ACADEMIA MILITAR

PROELIUM

SÉRIE VIII Nº 19 ISSN 1645 - 8826
ISSN 2976 - 0860

Revista Científica 2026

PRŒLIUM

Ficha Técnica

Proprietário e Editora:	Academia Militar Rua Gomes Freire 1169-203 Lisboa Tel.: 213186900 Fax: 213186911 URL: www.academiamilitar.pt E-mail: am.proelium@exercito.pt
Local:	Lisboa
Ano:	2026
Periodicidade:	Semestral
Depósito Legal:	209905/04
ISSN:	1645-8826/2976-0860
Produção final da capa:	Alferes RC Joana Mena, Academia Militar
Paginação, impressão e acabamentos:	Centro de Audiovisuais do Exército da Unidade de Apoio do Comando da Logística

A Revista *Proelium* está indexada à LATINDEX e acessível no Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal (RCAAP) em http://revistas.rcaap.pt/proelium.

Órgãos da *Proelium*

Sumário

<u>*TODOS OS TEXTOS SÃO DA RESPONSABILIDADE EXCLUSIVA*</u>

<u>*DOS/AS RESPETIVOS/AS AUTORES/AS*</u>

Editorial

Major-General (Mestre) Luís Miguel Afonso Calmeiro

Comandante da Academia Militar

Numa semana em que recebemos, para aumento ao acervo da biblioteca da Academia Militar, oito números da primeira edição, gentilmente oferecidos por S.Exa. o General Luís Valença Pinto, a *Revista Proelium* prossegue o seu percurso editorial, de mais de nove décadas, com uma visão orientada para a consolidação da qualidade científica, o reforço da sua projeção internacional e a afirmação da sua relevância no domínio das ciências militares, dos estudos estratégicos e da segurança e defesa.

Neste contexto, assume especial importância o incentivo à produção e divulgação científica por parte dos alunos e docentes da Academia Militar. A *Proelium* pretende constituir-se como um espaço privilegiado para a publicação e disseminação do conhecimento produzido na instituição, contribuindo para o desenvolvimento de competências de investigação, análise crítica e reflexão estratégica, essenciais à formação académica e militar, sendo de relevar, a participação de dois autores estrangeiros, a predominância de artigos redigidos em língua inglesa e o contributo de investigadores de outros estabelecimentos de ensino superior e centros de investigação.

Este compromisso estende-se igualmente à comunidade científica nacional e internacional. A revista procura afirmar-se como uma plataforma aberta à publicação de trabalhos originais de docentes, investigadores e estudantes de instituições de ensino superior e centros de investigação, promovendo o diálogo interdisciplinar e o intercâmbio de conhecimento entre diferentes áreas científicas e contextos institucionais. O aumento da participação de autores nacionais e estrangeiros constitui um elemento fundamental para o enriquecimento da qualidade científica da revista e para o alargamento do seu impacto académico.

A crescente publicação de artigos em língua inglesa representa igualmente um importante vetor de internacionalização, reforçando a visibilidade da investigação publicada e promovendo a ligação da *Proelium* às redes científicas internacionais.

A *Proelium* continuará, assim, a afirmar-se como um espaço de produção e disseminação de conhecimento, de pensamento crítico e de reflexão estratégica, ao serviço da Academia Militar e da comunidade científica interessada nas áreas da defesa, da segurança, da liderança e dos estudos estratégicos.

Aos autores, revisores, membros do conselho científico, alunos, docentes e leitores que contribuem para a qualidade deste projeto editorial, manifesto o meu reconhecimento e agradecimento, pelo rigor, disponibilidade e espírito de serviço que demonstram, refletindo a cultura de excelência que caracteriza a Academia Militar.

Desde sempre a Honrar Portugal, é tempo de renovar o compromisso de continuar a apoiar o desenvolvimento da Revista *Proelium*, garantindo que permanece como um espaço aberto, exigente e relevante para quem se dedica ao estudo e à compreensão dos domínios da segurança e defesa, renovando o convite para que continuem a fazer da *Proelium* uma revista ainda mais relevante, rigorosa e internacional.

Major-General Luís Miguel Afonso Calmeiro

Comandante da Academia Militar

https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_47958

COMPARISON OF FAT MASS PERCENTAGE MEASUREMENTS OBTAINED USING VARIOUS EQUATIONS AND BIOELECTRICAL IMPEDANCE ANALYSIS (BIA) DEVICES ON CADET-STUDENTS AT A MILITARY ACADEMY

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_47961

ABSTRACT

Bioimpedance is a well-established technique for the indirect estimation of body composition. However, despite its benefits, bioimpedance is not considered the reference technique for assessing fat mass (FM), and there are many different devices that don't always give the same values. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to assess and compare the FM% of Cadet-students at the Military Academy obtained with different equations and bioimpedance devices. This is a cross-sectional observational study with 25 healthy, non-athletic Caucasian male adults (mean age: 24.0 ± 2.1 years). Although the three devices used to assess body composition at the Military Academy differed significantly (One-way repeated measures ANOVA), they showed moderate to good relative reliability. Of all the devices analyzed, the Tanita BF-562 device obtained the best absolute agreement (ICC = 0.68) with the established benchmark. In conclusion, it is recommended that whatever BIA device is used in the future to assess the FM% of Cadets, it is essential to always use it over time to detect any changes or adjust the values through regression.

Keywords: bioimpedance devices; fat mass; assessments; cadet-students; agreement.

RESUMO

A bioimpedância constitui uma técnica amplamente estabelecida para a estimativa indireta da composição corporal. Contudo, apesar das suas vantagens, não é considerada a técnica de referência para a avaliação da massa gorda (MG), existindo ainda diversos dispositivos que não produzem valores consistentes entre si. Assim, o principal objetivo deste estudo consistiu em avaliar e comparar a percentagem de massa gorda (MG%) de alunos-cadetes da Academia Militar, obtida através de diferentes equações e dispositivos de bioimpedância. Trata-se de um estudo observacional transversal, com uma amostra de 25 adultos do sexo masculino, caucasianos, saudáveis e não atletas (idade média: 24,0 ± 2,1 anos). Embora os três dispositivos utilizados para avaliar a composição corporal na Academia Militar tenham apresentado diferenças estatisticamente significativas (ANOVA de medidas repetidas a um fator), evidenciaram uma fiabilidade relativa moderada a boa. Entre os dispositivos analisados, o Tanita BF-562 apresentou a melhor concordância absoluta (ICC = 0,68) com o referencial estabelecido. Em conclusão, recomenda-se que, independentemente do dispositivo de bioimpedância utilizado futuramente para avaliar a MG% dos cadetes, este seja aplicado de forma consistente ao longo do tempo, de modo a detetar alterações ou a ajustar os valores através de modelos de regressão.

Palavras-chave: dispositivos de bioimpedância; massa gorda; avaliação; cadetes-alunos; concordância.

1. INTRODUCTION

Assessing body composition throughout life is essential, both for health reasons and for functional or physical performance (Ackland et al., 2012; ACSM's, 2022; Boileau & Lohman, 1977; Coutinho et al., 2013; Slaughter & Lohman, 1980). In the clinical field, not only sarcopenia and dehydration in the elderly are problems, overweight and obesity (Janssen et al., 2005; Rodriguez-Martine et al., 2020) at a young age are also a frightening scourge in terms of the diseases they can trigger (Yusuf, et al., 2004; Sharma & Chetty, 2005). Similar to athletes in competitive sports (Bongiovanni, et al., 2021), certain professional groups or specific populations, such as military personnel or individuals in physically demanding occupations (Friedl 2012), require regular and precise monitoring of body composition to optimize performance and health outcomes. In these contexts, the distribution and proportion of body mass components are particularly critical (Silva, 2018). The human body's complex morphological structure (Saltzman & Mogensen, 2012) allows for multiple approaches to body composition assessment (Lukaski, 1987), depending on the level of analysis desired, ranging from the atomic and molecular levels to cellular, tissue, and whole-body assessments (Wang et al., 1992). Although air-displacement plethysmography and hydrostatic weighing are classified as indirect methods (Wells & Fewtrell 2006), they are widely regarded as reference standards for assessing fat mass (FM) (Campa et al., 2021; Heymsfield et al., 2005). Within the framework of the two-component model (2CM) at the molecular level (Level II), as proposed by Wang et al. in 1992, these techniques also allow for the estimation of fat-free mass (FFM) (Brozek et al., 1963; Siri, 1961).

For a more precise and comprehensive assessment of fat mass, the four-component model (4CM) has been considered in the literature, the gold standard, as it overcomes some of the limitations of earlier models, such as variations in body water and density across age, sex, and ethnicity (Heyward & Stolarczyk, 1996; Wells et al., 2010). This method, however, requires the use of multiple indirect techniques and specialized equipment, including air-displacement plethysmography, deuterium dilution, and Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) (Wang et al., 1992). The high costs of traditional equipment, some of which is technically demanding and even invasive (e.g., involving isotopes or radiation), make these methods neither portable nor practical, with preparation procedures that are often time-consuming (Heymsfield et al., 2005). In contrast, doubly indirect methods such as anthropometry and bioimpedance have emerged as credible and efficient alternatives (Campa et al., 2024; Carrion et al., 2019; Heymsfield et al., 2015; Hillier et al., 2014; Jackson et al., 2009; Kasper et al., 2021; Kerr et al., 2017). These approaches are quicker and easier to administer, cost-effective, involve portable equipment, and are suitable for a wide range of environments, especially when assessing large groups, such as military personnel. Bioimpedance requires minimal training and demonstrates low intra- and inter-assessor variability (Kotler et al., 1996).

The technological evolution of bioimpedance devices in recent years has led to the development of equipment incorporating algorithms based on predictive regression equations derived from population-specific data — taking into account variables such as sex, age, weight, height, ethnicity, and physical activity level (Campa et al., 2024). As a result, a wide range of bioimpedance devices from various manufacturers (e.g., Tanita, Omron, Akern, InBody, Seca, ImpediMed, Xitron, RJL, Bodystat, among others) are now available on the market for estimating body composition. These devices operate on the principles of Ohm's law and utilize the distinct conductive properties of body tissues, such as water, muscle, and adipose tissue which offer varying levels of resistance to the painless and harmless passage of an electrical current (Buchholz et al., 2004; Ellis, 2000; Kyle et al., 2004; Lukaski, 1996; Lukaski & Piccoli, 2012). However, a major limitation lies in the lack of transparency regarding the algorithms embedded within each manufacturer's equipment and model, which can lead to discrepancies in body composition assessments. This issue is further complicated when different technological approaches, such as type (Bioelectrical Impedance Spectroscopy [BIS]; Bioelectrical Impedance Analysis [BIA]), configuration (e.g., leg-leg, hand-hand, foot-hand, or segmental), sampling frequency (Single Frequency [SF]; Multifrequency [MF]) or procedural differences (e.g., number and type of electrodes or sensors) are used (Campa et al., 2024; Dellinger et al., 2021; Siedler et al., 2023; Tinsley et al., 2020). Consequently, using equipment that provides raw measurements, such as resistance (R), reactance (Xc), and phase angle (PA), offers a significant advantage. These raw values allow for both quantitative analyses, through the application of predictive equations validated for specific populations, and qualitative assessments, including phase angle interpretation and bioelectrical impedance vector analysis (BIVA)

(Campa et al., 2021; Campa et al., 2019; Lukaski & Piccoli, 2012; Piccoli et al., 1994).

Over the past 50 years, the body composition of cadet students at the Military Academy has been assessed with some frequency, taking advantage of the procedural advantages of bioimpedance (Campa et al., 2021; Campa et al., 2024; Carrion, et al. 2019). However, these last decades have been rich in the development of new and technologically more accurate devices. Currently, the Military Academy gathers a huge amount of body composition data, obtained over the last decades although the devices used over the years have presented different technological approaches. The main aim of this study was therefore to assess and compare the FM percentage (FM%) of Cadet-students at the Military Academy obtained with different equations and bioimpedance devices.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. PARTICIPANTS

The study design was a cross-sectional observational study, carried out in April and May 2025, with a non-probabilistic and intentional sampling strategy, involving all Cadet-students who volunteered at the Military Academy in Amadora. G*Power software (version 3.1.9.7, Germany) was used to perform an a priori power analysis to calculate the required sample size for a repeated-measures ANOVA (within-subjects) design, based on the following parameters: four repeated measures within a single group, $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, a medium effect size f = 0.25 (Cohen, 1988), correlation among repeated measures = 0.5 and a nonsphericity correction $\varepsilon = 1$. The required sample size recommendation was n = 24 (participants) in the assessment of FM%.

The inclusion criteria were Cadet-students from the Military Academy, with no illness, injury or medication. Consequently, the exclusion criteria were any injury or illness that could interfere with data collection and evaluation, the existence of a medical implant, have not complied with the prior indications, or not having signed the Informed, Free and Clarified Consent (IFCC) form. All participants were previously informed about the aim and protocol of the study, having voluntarily agreed to take part signing the IFCC form. The sample consisted of 25 healthy, non-athletic Caucasian male adults with a mean age of 24.0 ± 2.1, ranging from 21 to 29 years.

The study was conducted in accordance with national and international guidelines for scientific research with human beings, including the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Oviedo Convention (1997). This trial is part of a larger ongoing longitudinal prospective research study called AFUNPRO-MAC (Anthropometric and Functional Profile of Military Academy Cadets). The AFUNPRO-MAC intends to assess the morphology, body composition and functional performance of Cadet-students at the Military Academy, and was previously approved by the Commandant of the Military Academy, by the Research, Development and Innovation of the Military Academy (CINAMIL), by the Research Ethics Council of the Faculty of Human Motricity (CEIFMH) (Approval Nº 1 of 12 January 2024), and conformed to all ethical standards for human research as set out in declaration of Helsinki (WMA, 2013).

2.2. PROCEDURES

The body composition measurements were conducted in the morning (8:00 a.m.), after a 10-minute rest and required that participants were at least on an 8-hour fast, have refrained from exercise during the 12 hours before evaluation, and presenting a hydrated state. The room was suitable and comfortable, with a temperature between 21.8 and 22.7ºC and humidity ranging from 54% to 57%. Except for the bioimpedance devices, all electronic equipment (mobile phones, smartwatches, computers, ...) was left outside the room. The anthropometric and bioimpedance parameters were assessed by an anthropometric technician accredited with level I by the International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK), with a maximum Technical Measurement Error (TME) of 7.5% for fat folds and 1.5% for other measurements and with extensive experience in the use, according to the general recommendations of each manufacturer, of different bioimpedance devices.

Participants were instructed not to perform moderate or vigorous physical exercise during the previous 24 hours, nor to consume alcohol or stimulant beverages containing caffeine or theine during the 48 hours before the assessments. To ensure greater control of conditions, assessments were always conducted on Thursdays, guaranteeing identical daily routines and meals at the Military Academy. Approximately 30 minutes before the assessments, participants were asked to empty their bladders and bowels and to present themselves barefoot, wearing shorts, a light T-shirt, and without any metal objects.

2.3. ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASURES

The variables stature and weight were assessed according to the ISAK recommendations. Stature was measured with the participants in a bipedal position, to the nearest of 0.1 cm, with an anthropometer (GPM, Swiss Made). Weight was measured using a SECA scale (Germany Made) on a flat, firm surface, with an accuracy of up to 0.5 kg. Skinfold and girth measurements were taken according to standard procedures used by the ISAK (Esparza-Ros, Vaquero-Crisóbal e Marfell-Jones 2019). The five skinfold thicknesses (triceps, subscapular, biceps, iliac crest and front thigh) and five girths (arm relaxed, waist, thigh, gluteal and calf) were measured with an accuracy of 0.5 mm and 0.1 cm, respectively, using a Slimguide® skinfold calliper (Creative Heath Products, Plymouth Mitch, Patent Pend., 1 mm precision) and an anthropometric measuring tape (CESCORF, Porto Alegre, Brazil), by a level-I ISAK Accredited Anthropometrist. The intra-observer technical error of measurement (TEM) was 1.1% (with a coefficient of reliability (R = 0.99), well below the accepted value for skinfolds (Esparza-Ros, Vaquero-Crisóbal e Marfell-Jones 2019).

2.4. BIOELECTRIC IMPEDANCE ANALYSIS (BIA) DEVICES

Three BIA devices (OMRON BF300, TANITA BF-562 and TANITA BC-601) were used to directly assess FM%. The OMRON BF300 Body Fat Monitor (Model HBF-300-E, Matsusaka Co, Ltd, Japan) is a hand-hand type, with a single frequency (SF) of 50 kHz, four metal sensors (two in each hand) and evaluates FM% automatically. Before each assessment, the participant's height (cm), weight (kg), age (years) and sex (M/F) were entered into the device. The assessments were carried out in a bipedal position with the legs about 35º to 45º apart, arms fully extended forwards (holding the equipment), parallel to the ground.

The Body Fat Monitor/Scale TANITA BF-562 (Tanita Corporation, Japan) is a leg-leg type, single frequency (SF) of 50 kHz, has four metal sensors (two in each foot) and also evaluates FM% automatically. Before starting the measurements, the assessment date was updated, and only each participant's dates of birth, height (cm) and sex (M/F) were entered into the device. Age and weight were not entered, as the scale automatically weighs and calculates age. The assessments were carried out in the bipedal position, with the arms hanging close to the body.

The TANITA BC-601 Segmental Body Composition Monitor (Tanita Corporation, Japan) is of the segmental type, uses an alternating current of 100 µA, a single frequency (SF) of 50 kHz and eight metal sensors (two in each hand/foot). The data entry procedures are the same as those for the TANITA BF-562, with the only addition being the entry of each participant's physical activity level (1, 2 or 3). Assessments of FM% and other body composition components were obtained automatically. Participants were in a bipedal position, but with their arms stretched forwards, holding the equipment's monitor.

The AKERN BIA101 BIVA PRO device (Akern, Florence, Italy), widely used and validated in the literature, is a foot-hand type device that uses an alternating current of 250 µA and a single simple frequency (SF) of 50 kHz to measure the raw values of Resistance (R), Reactance (Xc) and Phase Angle (PA), enabling that the most appropriate equations from the M3C body composition model (Wang, Pierson e Heymsfield 1992) to be chosen, according to the specific characteristics of a given sample, to assess the components of body composition. Before each assessment, the battery was charged (above 80%), the quality of the cables was checked and the device was calibrated. Normal values were recognized when R was 383 ± 10 Ω and Xc was 45 ± 5 Ω, as indicated by AKERN. For each participant, after the skin areas had been properly cleaned with alcohol (70%) and dried, two pairs (emitter/sensor) of new BIATRODES electrodes (Akern, Florence, Italy) were placed at specific locations (on the back of the right hand and right foot), with a minimum distance of 5 cm between each pair, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The assessments were carried out in the supine position, with the legs stretched out and separated from each other 45º, the arms stretched out and separated from the torso about 30º, and the palms of the hands facing downwards.

The raw values obtained (R, Xc or Z) were then entered into prediction equations validated in the literature and carefully selected based on the specific characteristics of the sample (sex, ethnicity, age, level of physical activity, ...) to indirectly estimated FM%.

To create a reference for comparing OMRON BF300, TANITA BF-562 and TANITA BC-601 devices, we initially use 29 equations developed based on different body composition models ⎯ M2C and M3C (Wang, Pierson e Heymsfield 1992) ⎯ that met the general requirements (Fragoso e Bonito 2024). From these, we retained three equations (3, 6 and 20) that yielded the strongest associations with participants' sum of skinfold measurements, as indicated by the highest coefficients of determination (R^2). Each participant's FM% was estimated using the three selected equations and the average of these values served as their individual benchmark. The mean of the individual values from the three equations achieved a better R^2 than any of the equations individually and was therefore used as the benchmark. We used

Excel 2024 MSO software (version 2408, Microsoft) to process the data, particularly for the various calculations required by the different FM% prediction equations.

2.5. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The descriptive analysis allowed the sample's characterization and consisted of the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for the following variables: age (years), height (cm), weight (kg), resistance (R), reactance (Xc), impedance (Z), five skinfold thicknesses (triceps, subscapular, biceps, iliac crest and front thigh) (mm), five girths (arm relaxed, waist, thigh, gluteal and calf) (cm), and the FM% obtained directly by each device, or indirectly by averaging the results of the three carefully selected predictive equations.

One-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to evaluate the differences in FM% mean values among the methods (different devices/equations). Normality and sphericity assumptions were verified using Shapiro-Wilk test and Mauchly's test, respectively. When statistically significant differences were identified, Bonferroni-corrected post hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted to determine which devices/equations differed. The effect size for the repeated measures ANOVA was assessed using partial eta-squared (η^2p). According to (Cohen 1992), η^2p values was considered as small ($\eta^2p < 0.06$), medium ($0.06 \leq \eta^2p < 0.14$), or large ($\eta^2p \geq 0.14$).

The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) was calculated to find out the degree of reproducibility of the results, namely the relative consistency and absolute agreement of the measurements. According to Koo e Li (2016), reliability was classified as poor (ICC < 0.50), moderate (0.50 ≤ ICC < 0.75), good (0.75 ≤ ICC < 0.90) or excellent (ICC ≥ 0.90). In addition, the agreement between the FM% obtained by the different devices/equations was examined using Bland-Altman plots, which involved analyzing the mean difference (bias) and estimating the limits of agreement and their 95% confidence intervals. Simple linear regression of differences versus means was used to test for proportional bias, and a significant regression line indicated that the bias varied with the magnitude of the measurements. The significance level (α) established was 0.05 and statistical significance was considered if $p < 0.05$. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS Statistics software (version 30, IBM).

3. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the anthropometric and body composition characteristics of the participants. The cadets have a mean height of 175.7 + 6.4 cm and a mean weight of 74.8 + 9.5 kg. The mean sum of the five skinfolds is 54.0 + 14.1 mm. The FM% assess with the Omron BF300 with 13.0 + 4.6% has the lowest mean value, while the Tanita BF-562 with 18.0 + 3.9% has the highest mean result.

Male (n = 25)	*M*	*SD*
Age (years)	24.0	2.1
Height (cm)	175.7	6.4
Weight (kg)	74.8	9.5
Skinfolds		
Triceps (TRI, mm)	10.6	3.3
Biceps (BIC, mm)	4.4	2.2
Subscapular (SBS, mm)	10.9	2.9
Iliac crest (SIL, mm)	15.3	5.9
Front thigh (CRL, mm)	12.8	3.9
∑5SKF (mm)	54.0	14.1
Girths		
Arm relaxed (cm)	31.9	2.5
Waist (cm)	81.9	5.7
Gluteal (cm)	95.2	5.4
Thigh (cm)	57.0	3.1
Calf (cm)	37.5	2.4
Bioimpedance (*Akern BIA101 BIVA PRO*)		
Resistance (R, Ω)	502.3	49.2
Reactance (Xc, Ω)	66.4	9.1
Impedance (Z, Ω)	506.7	49.1
FM (%) by *Omron BF300*	13.0	4.6
FM (%) by *Tanita BF-562*	18.0	3.9
FM (%) by *Tanita BC-601*	14.8	4.3

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Participants.

Note. FM – Fat Mass; ∑5SKF – Sum of five Skinfolds (TRI, BICSBS, SIL, CRL).

The benchmark FM% was calculated by averaging the values of the three equations with the highest R^2. The selected equations have a correlation (R) with the ∑5SKF between .90 and .97, and a respective coefficient of determination (R^2) between .81 and .94. We would like to highlight that the FM% obtained from the average of the three previous equations has higher R and R^2 values, .97 and .95 respectively, with a confidence interval of between .94 and .99, as shown in table 2.

Devices	Reference Method	Descriptive			Corr. with ∑5SKF		R^2
		n	*M*	*SD*	*R*	95% CI	
Omron BF300	BIA	25	13.0	4.6	.71**	[.45., .87]	.51
Tanita BF-562	BIA	25	18.0	3.9	.63**	[.31., .82]	.39
Tanita BC-601	BIA	25	14.8	4.3	.65**	[.35., .83]	.43
Equations							
(3) Lean, Han & Deurenberg (1996)	UW	25	15.9	4.0	.96**	[.92., .98]	.93
(6) Durnin & Womersley (1974)	UW	25	18.1	3.3	.97**	[.93., .99]	.94
(20) Van Loan & Mayclin (1987)	ID	25	19.0	3.1	.90**	[.79., .96]	.81
Mean of three Equations (Mean Eq)		**25**	**17.7**	**3.6**	.97**	[.94., .99]	**.95**

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of FM% obtained using BIA devices, Selected Equations and Correlations with ∑5SKF.

Note. BIA - Bioelectric Impedance Analysis; UW – underwater; ID – isotope dilution; ∑5SKF – Sum of five skinfolds (TRI, BIC, SBS, SIL, CRL); Pearson Coefficient (*R*); Coefficient of Determination (R^2); CI – Confidence Interval; $^{**}p$ <.001 (2-tailed). BD – body density; FM – fat mass; TBW – total body water; R – resistance, H – height; W – weight. (3) Lean, Han & Deurenberg_1 (1996): BD = 1.1862 − 0.0684 log (BIC+TRI+SBS+SIL) – 0.000601 (Age); FM% = [(4.96/BD) − 4.51] * 100 (Siri adapted). (6) Durnin & Womersley_1 (1974): BD = 1.1765 – 0.0744 log (TRI+BIC+SBS+SIL); FM% = [(4.96/BD) − 4.51] * 100 (Siri adapted). (20) Van Loan & Mayclin (1987): TBW = 9.9868 + 0.000724 (H^2) + 0.2822 (W) − 0.0153 (R) − 2.3313 (Sex) −0.1319 (Age); FM% = [(2.122/BD) + (0.779 * TBW) – 1.356] * 100 (Silva et al. 2004).

The comparison of FM% values obtained from the different devices/equations, conducted using the repeated measures ANOVA, followed by the Bonferroni multiple comparisons test, showed that there were statistically significant differences ($F(3,72) = 37.50$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2p = 0.61$) between all the devices/equations, except between the Tanita BF-562 and Mean Eq (benchmark) pair, with a mean difference of 0.30 ($p = 1.000$) and a 95% confidence interval between −1.454 and 2.054.

Figure 1 shows an integrated view of the FM% obtained by each device plotted against the mean fat mass of the selected equations (Mean Eq), that was used as a benchmark. The concordance line was also added to facilitate the visual assessment of consistency and agreement. All devices showed considerable consistency with the reference (lines closely parallel to the concordance line), with systematic underestimation by the *Omron BF300* and *Tanita BC-601*, and slight overestimation by the *Tanita BF-562* up to ≈18 of FM% and slight underestimation thereafter.

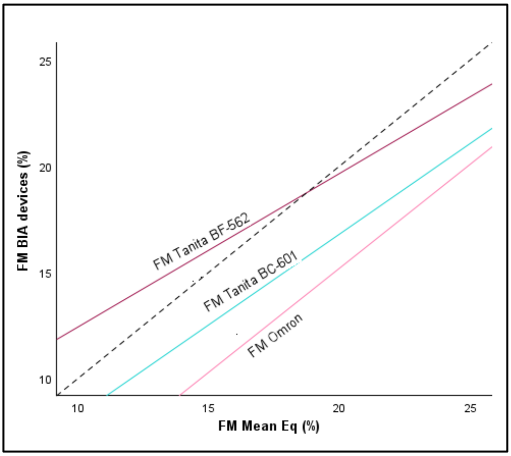

Figure 1. Integrated graph with the fat mass obtained by each device, with the FM Mean Eq (%) as a benchmark

Note. FM BIA devices (%): Omron BF300; Tanita BF-562; Tanita BC-601. FM Mean Eq (%): Lean, Han & Deurenberg (1996); Durnin & Womersley (1974); Van Loan & Mayclin (1987).

Table 3 presents the results of Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) which makes possible the quantitative assessment of both consistency (relative reliability) and absolute agreement. In terms of relative reliability, the results indicate moderate to good values, whereas absolute agreement ranges from poor to moderate.

Devices or equations	Consistency		Absolute Agreement	
	ICC	95% CI	ICC	95% CI
All	.78	[.64; .88]	.58	[.24; .80]
Omron BF300 vs Mean Eq	.74	[.50; .88]	.45	[-.10; .79]
Tanita BF-562 vs Mean Eq	.67	[.38; .84]	.68	[.39; .84]
Tanita BC-601 vs Mean Eq	.70	[.42; .85]	.56	[.03; .81]

Table 3. Relative Reliability (consistency) and Absolute Agreement of FM% values obtained with different devices/equations.
Note. ICC – Intraclass Correlation Coefficient; CI – Confidence Interval.
FM Mean Eq (%): Lean, Han & Deurenberg (1996); Durnin & Womersley (1974); Van Loan & Mayclin (1987).

Figure 2 shows the respective Bland-Altman plots for each pair of FM% devices/equation. A systematic bias is observed in the *Omron BF300* and *Tanita BC-601,* both reporting consistently lower values, but with most values within the limits of agreement. The graphs also reveal wide limits of agreement in all the devices, which does not represent an excellent absolute agreement. Nevertheless, the *Tanita BF-562* presents the best absolute agreement.

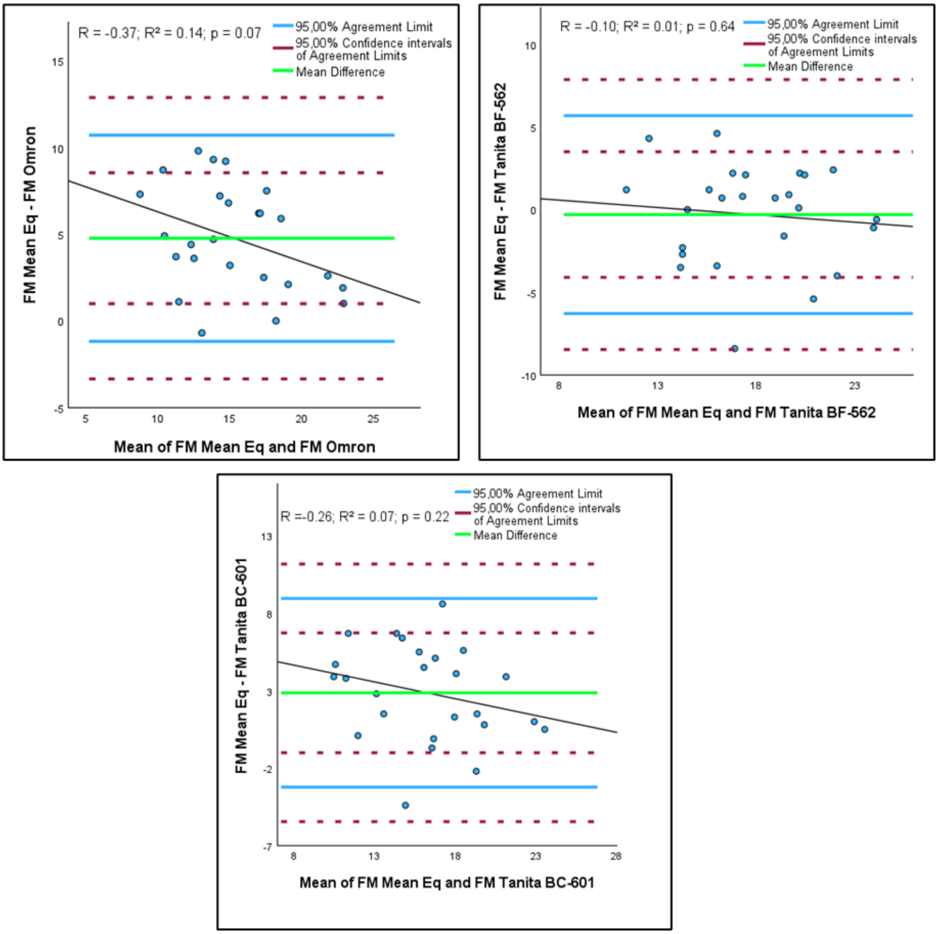

Figure 2. Bland-Altman Plots for Agreement between each FM% device with FM% Mean Eq

Note. FM Omron BF300 (%); FM Tanita BF-562 (%); FM Tanita BC-601 (%) and FM Mean Eq (%).

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the cellular properties of the tissues that make up the human body, bioelectrical impedance analysis (BIA) can be effectively used to quickly assess changes in body composition across different population including the general public, military personnel, and athletes. This technique can provide key information about Total Body Water (TBW), Fat-Free Mass (FFM) and Fat Mass (FM), enabling timely adjustments to training programs, hydration strategies, and dietary plans.

The main aim of this study was to assess and compare the FM% of male cadet-students at the Military Academy, obtained using different equations and bioimpedance devices. The results showed that the *Omron BF300* device reported the lowest average fat mass values (13.0 ± 4.6%), followed by *Tanita BC-601* device (14.8 ± 4.3%), and the FM Mean Eq (17.7 ± 3.6%), while the *Tanita BF-562* device presented the highest values (18.0 ± 3.9%).

Regarding the characteristics of the sample under study, they have average height and weight values that are relatively similar to those of cadets from similar Armed Forces Officer Schools (Agostinelli et al., 2024; Beutler et al., 2009; Botta et al., 2023; Oliveira et al., 2021; Newman et al., 2022; Roberts et al., 2023; Spartali et al., 2014). Specifically with regard to FM%, the average values obtained by the Military Academy cadets are within the range of 13.0% to 18.0% (depending on the device used), and do not differ from those presented by male cadets (with similar average ages) belonging to foreign military academies (Aandstad et al., 2020; Botta et al., 2023; Steed et al., 2016).

There are various ways of assessing body composition and we could of course, as usual, use the reference method (M4C) (Wang et al., 1992) with multiple indirect techniques and specialized equipment (including air-displacement plethysmography, deuterium dilution, and dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) to assess the FM% of student cadets. But we wanted to simplify things and try to create an alternative, quick, simple, cheap and practical way, without the problem of propagating of the measurement error associated to each equipment (necessary in the M4C model), which would also allow us to accurately assess subjects (so-called normal) with normal fat percentage values. Skinfolds are one of the most popular and widely used techniques, being a good way of assessing body fat distribution, being the technique least affected by daily activities (exercise, meals, hydration status, caffeine, menstrual cycle, ...) (Kasper et al., 2021) (Kerr et al., 2017). According to Doran et al. (2013), the sum of skinfolds in normal adults has a high degree of agreement with DEXA.

Initially, 29 equations were used, carefully selected according to the type of subjects (athletes or not), sex, ethnicity, age, amount of fat and the type of equations, following the methodology recommended by Fragoso e Bonito (2024) in order to reduce the errors associated with the population studied. The correlations of the equations and the three BIA devices with ∑5SKF were then analyzed.

Among all the measurement methods used, the average obtained from the three equations (FM Mean Eq) showed the best coefficient of determination (R = .95) with ∑5SKF, representing a best precision of real fat than only each equation.

After adopting the FM Mean (17.7% ± 3.6) as the reference, we compared the results with those obtained from the different devices. The ANOVA results showed statistically significant differences between the reference and the devices, except for the Tanita BF-562 device (p = 1.000).

All the devices showed moderate or good reliability (Koo e Li 2016) with relative reliability (0.67 ≤ ICC ≤ 0.78) and absolute agreement (0.45 ≤ ICC ≤ 0.68). *The Tanita BF-562* device distinguished itself with an ICC of 0.67 and 0.68, respectively.

Regarding the agreement between the different devices, none showed statistically significant differences (all $p \geq 0.07$), with the majority of values between limits of agreement. *Tanita BF-562* device proved to be the one with the best absolute agreement (ICC = 0.68), without significative proportional bias tendence (p = 0.64). However, for Cadet-students with less fat mass (≤ ≈18%), this device overestimates slight the values compared to the reference (FM Mean Eq), while for Cadet-students with more fat mass (> ≈18%), it begins to underestimate slight them. In slimmer adult men, fat is mainly localized in the limbs, varying little with age, while in less slender men fat also begins to accumulate in the trunk, unlike women who accumulate more in the gluteal-femoral region (Hermsdorff & Monteiro, 2004). As the *Tanita BF-562* is a leg-leg type device, i.e. it assesses the fat mass of the lower limbs while estimating the rest of the body, this could be the reason for underestimating the values of cadets with more than 18% fat mass.

The *Omron BF300* is an arm-arm device and works in the opposite way to the previous one, i.e. it assesses the fat mass of the upper limbs by estimating the rest of the body's fat. However, it shows a systematic bias (good consistency, poor absolute agreement), underestimating the cadets' fat mass values by an average of approximately 5% and not showing a significant proportional bias (p = 0.07). The reason for the good consistency may be that only one of the five skinfolds assessed was not located on the upper limbs or trunk.

The *Tanita BC-601* is a segmental type, i.e. it assesses the whole body. It doesn't have as good a consistency as the *Omron BF300*, which may be due to the issue of fat distribution and localization of skinfolds, underestimating FM values by an average of around 3%, with no significant proportional bias (p = 0.22). It has better absolute agreement than the *Omron BF300*, possibly due to being able to assess whole body fat mass. The graphs show that the difference between the three devices is mainly due to the respective differences in the mean values obtained, although there is relative reliability between them (Figure 1 and 2). This leads us to the possibility of neutralizing these differences by adjusting the respective lines obtained by regression.

A study by Moreno et al. (2001) showed that when compared with the fat mass values obtained using the Siri Equation (Siri, 1961), the *Omron BF300* device also underestimated the fat mass values (1.2%) but showed an ICC > 0.95 and good agreement.

Also, a study carried out by Minderico et al. (2008) to compare the FM% assessed with bioelectric impedance (BIA) devices with the four-component model (*gold standard*), showed that the *Omron BF300* device did not present equal values, but did not differ statistically significantly ($p > 0.05$) from the reference model in any body composition variable.

Other previous studies by Filho et al. (2011) and Silva et al. (2014) carried out with different bioimpedance devices, but from the same manufacturers (OMRON and TANITA), also reported no statistically significant differences. The study by Pateyjohns, et al. (2006) also showed that a TANITA model had good agreement and is recommended for assessing large groups, such as military personnel.

The study by Lintsi et al. (2004) had already reported that the *Omron BF300* device tended to underestimate FM%, as our study corroborates. This hand-hand type device only assesses the upper part of the human body, underestimating the rest, which concentrates most of the body mass. Perhaps this is one of the explanatory facts, because the same logic (but inversely) applies to the *Tanita BF-562*, which is of the leg-leg type and obtains the highest results.

The following strengths stand out in our study: (1) the sample is well representative (age, ethnicity, level of physical activity) of the population of male cadet-students at the Military Academy; (2) the prerequisites of the participants and the procedures before and during the assessments were scrupulously demanded or complied with; (3) the selection of three prediction equations among dozens existing was rigorous and judicious, based on the best coefficients of determination (R^2), resulting from the correlation with the sum of the participants' fat skinfolds; (4) the average of the three prediction equations (FM Mean Eq) used as a reference to compare each BIA device included anthropometric and bioimpedance equations validated in the literature; and, (5) the anthropometric measurements were assessed by an anthropometric technician accredited with level I by the International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK).

Although in our opinion the objective of this study has been fully achieved, we must list any limitations that need to be mitigated. Thus, after our reflection, although the G*Power software recommended a minimum sample of 24 participants for the statistical analysis carried out, it seems to us that in future studies on this specific population of Military Academy student cadets, it might be advantageous to use a sample with more participants, and preferably one that allows both sexes to be assessed. Another limitation was the use of only five skinfolds to assess fat, and of these, only one (front thigh) was located on the lower limbs, even though the sample did not include women. The results we obtained could be the consequence of either the number of skinfolds used or the skinfolds that were chosen, so there could be a possibility of bias.

In future studies, if necessary, it will be possible to use the mean of three equations (Mean Eq) to compare the FM% of cadets currently studying at the Military Academy, with the fat mass values of past student cadets, documented over the years. Furthermore, if assessments are carried out on this population using these devices, it may be pertinent to adjust the values using regression for each bioimpedance device.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Although the three devices used to assess body composition at the Military Academy differed significantly, they showed moderate to good relative reliability. The *Omron BF300* present the best consistency. Of all the devices analyzed, the *Tanita BF-562* device obtained the best absolute agreement with the established benchmark, very slightly overestimating the FM of the Cadets with values up to ≈18%, then underestimating it from this value onwards, but also very slightly. It is recommended that whatever BIA device is used in the future to assess the FM% of

Cadets, it is essential to always use the same one over time to detect any changes. Ideally, if possible, it would be desirable for the assessment to be conducted using a hand-foot device that provides us raw values, allowing us to input them into prediction equations validated in the literature.

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THE ETHICS OF SECRECY: INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_47964

ABSTRACT

This article explores the ethical and legal dilemmas regarding intelligence activities within liberal democracies, where the operational demands of secrecy often collide with the democratic imperatives of accountability and protection of fundamental rights. Through case studies from the European Union, it investigates how historical legacies, public trust, and legal frameworks shape intelligence practices and influence their legitimacy. Underscoring the inherent moral ambivalence of intelligence – being an indispensable tool for national security, yet prone to overstep in the absence of effective constraints – the study ultimately insists on the need for normative structures capable of reconciling national security with civil liberties. Without meaningful oversight and transparency, intelligence agencies risk becoming incompatible with democratic principles. Yet, a key question persists: where should the line be drawn between democratic legitimacy and operational secrecy?

Keywords: Intelligence Ethics; Democratic Accountability; Rule of Law; National Security.

RESUMO

Este artigo explora os dilemas éticos e jurídicos relacionados às atividades de inteligência nas democracias liberais, onde as exigências operacionais de sigilo muitas vezes entram em conflito com os imperativos democráticos de responsabilização e proteção dos direitos fundamentais. Através de estudos de caso provenientes da União Europeia, investiga-se como legados históricos, confiança pública e quadros jurídicos moldam as práticas de inteligência e influenciam a sua legitimidade. Ao destacar a ambivalência moral inerente à inteligência – sendo uma ferramenta indispensável para a segurança nacional, mas propensa a excessos na ausência de restrições eficazes – o estudo enfatiza a necessidade de estruturas normativas capazes de conciliar segurança nacional e liberdades civis. Sem uma supervisão efetiva e uma transparência significativa, os serviços de inteligência correm o risco de se tornarem incompatíveis com os princípios democráticos. Contudo, permanece uma questão fundamental: onde deve ser traçada a linha entre legitimidade democrática e sigilo operacional?

Palavras-chave: Ética dos Serviços de Informações; Responsabilização Democrática; Estado de Direito; Segurança Nacional.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Secret intelligence activity is often depicted as an "extra-ethical" domain, where conventional moral rules are apparently suspended in the name of national security. Yet both history and contemporary practice reveal that intelligence cannot escape the ethical and legal principles underpinning liberal democracies. Tasked with collecting, analysing, and disseminating information critical to the protection of the state, intelligence agencies must navigate a delicate balance between operational necessity and democratic accountability. This tension lies at the heart of this study, which explores how intelligence functions within a framework of legal, ethical, and institutional constraints.

Writing on intelligence services is an inherently complex undertaking, as the knowledge available represents only a fraction of their actual operations, essentially consisting of the information that these agencies themselves choose to make public. While it is possible to delineate their mission, objectives, and general principles, their operational methods largely remain shielded by institutional secrecy.

In Europe, intelligence services do not enjoy the same notoriety and visibility as agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the United States or MI6 in the United Kingdom. The CIA, the intelligence organ of the world's leading power in the post–Cold War period, has become globally renowned for its several interventions and influence it has exerted on international politics. This explains why a substantial body of studies, articles, and debates has developed around its activities, fostering a robust academic tradition on American intelligence, now regarded as a reference model in the scholarly literature on the subject.

2. EUROPEAN CHALLENGES IN DEFENCE

The American experience represents the cornerstone of contemporary political and academic reflection on intelligence, serving as a benchmark for the development of modern security and intelligence architectures. Europe observes this model with interest but still struggles to fully replicate it. Indeed, within the European context, there is no central agency comparable to the CIA, nor a federal body like the FBI capable of coordinating investigative and intelligence activities at a continental extent. This gap is partly attributable to Europe's own history, traditionally marked by difficulties in coordinating common defence. It is a recurring theme in the continent's politics, proposed multiple times in various formulations, yet never resulting in a genuinely integrated structure. Even the most recent international events – from terrorist attacks on European soil to conflicts increasingly close to the Union's borders – have been insufficient to generate a common system of defence and intelligence.

Nevertheless, the European Union avails of Europol, the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, which assists, analyses, and coordinates the policing activities of member states; yet it lacks direct investigative or arrest powers. As such, it cannot be equated to a true intelligence agency: its powers are limited, and its function remains essentially supportive. Despite being a fundamental instrument in the fight against organized crime and terrorism – and having been strengthened following the 2015 Paris attacks – Europol does not possess the operational capacities or the mandate typical of a federal agency such as the FBI.

Similarly, Interpol, the international police cooperation organization with 196 member countries, addresses transnational crime on a global scale but does not wield direct policing powers, limiting itself to facilitating information exchange and operational coordination among national forces.

Overall, the European defence system is still in the process of formation, posing as an institutionally fragile structure that still lacks a full common operational capacity. Although the Union has established a strategic framework – articulated through the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the Strategic Compass adopted in 2022 – its implementation remains partial and fragmented. Within this context of incomplete integration, European defence systems remain heterogeneous, and responses to major international threats continue to rely heavily on individual member states, despite the existence of a shared regulatory framework.

One element, however, seems to unite various European powers: the public perception of intelligence services, which is markedly different from that observed in the United States. In the absence of a consolidated tradition, European public opinion often maintains a certain distance, if not outright suspicion, toward these agencies.

2.1. THE PORTUGAL'S CASE

The case of Portugal is particularly emblematic, as the country possesses a legal framework governing surveillance that significantly limits the operational prerogatives of intelligence services within its territory. This approach finds its roots in recent history, which profoundly influenced the role, public perception, and institutional evolution of these agencies.

During António de Oliveira Salazar's and Marcello Caetano dictatorship (1933–1974), political repression was largely exercised through the PIDE (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, 1945–1969), the principal instrument of the repressive apparatus of the Estado Novo, the official name of the authoritarian regime. The PIDE held broad powers of investigation, detention, and arrest against anyone suspected of subversive activity against the state. It operated as secret political police, conducting espionage operations and repressing so-called "political and social crimes" through arbitrary imprisonment, special tribunals, and torture. It constituted one of the pillars of a system of fear, denunciation, and persecution within a regime of clearly police-oriented nature.

After the Carnation Revolution of 1974, a commission was established to dissolve the political police. The collective memory of PIDE's abuses left a profound mark on Portuguese society, such that for about a decade the new democratic Republic avoided re-establishing a national secret service. Moreover, the totalitarian and repressive nature of the intelligence service during that period generated a deep-seated aversion toward intelligence, still perceptible among both the elite and the general population. This aversion decisively shapes the distrust with which these services are perceived today: the long history of the PVDE and subsequent PIDE as oppressors of individual freedoms has resulted in contemporary services being viewed not as essential instruments of the state but rather as adversaries of citizens.

This historical legacy continues to influence the perception of the two main contemporary intelligence agencies: the Serviço de Informações de Segurança (SIS), established in 1986, and the Serviço de Informações Estratégicas de Defesa (SIED), created in 1997. Their competencies remain limited to the collection and analysis of information, report drafting, and transmission of data to other authorized investigative bodies, in order to facilitate subsequent investigations. They do not possess the authority to conduct direct criminal investigations or to intercept communications, tools that in many other Western countries constitute a central element of intelligence operations.

This restrictive framework strongly affects the efficacy of the services, whose powers are legally limited in the name of protecting citizens' liberties and fundamental rights. The result is a system in which intelligence services are almost "expelled" from the national security sphere, a role increasingly occupied by police forces. This overlap of competencies, fuelled by underlying political ambiguity, generates institutional friction, internal competition, and a lack of cooperation, which negatively impacts the quality of intelligence outputs and the stability of the overall security system.

In conclusion, persistent public distrust has constrained the operational capacity and effectiveness of Portuguese intelligence, which remains strictly bound by the principles of the 1976 Constitution and respect for fundamental rights, particularly privacy and civil liberties. While this constraint ensures adherence to democratic values, it often conflicts with the functional requirements of intelligence work, based on the collection and analysis of confidential information.

In particular, contemporary debate, both in Portugal and in many other democracies, revolves around the delicate balance between liberty and security. Determining which of these two values should prevail, and to what extent, represents one of the most complex and pressing issues in democratic governance.

3. ETHICAL PARTICULARITY OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Over the past century, intelligence has become one of the most crucial instruments within the political community, as it provides the information necessary for the protection and security of its members. The sector underwent profound transformation following the September 11, 2001 attacks, when the United States radically altered its foreign policy doctrine, abandoning the principle of deterrence in favour of pre-emptive action, aimed at preventing the emergence of external threats before they materialized. This shift also entailed institutional reforms, including the creation of the office of the National Director of Intelligence, tasked with coordinating the various services and ensuring the effective exchange of information among them.

A comparable level of organization and theoretical reflection is not observed in Europe, where a common ethical and normative framework defining the legitimacy and limits of intelligence activity is still lacking. This regulatory gap is particularly evident in the differing national responses to recent security crises, within a context in which threats have evolved on a global scale. Consequently, there is a clear absence of a shared normative theory governing the actions of national security intelligence agencies, or at the very least the recognition of its necessity.

Intelligence has been interpreted as an activity apparently devoid of ethical limits, or even as an intrinsically immoral domain, especially when viewed through a Machiavellian lens in which power, success, and survival prevail over moral considerations. This interpretation, however, risks reducing intelligence to a mere instrument of national security, severing any connection with ethics. Paradoxically, it is precisely the reference to national security that constitutes its primary ethical foundation: all actions and institutions intended to safeguard it derive their principal moral justification from this objective. The moral dilemma of intelligence becomes even clearer when compared with the ethics of war.

3.1. INTELLIGENCE AND WAR TRADITION

For a long time, the study of intelligence operations has been associated with the tradition of just war, whose ethics are considered largely analogous. Both practices, in fact, can be seen as forms of moral exceptionalism, in which certain actions are exempted from ordinary ethical evaluation. In both epistemic and military competition, distinct codes and rules are applied to legitimate otherwise impermissible behaviours, since common moral norms do not fully apply in these contexts.

Nevertheless, this perspective is only partially adequate, as it overlooks the profound differences between the two phenomena. War, after all, occurs within a specific temporal and spatial framework, a condition that provides its justification; intelligence, by contrast, is a continuous activity, lacking any clear temporal boundary between peace and conflict. Such dissimilarity stems from the nature of the threat being addressed: whereas war responds to a manifest danger, intelligence aims to act before any threat materializes. In this sense, intelligence focuses primarily on internal surveillance rather than battlefield engagement, constituting a systematic process of data collection and analysis in order to identify and monitor potential dangers while they are still latent.

Accordingly, intelligence activity can be conceived as a form of continuous and preventive defence, operating incessantly and often before a full ethical assessment of legitimacy is even possible. It thus emerges as a primary resource to be mobilized before any other form of action, given its essential role in the decision-making process.

Hence, intelligence occupies an intermediate space between the political and security domains. Its ethical burden differs fundamentally from that of warfare because, rather than entailing the direct taking of human life, intelligence aims to prevent such outcomes by pursuing less destructive alternatives. Precisely because of these differences, several scholars caution that extending the just war framework to intelligence may legitimise an overly permissive understanding of its practices.

Finally, the principles of jus ad bellum offer a useful starting point for understanding the moral implications of intelligence activity, but cannot alone constitute a normative framework for developing principles of jus ad intelligentiam. For this very reason, intelligence services require their own ethical framework. They engage in practices that, if judged by the moral rules of everyday life – particularly from a Kantian or traditional just war perspective – would often be unacceptable.

3.2. ETHICAL AMBIGUITY OF THE INTELLIGENCE

The moral dilemma of intelligence lies in its fundamental ambivalence: on one hand, it encompasses actions that infringe established ethical norms; on the other, it plays a crucial role in preventing serious threats to the security of a State and its citizens. Intelligence thus emerges as a morally ambiguous practice, oscillating between crime and necessity, between the pursuit of a lesser evil and the protection of a higher good.

Defining an adequate ethical and normative framework for intelligence proves complex, primarily due to the ambiguous definition of the concept of security, which lies at the core of any justification for intelligence operations. Security is inherently variable, changing according to political, social, and cultural contexts, as well as the nature of threats – whether military, criminal, or economic – that a State seeks to confront. One may ask, for instance, whether security should be regarded as a duty of the State, a component of foreign policy, or a minimal condition for survival. Each country formulates its own definition based on the vital interests it aims to safeguard; in general terms, however, security can be understood as the set of processes and measures designed to preserve those interests. In this perspective, intelligence is inextricably linked to the very notion of national security, representing one of the core elements of its institutional architecture.

In short, the value of security is implicit in the capacity of a State to safeguard the vital interests of its citizens. It should not be conceived as an abstract entity detached from the population, but rather as a common good intrinsically connected to their well-being. Indeed, the fundamental challenge for any State is to counterbalance the protection of individual rights with the pursuit of collective safety. It's important not to reduce this tension to a simple trade-off between privacy and security – as if an increase in one implied a decrease in the other – since both exist on a continuum of values that varies according to context and risk perception.

However, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the United States came to believe that strengthening national security powers would be justified even at the expense of fundamental rights and civil guarantees. Following the U.S. model, many world powers adopted similar policies, enhancing counterterrorism capacities at the cost of individual civil liberties, under the assumption that only such measures could ensure a genuine strategic decision advantage. Yet Benjamin Franklin's famous advice remains profoundly relevant today: "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety".

3.3. SECRECY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Intelligence operations are often conceived as a third option between diplomacy and war, activated when the first proves ineffective and the second excessive. Contrary to cinematic portrayals, intelligence activity is predominantly epistemic: it aims to enhance understanding of the world and provide policymakers with the information necessary to act with maximum awareness. Strictly speaking, intelligence is not merely an epistemic action but a shared epistemic activity conducted within a context of competition. In this sense, it performs interpretive functions regarding the environment, supports decision-making processes, and strategically intervenes against threats through the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information.

Such functions require cooperation among multiple actors operating across different domains, especially in contemporary contexts where threats are increasingly complex, interconnected, and not solely military. But most importantly, the epistemic competition compels secrecy in order to preserve informational advantage concerning both conventional and unconventional threats to national security, whereas extreme disclosure would be self-defeating. In this sense, secrecy is not merely a tactical choice but a fundamental condition for the effectiveness of intelligence, constituting a defining feature of its institutional character.

Secrecy, however, inherently conflicts with the principle of transparency that characterizes liberal democracies, meaning that intelligence agencies rely on an element that, by definition, limits accountability and challenges democratic representativeness. This constitutes a structural dilemma, unsolvable yet unavoidable, as relinquishing secrecy would compromise national security itself.

The culture of secrecy is particularly relevant in two areas: scholarship and justice, both intimately linked to institutional responsibility. Firstly, a true understanding of how intelligence services influence events is possible only through the study of their history, which in turn depends on the publication of archives. Analysis and resulting scholarship are therefore limited to what the State chooses to make accessible.

Secondly, while operations are often shielded from public scrutiny, officers must, at least in principle, remain morally accountable for their activity, which in turn needs to be actionable by political authorities. Parliament and the executive are therefore required to exercise rigorous oversight to ensure that intelligence activities conform to democratic principles.

The difficulty lies in the recurrent tendency of intelligence officers to withhold information from the government, on the grounds that its members are insufficiently trained to maintain secrecy and might jeopardize the security of ongoing operations. The lack of reliable information regarding the actions undertaken – and the motives behind them – generates a confused public opinion, unable to understand or justify secrecy.

As previously mentioned, much depends on the ambiguity surrounding the notion of national security, whose overly expansive interpretation has been at the root of many intelligence-related scandals. When invoked too broadly, the notion risks legitimising excessive classification and fostering an unnecessary culture of secrecy; conversely, a more limited use of secrecy would benefit the intelligence community itself, enhancing its credibility while saving time and resources otherwise devoted to classifying even the most innocuous information. Greater transparency would, in fact, minimize the fear of abuse, ineptitude, corruption and illegality within intelligence services, as officers would become accountable for their actions without the shield of secrecy to protect them from potential sanctions.

Moreover, within a liberal democracy, secrecy should represent the exception rather than the rule. The emphasis should rest on openness with limited exceptions, rather than on secrecy with limited openness. Any alternative interpretation of this principle of exceptionalism would verge on authoritarianism. National security must never serve as a pretext for abandoning the rule of law, which remains the cornerstone of any democratic system. If intelligence agencies do not derive their powers from the legal order, they cannot claim legitimacy and would be indistinguishable from any other clandestine or even terrorist organization.

The European oversight architecture provides a multi-layered mechanism, where primary control is entrusted to national parliaments while supranational oversight is largely exercised through human rights and data protection law. Strictly speaking, intelligence activities remain an area of national competence not formally transferred to the EU, where each State has its own system of parliamentary, judicial and executive oversight, shaped by the constitutional framework and historical context. At the same time, intergovernmental cooperation and European-level principles contribute indirectly to the supranational dimension, complementing and reinforcing national levels.

The core supranational forms of control are exercised by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), both of which have addressed intelligence practices in their jurisprudence. Additionally, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) publishes non-binding reports and recommendations that exert political and normative pressure to ensure the protection of fundamental rights.

A particularly illustrative case is Big Brother Watch and Others v. United Kingdom, in which the ECHR assessed the lawfulness of the United Kingdom's "secret surveillance regime including bulk interception of communications and intelligence sharing". The case concerned many surveillance activities carried out by the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the country's principal intelligence, security and cyber agency. In its 2021 judgement, the Court ruled that the system violated Articles 8 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, respectively protecting 'Respect for private life' and 'Freedom of expression'. Indeed, the framework lacked adequate safeguards, especially for journalistic sources. As a result, the United Kingdom was prompted to revise its surveillance legislation and introduce clearer procedures for the authorization, oversight, and use of intercepted data.

Beyond its national implications, the case established a jurisprudential milestone in Europe, reaffirming that, even in the realm of national security, intelligence activities must remain subject to the rule of law.

4. EUROPEAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. THE SNOWDEN CASE

The Big Brother Watch and Others applications were filed in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations, which shook public confidence in the balance between national security and individual privacy. In 2013, Snowden, a contractor for the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), disclosed a substantial collection of classified documents. These leaks exposed extensive surveillance programs carried out by the NSA and its international partners – including GCHQ's operation Tempora – revealing how large-scale data analysis had been systematically employed in the preceding years.

The NSA's operations formally took place within a framework of legality under two main conditions: first, they were legitimised by the 2008 Amendment to the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA); and second, they targeted individuals who had consented to the sharing of their data, naively self-waiving their privacy rights – often through the uncritical acceptance of online terms of service on platforms such as Facebook or Gmail.

Nevertheless, Snowden's disclosures sparked deep socio-political concerns and marked a turning point in the global debate on intelligence ethics. This watershed moment prompted governments worldwide to reconsider the regulation of their intelligence agencies in order to ensure a stronger protection of citizens' rights. At the European level, the most significant legal and institutional reforms include the 2016/279 and the 2016/680 European Directives. The current legislative framework is comprehensively outlined in "Surveillance by intelligence services: fundamental rights safeguards and remedies in the EU", a two-volumes study issued by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2017 and updated in 2023.

4.2. THE 2016/679 AND 2016/680 DIRECTIVES

The EU Directive 2016/679, commonly known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), represents the core legal framework governing data protection within the European Union. In force since May 2018, it regulates the processing of personal data by private entities and strengthens the protection of individuals' privacy rights across all Member States. The Regulation reinforces existing safeguards and enhances individuals' control over their personal information. The principles enshrined in the document are upheld by the European Data Protection Board (EDPB), the supervisory and coordination body established under Articles 68–76 to ensure uniform application throughout the Union. To this end, the EDPB issues guidelines and recommendations, such as the Guidelines 03/2022 on Dark Patterns in Social Media Platform Interfaces, which delve into the principle of transparency and provide practical guidance for preventing deceptive design practices that may compromise users' ability to provide free and informed consent. In this context, particular attention has also been devoted to the transparent design of website interfaces, especially regarding cookie banners.

However, as stated in its Article 2(2)(d), the GDPR does not apply to data processing carried out by competent authorities for purposes related to national security or law enforcement. This regulatory gap made it necessary to adopt a complementary instrument specifically addressing security operations: Directive (EU) 2016/680 "on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties". Still, by its very nature, the Law Enforcement Directive (LED), as it is commonly known, offers a more limited and flexible framework than a regulation, allowing Member States discretion in determining the means to achieve compliance. Moreover, transparency does not play the same central role as under the GDPR, where it constitutes a guiding principle. This is because the Directive concerns activities such as criminal investigations, video surveillance, and other forms of covert data analysis carried out by competent authorities in connection with criminal offences, where a lower degree of transparency is justified by operational requirements.

"[…] The LED does not explicitly require controllers to process personal data "in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject" (cf. Art. 5(1)(a) GDPR). The principle of "lawfulness, fairness and transparency" (Art. 5(1)(a) GDPR) has been narrowed down to a principle of lawfulness and fairness (Art. 4(1)(a) LED). The information to the data subject has to be provided not in a "concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible form" (Art. 12(1) GDPR) but in a "concise, intelligible and easily accessible form" (Art. 12(1) LED)."

Hence, while there exists an almost absolute legal prohibition against the deliberate killing of innocent individuals, no comparable restriction applies to intrusions into their privacy. Nevertheless, intelligence activities must be guided by normative principles capable of ethically justifying actions that inherently involve the violation of people's privacy rights. Indeed, the practice of bulk data access, particularly when supported by machine learning, inevitably entails the collection of information concerning innocent citizens, who constitute the vast majority of entries in intelligence databases despite being of no operational relevance.

Only a reasonable prospect of achieving legitimate security objectives could justify such practices, where the ethical risks and the harm caused are outweighed by the perceived gains. Any intrusion must therefore be proportionate, necessary and justified in relation to its intended purpose. In this regard, the principle of proportionality follows a purely rational logic: no actor would perform an action if the moral good of an end is outweighed by the cost of its mean. However, in the field of national security, the line between proportionate and disproportionate intelligence measures may be blurred, particularly when bulk data collection is involved. This ethical tension is partly mitigated by anonymisation techniques, forms of information sanitization designed to ensure that only the privacy rights of genuine suspects are substantively affected. By limiting the identifiability of most data subjects, these methods reduce the ethical and legal impact of mass surveillance while still enabling the operational use of sensitive information.

In conclusion, the Directive represents a crucial tool within the European legal framework: up to date, it is the major targeted effort to enact laws on data analysis in security activities, establishing a minimum set of safeguards in a domain otherwise characterised by structural secrecy.

4.3. THE PEGASUS PROJECT

It is noteworthy that the reforms introduced in the aftermath of Snowden's scandal failed to ensure reliable guarantees for the protection of privacy rights. In 2021, an investigation by Amnesty International, Forbidden Stories and eighteen partner organisations exposed the extensive use by governments worldwide of surveillance spyware against individuals who posed no legitimate security threat. Indeed, the targets included activists, opposition figures, journalists, politicians, law enforcement officials, diplomats, and lawyers. Shielded by broad invocations of national security, also European countries – meaning their intelligence services – were incriminated in the Pegasus allegations, having deployed malware tools far beyond legitimate criminal investigations but rather for political purposes, in a clear systematic abuse of such technology.

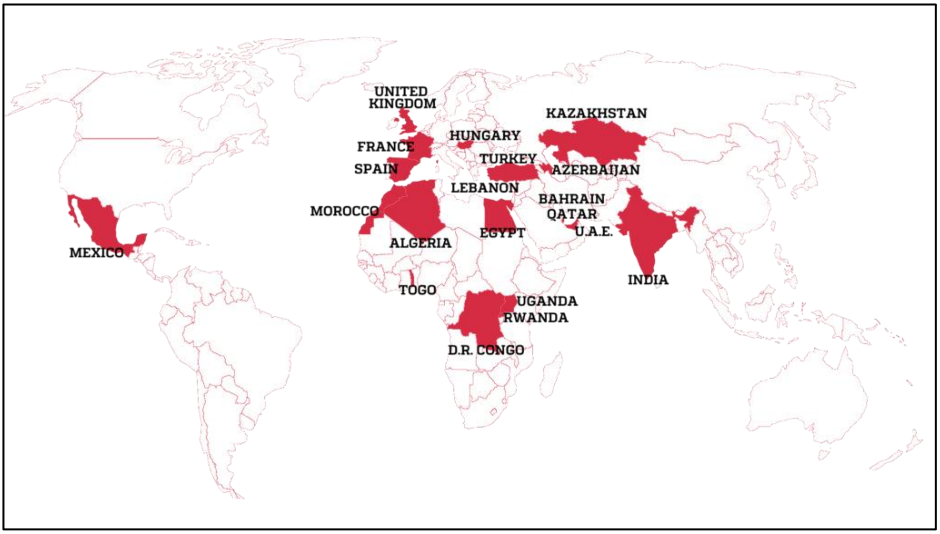

Illustration 1. Countries where journalists were selected as targets.
Source. P. Rueckert. July 2021. *Pegasus: The new global weapon for silencing journalists*. Forbidden stories. https://forbiddenstories.org/pegasus-the-new-global-weapon-for-silencing-journalists/

The disclosure primarily concerned Pegasus, an intrusion software developed by the Israeli firm NSO Group to hack into smartphones and provide full access to their data, including text messages, call interceptions, passwords, locations, microphone and camera recordings. Unlike mass surveillance, a spyware targets specific individuals in order to collect information without their knowledge; hence Pegasus has come to epitomize digital repression worldwide, particularly due to its implementation by authoritarian regimes. Yet, even within Europe – where the malware was reportedly acquired by at least fourteen government intelligence agencies – the scandal highlighted persistent structural vulnerabilities: the opacity surrounding espionage activities and the absence of robust mechanisms of public accountability.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Even the most recent history underscores the enduring ambiguity inherent in intelligence activities, where the reliance on operational secrecy continues to generate fear of potential abuses of power and contributes to widespread public distrust – especially as a result of scandals such as the Snowden revelations or the Pegasus affair. While secrecy is an indispensable component of intelligence work, it is nonetheless essential to identify strategies capable of legitimising it at the societal level, starting from the introduction of stronger legal safeguards and clearer procedural guarantees. In fact, many agencies claim to adhere to fundamental principles and to acknowledge the importance of individual rights and civil liberties, deliberately refraining from more intrusive or aggressive methods in the pursuit of information.

Yet a lingering sense of doubt regarding possible unlawful practices concealed behind institutional secrecy is likely to persist. However, this represents a – perhaps unavoidable – price that democratic societies must pay for the protection of national security. To this point, it is important to recall the unique role intelligence agencies play, both in shaping governmental decision-making and in ensuring the internal security of the State: they determine what action is best given the range of possibilities in a competitive environment related to threats. This function is indispensable and, in my view, cannot be relinquished – not even at the cost of certain individual freedoms. Nevertheless, there remains hope for enhanced accountability mechanisms, supported by a clearer and more robust legislative framework capable of defining, preventing, and sanctioning potential violations of professional and legal standards.

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TRACING THE PATH OF MILITARY TOURISM: WHAT IS IT, AND WHERE IS IT HEADING?

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_47979

ABSTRACT

In light of the Ukrainian War's impact, this study explores the surge in Military Tourism's popularity among both tourists and academics. The objective is to shed light on the evolving Military Tourism landscape and lay the groundwork for future research. The study's methodology combines a systematic literature review with a comprehensive synthesis of findings to offer a comprehensive overview of Military Tourism. The state-of-the-art in this field, based on the 78 papers, is developed using two frameworks: Theories, Contexts, and Methodologies (TCM) and Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcomes (ADO). Results suggest that the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Experience Behavioral Model are more popular, and that most studies are conducted with university students, tour guides, tourists, and museum directors. Military Tourism has personal and educational purposes. Family, childhood memories, and military experience all influence this type of tourism. Educational antecedents included learning about a war, storytelling, and patriotic education. This research offers insights for educators, policymakers, and military heritage site managers, as findings can inform curriculum development for military history and heritage programs, aligning them with tourists' interests and educational objectives. This study significantly enriches the field of Military Tourism research. By presenting a thorough review of research papers and synthesizing findings through the TCM and ADO frameworks, it offers a unique and valuable perspective on this emerging domain. It identifies dominant theoretical models, diverse research methodologies, and the personal and educational motivations underpinning Military Tourism.

Keywords: Military tourism; Battlefield tourism; War tourism; ADO Framework; TCM Framework; Special interest tourism (SIT).

RESUMO

À luz do impacto da Guerra da Ucrânia, este estudo explora o aumento da popularidade do Turismo Militar, tanto entre os turistas como no meio académico. O objetivo consiste em esclarecer o panorama em evolução do Turismo Militar e em estabelecer as bases para futuras investigações. A metodologia do estudo combina uma revisão sistemática da literatura com uma síntese abrangente dos resultados, de forma a oferecer uma visão global do Turismo Militar. O estado da arte neste domínio, com base em 78 artigos, é desenvolvido através de dois modelos analíticos: Theories, Contexts, and Methodologies (TCM) e Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcomes (ADO). Os resultados sugerem que a Teoria do Comportamento Planeado e o Modelo Comportamental da Experiência são os mais utilizados, e que a maioria dos estudos é realizada com estudantes universitários, guias turísticos, turistas e diretores de museus. O Turismo Militar apresenta finalidades pessoais e educativas. A família, as memórias de infância e a experiência militar influenciam este tipo de turismo. Entre os antecedentes educativos destacam-se a aprendizagem sobre a guerra, a narrativa histórica e a educação patriótica. Esta investigação oferece contributos relevantes para educadores, decisores políticos e gestores de locais de património militar, uma vez que os resultados podem informar o desenvolvimento curricular de programas de história militar e património, alinhando-os com os interesses dos turistas e com os objetivos educativos. Este estudo enriquece significativamente o campo de investigação do Turismo Militar. Ao apresentar uma revisão aprofundada da literatura e ao sintetizar os resultados através dos modelos TCM e ADO, oferece uma perspetiva única e valiosa sobre este domínio emergente. Identifica os modelos teóricos dominantes, as diversas metodologias de investigação e as motivações pessoais e educativas que sustentam o Turismo Militar.

Palavras-chave: Turismo militar; Turismo de campos de batalha; Turismo de guerra; Modelo ADO; Modelo TCM; Turismo de interesse especial (SIT).

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the tourism and travel business has grown, boosting academic Interest in numerous tourism categories worldwide. Military tourism emerged from the industry's recent Interest in historical events and heritage. Military tourism, often known as war tourism, battlefield tourism, or armament tourism, is a novel and uncommon form of tourism (Williams et al., 2023). This specialized style of tourism attracts tourists seeking unique experiences and a deeper understanding of culture, history, and conflict. The main activities are touring battlefields, bunkers, fortifications, military museums, and war re-enactments and military-themed shows (Williams, et al. 2023; Zienkiewicz et al., 2021; Venter, 2017; Hall, Basarin, & Lockstone-Binney, 2010).

Military tourism, heritage tourism, and dark tourism share intricate connections that reflect the multifaceted nature of tourism experiences related to historical events and conflicts. Many military locations have cultural and historical significance, making them heritage sites, and demonstrating the overlap between military tourism and heritage tourism. Battlefields, forts, and military cemeteries serve as archives of common history, allowing visitors to feel a connection to the past. These locations support the preservation of cultural heritage (Yu & Xu, 2019), facilitate ritualized experiences (Yan et al., 2024), and serve as memorials to military incidents. Furthermore, the intersection of military tourism with dark tourism underscores the complex nature of these travel experiences.

Specific military sites, such as concentration camps and war memorials remembering massive crimes, are frequently associated with dark tourism (Wang et al., 2021). In such instances, visitors engage with places that evoke somber reflections on human suffering and historical tragedies.

A review of the literature on military tourism is warranted, given its unique intersection with dark tourism and history. By examining the pertinent literature, researchers can elucidate the distinctive characteristics, motivations, and ethical considerations of military tourism, thereby enabling a nuanced understanding of how it diverges from or converges with heritage and dark tourism. Thus, this study aims to provide a comprehensive view of the academic landscape by meticulously compiling and assessing relevant papers using two well-established research methodologies. This study uses the Theories, Contexts, and Methods (TCM) framework to synthesize theoretical frameworks and models, contextual aspects, and methodological techniques in military tourism studies. To supplement, the Antecedents, Decisions, and Outcomes (ADO) framework paradigm examines the characteristics that predispose tourists to military tourism venues, their decision-making processes, their motives, and their experiences. While TCM offers information on "how do we know?", the ADO provides information on "what do we know?", allowing us to answer the question "where should we be heading?" (research agenda) (Kim & So, 2023; Khatri & Duggal, 2022). The present paper aims to answer the following three research questions:

Although the Military Tourism phenomenon has been studied since the 1990s, there has been a lack of comprehensive research that gathers all the information in one single article. Chen and Tsai (2019) and Çakar (2020) have studied visitor motivations, leaving open the question of how demographics, such as education, age, nationality, or gender, influenced interpretations of war tourism.

Furthermore, existing literature has largely overlooked the evolution of motivations and antecedents associated with military tourism, as well as the broader contextual factors that have shaped its development over time. This lack of longitudinal and conceptual engagement limits our understanding of how military tourism has emerged and transformed within academic discourse. In response to this gap, the present study seeks to explore the historical and theoretical trajectory of military tourism by addressing the following research question:

RQ1: *How has the concept of military tourism evolved within academic literature, particularly about its antecedents, decision-making processes, and outcomes?*

By integrating identified research gaps with leading contributions in the field, future scholars can more effectively explore critical sub-domains within military tourism. We argue that such an approach not only illuminates the historical development and emerging patterns in the literature but also provides a roadmap for future scholarly inquiry. Accordingly, the present study aims to deepen our understanding by addressing the following research question:

RQ2: *What are the emerging trends and prospective research directions in the field of military tourism?*

Previous studies on military tourism have predominantly focused on European contexts (e.g., Alabau-Montoya & Ruiz-Molina, 2020; Bornarel et al., 2021), often overlooking other geographical regions, such as Africa and Latin America, and their distinct cultural perspectives. This geographic and cultural imbalance limits the field's generalizability and richness. We propose that future research can offer valuable insights and methodological innovations—such as experimental designs and systematic literature reviews—that will benefit scholars and practitioners alike. To this end, the present study seeks to address the following research question:

RQ3: *How has the scientific literature on military tourism evolved in terms of conceptual development, geographic and cultural context, and research methodologies?*

To provide a thorough understanding of military tourism, this literature review synthesizes the diverse perspectives and methodologies in previous research, incorporating insights from disciplines such as tourism studies, history, sociology, and cultural studies. Researchers, decision-makers, and industry stakeholders seeking to understand the complex aspects of military tourism and its wider ramifications may greatly benefit from multidisciplinary expertise. Policymakers, destination managers, and tourism-sector experts can also benefit from understanding the academic discourse on military tourism. They receive evidence-based insights from it that can inform destination design, decision-making, and the development of ethical and sustainable tourism practices for military historical sites. Finally:

RQ4: *By examining the intricacies of military tourism and its effects on historical heritage and Interest in darker facets of the past, this research advances our understanding of the subject.*

To improve our understanding of this evolving field, pinpoint research gaps, integrate multidisciplinary knowledge, and support well-informed decision-making in both academia and the travel industry, it is appropriate to conduct a literature review on military tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. MILITARY TOURISM

Military tourism is a relatively recent and unusual form of tourism that has also been referred to as war tourism, battlefield tourism, and even armament tourism. Although there is not yet an official definition of this concept, Zienkiewicz et al. (2021) identified military tourism as a typical tourist visual, cultural, and material consumption program that involves visiting historical sites that are related to military conflict, including historic battlefields, military factories, military museums, and those with extensive collections of military artefacts, fortifications, and areas that are connected with famous military leaders (Linenthal, 1991; Reeves et al., 2016).

Additionally, tourists who participate in this type of tourism attend military-themed shows and events, such as military fan conventions, military picnics, and re-enactments of historical moments or battles. Military tourism can attract a vast range of visitors with different levels of Interest, motivations, and needs. Visiting military sites is usually related to tourists' particular Interest in war history, military engineering and technology, battlefield archaeology, or performing/watching historical re-enactments (Zienkiewicz et al., 2021; Venter, 2017). However, visitors to a battlefield might have other motivations, not necessarily directly connected to the battle's history or military matters, such as seeking experiences that blend cultural education and pure entertainment with the overall desire to learn (Hall, Basarin & Lockstone-Binney, 2010).

Although the attraction of tourists to battlefields and military sites started taking place after the Battle of Waterloo (1815), the first studies on military tourism were undertaken only at the beginning of the 21st century, being defined as a subset of heritage tourism and referred to as "military heritage tourism" by Venter (2017). Heritage tourism is "a subgroup of tourism, in which the main motivation for visiting a site is based on the place's heritage characteristics according to the tourist's perceptions of their heritage" (Poria et al., 2001). This form of tourism can have significant economic benefits for host communities, as visitors spend money on lodging, food, and souvenirs. However, there are specific concerns about the environmental and social impacts of heritage tourism, as well as the need to balance economic development with the preservation of cultural heritage sites (Hall, 2010). Cultural heritage protection is essential for the survival of heritage tourist destinations (Wang et al., 2024).

Experiences in heritage tourism can take many different forms in the developing world, from trips to museums and historic sites to cultural festivals and events (Wang et al., 2024). Heritage tourism also exists in monuments, homes, farms, cathedrals, castles, and archaeological ruins. Any conflicts and the battlefields on which they occurred are also considered to be part of heritage tourism (Light, 2017).

Additionally, Wang et al. (2021) and Stone (2012 stated that military tourism can also be considered as a subset of the darker, more sinister sort of tourism known as "dark tourism," which includes visiting places like battlefields and amusement parks with a focus on death, suffering, or the macabre. Dark Tourism, referred to as the dark side of tourism (Stone, 2012), was first introduced as "thanatourism" in 1996. Seaton (1996) defined it as travelling to see enactments, sites of mass or individual deaths, as well as memorials, internment sites, and material evidence of symbolic representations of death. Only in the 21st century was the term "dark tourism" introduced by the authors Lennon and Foley (2000), describing it as "the phenomenon which encompasses the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites". Stone (2012) reinforces this idea by defining dark tourism as visiting attractions or sites where atrocities, death, and disasters have occurred. According to Miles (2014), the most visited sites and areas included when participating in dark tourism are battlefields, murder and massacre sites, places where celebrities or important people have died, graveyards and internment sites, events, memorials, exhibitions featuring relics, and, lastly, reconstruction of death.

2.1. SOME SIMILARITIES BETWEEN MILITARY, HERITAGE, AND DARK TOURISM

Military tourism, heritage tourism, and dark tourism share similarities, as illustrated in Figure 1. Despite their nuances, these concepts share common themes and characteristics. Notably, all three involve a profound engagement with the past, driven by a shared desire to glean insights into historical events and their enduring societal impacts, as noted by Stone (2012). This mutual Interest in historical exploration forms a foundational bond among these diverse forms of tourism.

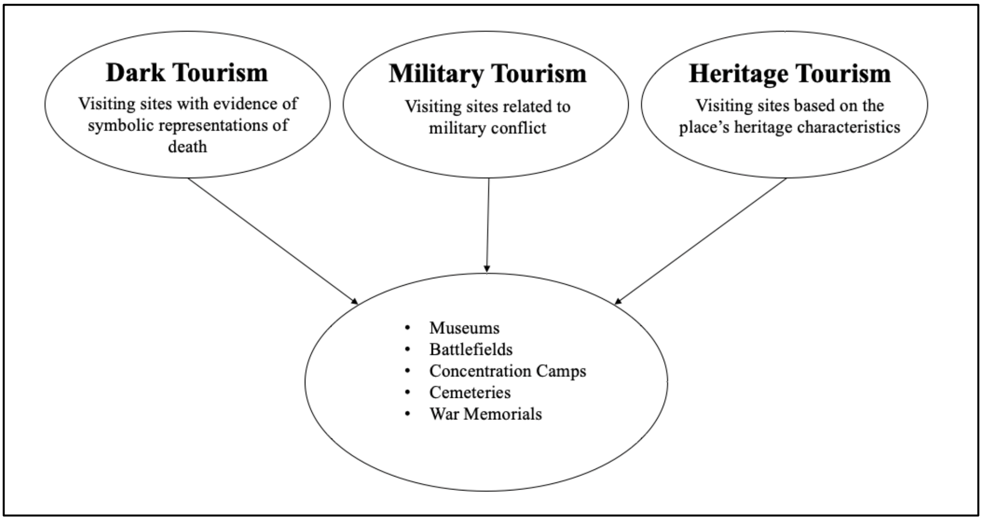

Figure 1. Similarities between Dark, Military, and Heritage Tourism.
Source. Author's elaboration based on the literature.

Moreover, the economic potential inherent in military, heritage, and dark tourism becomes apparent, underscoring their role as drivers of local prosperity. Through the establishment of museums, monuments, and other attractions, these tourism forms contribute substantially to the economic well-being of host communities, aligning with Hall's (2010) observations. This financial dimension further emphasizes the interconnected nature of military, heritage, and dark tourism, portraying them not merely as explorations of the past but as integral components of sustainable community development.

Military tourism often blurs the boundaries with heritage and dark tourism. Noteworthy examples include military sites, which, beyond their role in military tourism, are also recognized as heritage sites for their rich cultural and historical significance. Locations like battlefields, forts, and military cemeteries exemplify this overlap, embodying both military and heritage dimensions. Similarly, specific military sites, such as concentration camps and war memorials, cross into the area of dark tourism, commemorating profound human tragedies. These overlapping narratives further emphasize the interconnected nature of these tourism forms.

In summation, while military tourism, heritage tourism, and dark tourism maintain their distinct identities, their interlocking nature emphasizes a shared purpose. Understanding these connections goes beyond acknowledging their economic contributions; it enables us to recognize their collective potential to explore, commemorate, and learn from the past. However, this recognition comes with a caveat: the interplay of these tourism forms also reveals complex ethical and social issues. The exploration of the past, it appears, is not without its challenges and calls for a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationships within the tourism industry. Although extensive studies have investigated heritage tourism, as exemplified by the work of Zhang et al. (2023), and dark tourism, as illuminated by Poornima et al. (2023), a noticeable gap remains in military tourism. Despite the growing significance of military tourism within the broader context of special interest tourism (SIT), there is a distinct scarcity of comprehensive reviews that examine the unique characteristics of military tourists.

This dearth of literature presents a critical knowledge gap, hindering a thorough understanding of the motivations, behaviors, and preferences of individuals engaged in military tourism. As such, a dedicated exploration of military tourism and its associated SIT features is imperative to fill this void and contribute a nuanced perspective to the broader discourse on specialized forms of tourism.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

Systematic reviewers were provided with reporting guidelines using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) approach (Page et al., 2021). Identification, filtering, eligibility, and inclusion are the four essential processes in this process (Page et al., 2021). For better visual comprehension, we combined the filtering and eligibility phases in this study and designated the combined process as screening, as illustrated in Figure 2.

PRISMA's first step is to identify all relevant items and the database for the goal. Scopus was the database of choice to create the bibliographic base. Scopus is the largest citation and abstract database of peer-reviewed literature and includes an excellent, high-quality filtering criterion, making the sample and results more reliable (Kim & So, 2023). To search, keywords related to military tourism, both explicitly and implicitly, were carefully defined: "military tourism," "heritage tourism," "war tourism," "armament tourism," "dark tourism," and "battlefield tourism." The initial search returned 497 elements because we included a broader set of keywords. The search considered all publications published until June 2024 (inclusive).

The trial process is the second step in the PRISMA protocol, in which 155 articles were removed because they were conference papers or books, as it was not possible to access their peer review, leaving only manuscripts classified as "articles" and "reviews" for inclusion. By focusing on original research articles and reviews that undergo rigorous peer review, the coding protocol aims to maintain consistency and reliability in the database. In addition to this filtering, 30 articles were deleted because they were not written in English (languages included Spanish (7), Croatian (5), French (5), and Polish (4), with others at lower frequency). Lastly, one publication was not accessible and could not be evaluated. At the end of the process, the study identified 311 papers that followed this stage. In the third and final step of PRISMA, an eligibility evaluation is performed; the grounds for including or excluding specific publications are outlined in Figure 2. Three experienced coders analyzed the abstracts from each paper to determine if any articles did not meet the stated requirements, thereby selecting only documents that adhered to the study's objective.

If the abstract of an article did not make it clear what the study was about, the article was read to better understand it. The reasons for exclusion from a database include topics related to warfare, other military-related issues (excluding tourism), nationalism, political field trips, and aspects of the pre- and post-war periods unrelated to tourism. After completing this step, the final sample contained 78 qualifying articles.

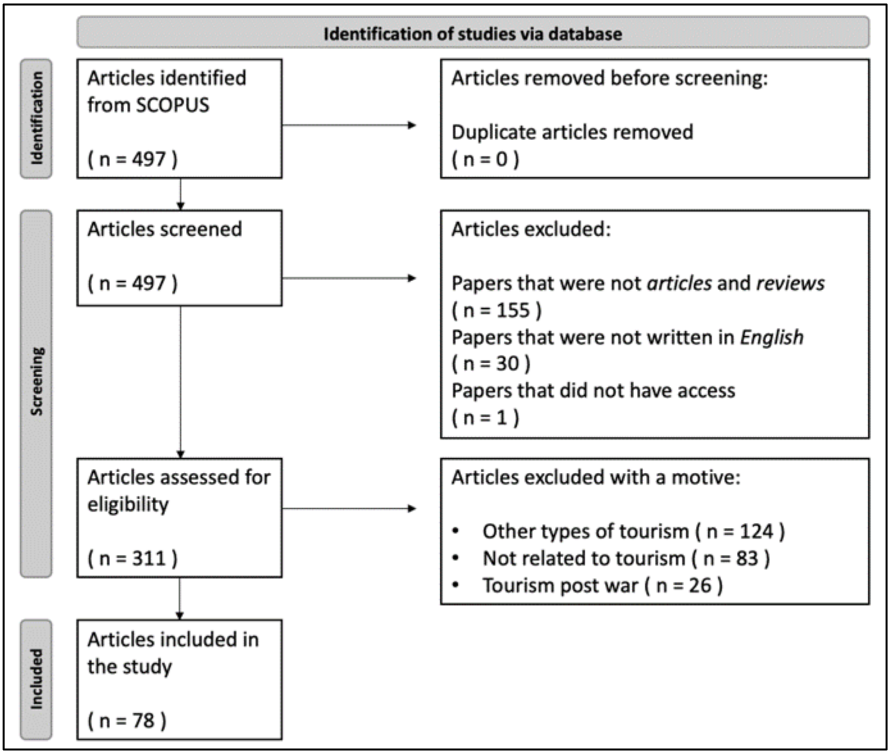

Figure 2. PRISMA analysis of Military Tourism studies.

3.2. BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

A variety of tools have been developed for bibliometric analysis to examine how academic literature changes over time (Rickly, 2022; Jiménez, Carmona, & Moral, 2024). It aids in identifying authors' publications, publication years, the most prominent and relevant journals, the countries of publication, and the conclusions reached (Ivanka et al., 2023; Kim & So, 2023). Because it accounts for all components of written content, bibliometric analysis can help an author identify new patterns in article and journal performance and gaps to be addressed in future studies (Kim & So, 2023).

3.3. STRUCTURE ORGANIZATION METHODS

More researchers have recently stated the need to have an organizing framework that provides the study with the necessary support for the construction of an enriched systematic review (Kim & So, 2023; Lim et al, 2021). In general, studies that incorporate one or more frameworks in their research are considered more comprehensive, as they offer a more robust structure.

This study adopted a framework method to provide a more thorough review of military tourism, using the TCM framework to clarify information from previous literature and offer fresh perspectives on the subject. This study also employs the ADO framework, which organizes earlier academic content to reveal linkages through antecedents, decisions, and outcomes. The TCM and ADO frameworks are both designed to aid in and produce a clearer perspective of the existing information. By combining the two frameworks mentioned, we allow them to complement each other. Although TCM is an excellent framework as it organizes the groundwork of past research (and gives future research the necessary tools to make discoveries), ADO adds engaging content in a structured assembly (Kim & So, 2023; Lim et al., 2021).

4. RESULTS

4.1. DESCRIPTIVE AND BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

This descriptive statistics section presents the sample publication trends over the years, the regions in which they have been published, the number of journals included, the most cited articles, and the most influential authors.

4.1.1. PUBLICATION TRENDS

The earliest publication included in this sample related to military tourism dates to 1996. Nevertheless, it is essential to note that other publications may have been excluded based on sample selection criteria. Research was restricted until 2011, and approximately half of the publications were available between 2018 and 2024. Publications then peaked in 2020, when 11 of the 78 eligible articles were published.

A frequency analysis of the number of papers published in each journal was performed to identify the key journals in which articles on military tourism were published and thus deemed most influential for this study. Of the 46 journals that publish articles about military tourism, 72 of the 78 eligible studies were published in these journals: the Journal of Heritage Tourism has published the most (9), with the Annals of Tourism Research (5) and Tourism Geographies (4) following right after. The other journals identified in this study have published at least one paper regarding the theme. It is essential to note, however, that although the Journal of

Heritage Tourism has the most published articles, the Annals of Tourism Research has the most citations. See details in Table 1.

Ranking	Journal	Nº of articles	Nº of citations
1	Journal of Heritage Tourism	9	277
2	Annals of Tourism Research	5	375
3	Tourism Geographies	4	125

Table 1. Military Tourism articles in the journal.

4.1.2. CITATION ANALYSIS

A citation analysis can explain the significance of a particular piece by counting its citations. In this study, we selected the top five most-cited papers by analyzing citations in the Scopus database. Visiting the Trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism (Dunkley et al., 2011) had the most citations (183), followed by papers with 165, 160, 155, and 71 citations. This information is presented in Table 2.

Ranking	Year	Authors	Title	Journal	No. of Citations
1	2011	Dunkley, R., Morgan, N., & Westwood, S.	*Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism*	Tourism Management	183
2	1998	Smith, V. L.	*War and tourism: An American ethnography*	Annals of Tourism Research	165
3	2014	Hartmann, R.	*Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: New directions in contemporary tourism research*	Journal of Heritage Tourism	160
4	1996	Crang, M.	*Magic kingdom or a quixotic quest for authenticity?*	Annals of Tourism Research	155
5	2014	Miles, S.	*Battlefield sites as dark tourism attractions: An analysis of experience*	Journal of Heritage Tourism	71

Table 2. Military Tourism's most cited articles.

Of the 78 qualifying papers, 37 were cited fewer than 10 times, accounting for approximately 46% of the total. Among articles with no citations, 14 of the 80 have none in the specific database, accounting for about 18% of the sample.

Ranking	Name	No. of Articles	No. of Citations
1	Hall, J.	3	62
2	Lockstone-Binney, L.	3	62
3	Hartmann, R.	2	161
4	Miles, S.	2	89
5	Lee, C.-K.	2	73

Table 3. Military Tourism's most influential authors.

Table 3 shows the three most influential authors for this study, based on data from Scopus. To understand the most influential authors, we considered each author's Scopus citation count and the number of published documents. According to the table, the most influential authors based on the number of articles published are J. Hall and L. Lockstone-Binney both have three published articles. However, they only count 62 citations each. The most influential authors, ranked by the number of citations, are R. Hartmann, with 161 citations and two published articles, followed by S. Miles with 89 citations and C.-K. Lee with 73 citations.

4.2. TCM FRAMEWORK

First developed by Paul et al. (2017), the TCM framework maps each letter of the acronym to a segment of the framework itself. The letter "T" stands for theories, which are supposed to embody the perspectives that scholars rely on to guide their research. "C" stands for contexts, which indicate the circumstances that arise when examining a specific topic, and "M" stands for methodologies or empirical evidence used. Figure 3 illustrates the TCM framework for military tourism based on the 78 articles of the sample.

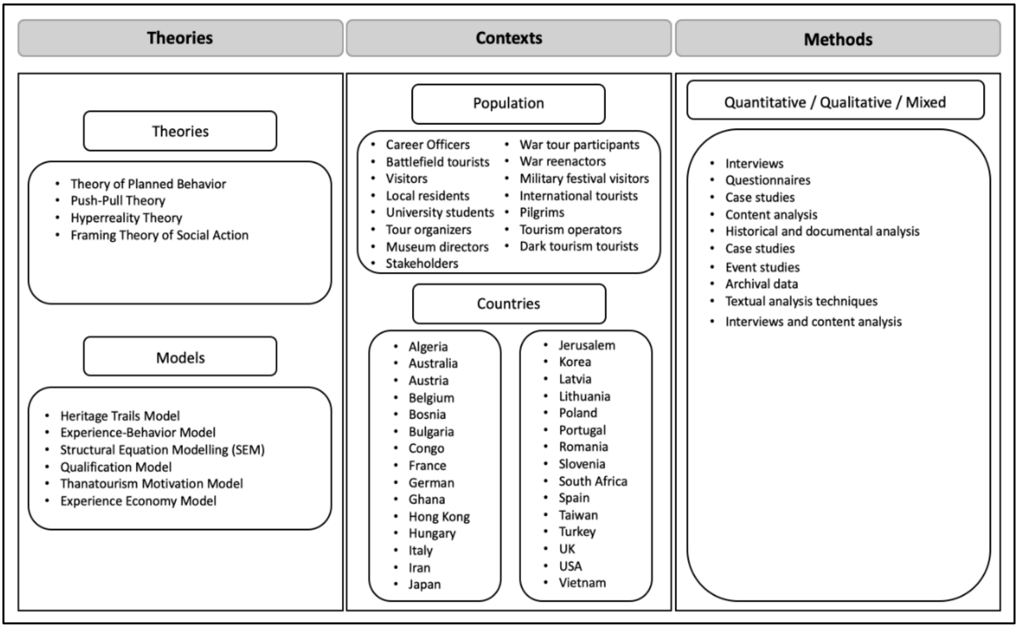

Figure 3. TCM framework for Military Tourism studies.
Source: Author's manual coding.

4.2.1. THEORIES

As seen in Figure 3, the articles regarding military tourism applied several models and theories, many of which helped to understand the behavior and motivations of tourists who engage in this sort of tourism. The sample included ten models and theories in total. The Theory of Planned Behavior, which was utilized in

Understanding opinions on War in dark tourism: a mixed-method approach (Juan et al., 2020), is among the most influential theories. The authors of this study used this theory to analyze the behavioral intentions of tourists who visit sites associated with their views on War, as it "confirmed that personality and individual-centric variables might influence tourist behavior" (Juan et al., 2020).

An example of a model used in the sample articles is the Heritage Trails Model, applied by Miles (2017). This concept helps determine whether historical tourism routes were organic or purposefully constructed, meaning that the routes were either pre-existing from wartime or expressly created for tourism purposes to commemorate and remember these war heritage locations.

4.2.2. CONTEXTS

In the published works analyzed for this study, Poland emerged as the country with the most significant focus, as exemplified by Zienkiewicz et al. (2022), alongside South Africa and Turkey. This can be justified by the number of war sites in each location and the profound impact these events had on the world, such as the Battle of Gallipoli in Turkey and the Second World War between 1939 and 1945.

When it comes to the main population in these studies, the focus seemed to lie on university students, battlefield tourists (see, for example, Lemelin et al., 2016), and tourism operators. These categories were identified as the primary targets and those with the most Interest in participating in military tourism-related events.

4.2.3. METHODS

Several methodologies have been followed in the sampled articles. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies have been applied. Textual analysis techniques based on internet reviews were used for quantitative methods (see, for example, Bornarel et al., 2021). On the other hand, the most used qualitative approaches include interviews (e.g., Brown & Ibarra, 2018) and case studies (e.g., Chen & Tsai, 2019). In the mixed approach, both quantitative and qualitative methods are used (as in Mirisaee & Ahmad, 2018).

4.3. ADO FRAMEWORK

Established by Paul and Benito (2018), the ADO framework clarifies the motives for engaging in specific conduct, the types of behavioral performance and, if applicable, non-performance, and the evaluations that follow. Hereinafter, the letter "A" represents the antecedents, which are internal or external factors that influence a decision; "D" represents decisions made individually or in groups; and the letter "O" represents the outcomes or consequences of those decisions (Lim et al., 2021). All three categories are interconnected and influence one another (Paul & Benito, 2018).

In this study, the antecedents are the reasons why a tourist would engage in military tourism, the decision is the intention to go, learn, and engage in this type of tourism, and the outcomes are both the positive and negative impacts that military tourism has on the people who participate in it, as well as the destinations and locations. Figure 4 illustrates the ADO framework based on the sample collected.

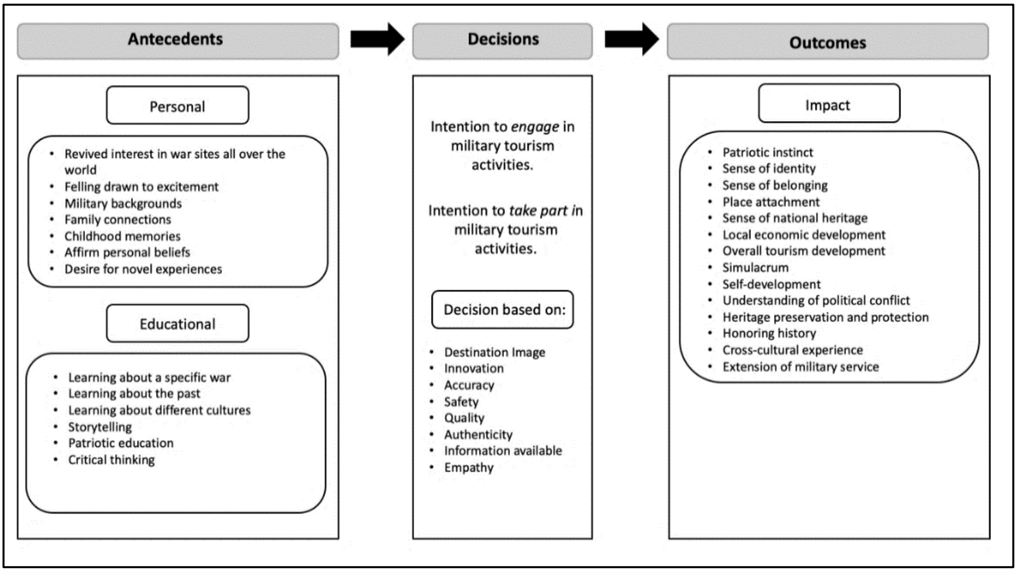

Figure 4. ADO framework for Military Tourism studies.
Source: Author's manual coding.

4.3.1. ANTECEDENTS

Based on the reviewed papers, there are numerous motivations for engaging in military tourism. To improve framework organization, those reasons were divided into two categories, as shown in Figure 4: "personal" motivations, tied to individual motives, and "educational" motivations, which include all reasons related to learning more about the military. Previous research on the reasons and meanings of battlefield tourism found that people participate in this type of tourism due to family connections and childhood memories. Some tourists visit war memorials to honor, recall, and express their love for those who died in war (Dunkley et al., 2011). It serves to reconnect and pay respect. Other travelers cite their childhood memories to justify their participation in military tourism. Some people view war locations and battlefields as opportunities to relive their early Interest in soldiers and recall the times they used to reconstruct battles. This fascination then becomes a justification for learning about ancient wars, leading to an interest in military tourism (Dunkley et al., 2011). According to a study on why tourists visit the battlefields on the Gallipoli Peninsula, education and knowledge of the history are key factors in attracting visitors to "places where tragic and often violent incidents have taken place" (Çakar, 2020).

4.3.2. DECISIONS

Following the understanding of the antecedents that influence decision-making, it is critical to discover the criteria that affect people's decisions to participate in a specific type of military tourism event.

The desire to join in or participate in these activities is often founded on accuracy. Hartmann and Su (2021) concluded in a study on tourism to the Lu Gou Qiao' Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese

Aggression that the accuracy of the presentation of historical events during the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 leaves visitors highly motivated to learn about the past.

Another important consideration is the use of technology. According to Alabau-Montoya and Ruiz-Molina's study Enhancing visitor experience with war heritage tourism through information and communication technologies: evidence from Spanish Civil War museums and sites (2020), the use of technology, such as images, music, augmented reality, and virtual reality, is thought to contribute to the production of vivid experiences, as well as the development of a sense of understanding and immersion in history. After evaluating TripAdvisor comments from visitors to war-related exhibitions that used ICT solutions, it was found that they considered them worthy, impressive, and empathetic, and that they would likely promote electronic word-of-mouth (Alabau-Montoya & Ruiz-Molina, 2020; de Lurdes Calisto & Sarkar, 2024). Overall, military museums should leverage technology to differentiate themselves and attract more visitors.

4.3.3. OUTCOMES

Regarding the outcomes derived from the ADO framework, the articles identified several beneficial impacts. For example, the study conducted by Irimiás (2014) on the management of Great War heritage sites in Trentino concluded that preserving these sites enabled future generations to learn more about the past, as they lacked direct memories of these events. As more people visit military heritage sites, there is a greater need to conserve them for future generations.

Proos and Hattingh's study (2020) presents another example of the outcomes, highlighting the economic development that military tourism can bring, particularly to developing countries. In this study on the development of the South African War Battlefield Route through the locations of various battles in the area, "the development of tourism, particularly tourism routes, can contribute to the economic development of local areas."

4.4. WHERE IS MILITARY TOURISM'S FUTURE RESEARCH HEADING?

There are a few directions future study could take to further our understanding of this specialized field, informed by the military tourism literature published to date and the TCM and ADO frameworks. Based on the future research proposed from the most recent articles under review from 2018 to 2024 (see Fig. 5), the lexical analysis was used with the help of Leximancer V5.0 to extract common patterns for future research:

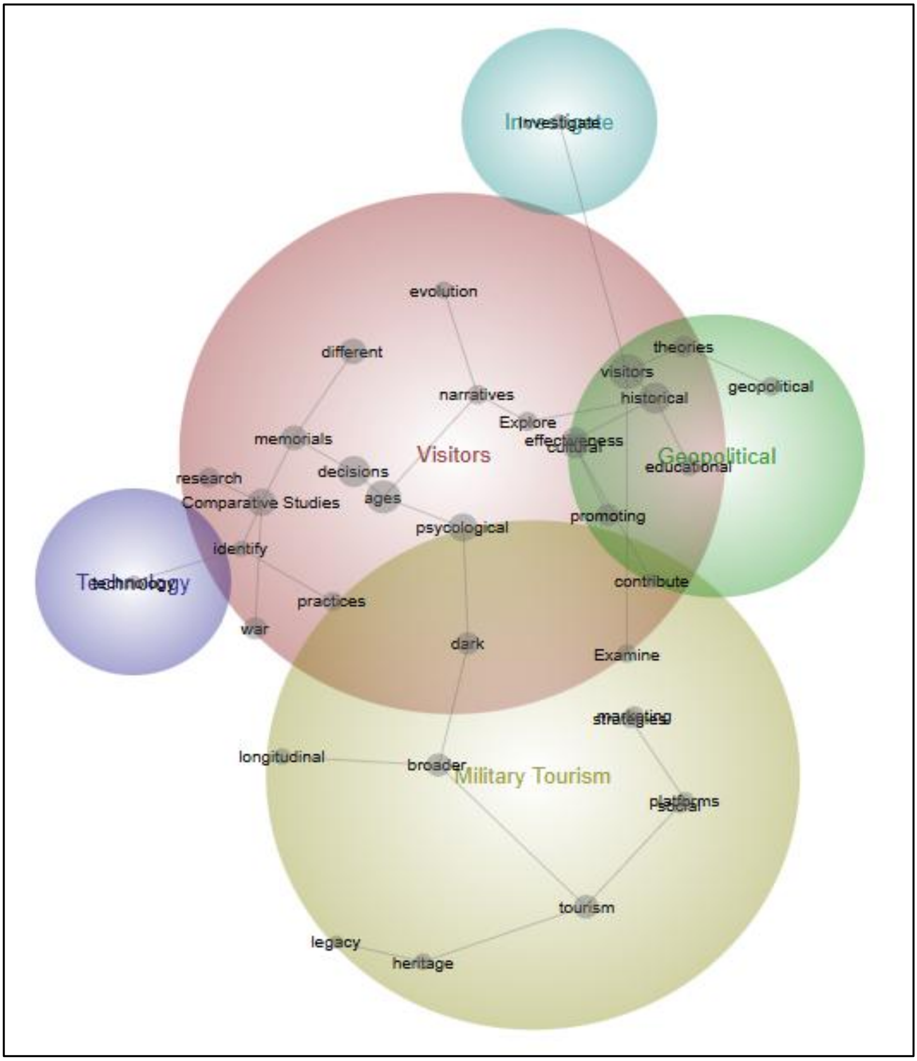

Figure 5. Future trend research based on the review articles 2018-2024.
Source. Leximancer outputs.

Proposed future research directions by relevance of hits (The Hits column denotes the number of text blocks in the articles associated with the Theme, Leximancer User Guide 5.0) are as follows:

Visitors in military tourism (66 Hits)

- Analyze how different visitor segments (e.g., age groups and cultural backgrounds) make decisions regarding military tourism and explore the specific factors that cater to the preferences of diverse audiences (Wang & Liu, 2021).
- Analyze the psychological aspects of antecedents and examine how personal values, emotions, and psychological connections influence the decision to participate in military tourism (O' Connor, 2021).

Military tourism (31 Hits)

- Investigate cross-cultural variations in motivations for military tourism and explore how cultural factors influence individuals' decisions to engage in this type of tourism. (Wang & Liu, 2021).
- Investigate the environmental impact of increased tourist footfall at military heritage sites and assess sustainable practices and policies to balance tourism growth with site preservation (Lopez & Garcia, 2020).
- Explore the social and cultural outcomes of military tourism, such as the impact on local communities and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (Dupont, 2019; Hernandez & Rossi, 2018).

Geopolitical aspects (16 Hits)

- Broaden the scope to include a more varied range of contexts in addition to Poland, South Africa, and Turkey. One way to achieve this would be to compare military tourist experiences across various geopolitical contexts to create a worldwide comparison (Kovac, 2020).
- Investigate how the magnitude and impact of historical events on a particular location influence military tourism and analyze the role of historical significance in attracting tourists (Williams, 2021; Kovac, 2020).

Investigation areas (6 Hits)

- The integration of multiple theories should be explored to provide a thorough understanding of the behavior of tourists in military tourism. Examine how different theories can enhance one another's analysis of intentions and actions and identify and assess emerging theories that have not been extensively applied in military tourism research but may be valuable to the field (O'Connor, 2021).
- Conduct longitudinal studies to track changes in tourist attitudes and behaviors over time, as well as to examine the evolution of military tourism trends and the factors driving these changes (O'Connor, 2021).

Technology and military tourism (3 Hits)

- Examine how digital ethnography can be used to comprehend military tourism-related online communities and conversations and examine how opinions are shaped and decisions taken (Lopez & Garcia, 2020).
- Further explore the role of technology in shaping decisions by assessing the impact of emerging technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and immersive experiences on visitor engagement (O'Connor, 2021).

Ultimately, a comprehensive analysis of military tourism, heritage tourism, and dark tourism offers valuable insights for investigating the inherent dynamics. Studies in this field could explore the reasons and emotional aspects of visitors' holistic experiences at locations that blend military history, heritage preservation, and dark tourism. Scholars can help with efficient tourist management and planning by evaluating the effects on heritage conservation and implementing creative narrative interpretation techniques (Noivo et al., 2022). A thorough understanding can be achieved by examining the roles of technology, community involvement, cross-cultural perspectives, and ethical considerations in integrating various themes. Furthermore, investigating how military history, heritage, and dark tourism intersect in educational outreach and programming might illuminate their possibilities.

This study aims to expand the current body of knowledge by introducing new theoretical perspectives, examining diverse contexts, employing cutting-edge methodologies, and addressing emerging challenges in military tourism.

5. DISCUSSION

For this study, 78 studies related to military tourism were identified. The bibliometric analysis conducted helped to analyze the growth and Interest in this industry. The publication trends over time revealed that around half of the studies were published during the last 5 years. The finding aligns with Zienkiewicz et al.'s (2021) study, which found a steady increase in military tourism, with military tourists becoming more common in the overall tourist sector. The literature on military tourism is still young, but it has been developing over the past few decades, so we expect additional studies in the coming years. Poland has been designated as a country where military tourism is gaining significant importance in the country's tourism sector, as many tourists visit this area to see historic monuments, sites, and military bases, according to Zienkiewicz et al. (2021). This information aligns with the study's finding that, along with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, Poland is one of the nations where most publications on military tourism are published (based on the authors' affiliation region).

To answer RQ1 and RQ2, this study categorized the information using the TCM and ADO frameworks, which have been used in tourist studies, after the bibliometric analysis (Kim & So, 2023; Lim et al., 2021). Their use provided a more thorough assessment and made it easier to review the sampled articles' outputs. Based on TCM, it was verified that military tourism researchers employed the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Experience Behavioral Model to understand tourists' behavior. They used tourism-specific models and theories, such as the Heritage Trails Model and the Thanatourism Motivation Model. This framework also helped us conclude that military tourism studies targeted "university students", "tourism operators", "battlefield tourists", and "museum directors" in terms of population, and Poland, Germany, South Africa, and the United States of America for their extensive list of battles and wars that shaped world history. Previous researchers employed quantitative, qualitative, and hybrid methods to follow up and draw crucial results. This study found that interviews, case studies, and questionnaires were the most common methods.

Finally, the ADO framework provided information to answer RQ3, identifying the antecedents (reasons why a person may participate in military tourism), decisions (what makes them choose one military event or site over another), and outcomes (what are the impacts of this type of tourism) in previous literature regarding this topic. As we identified several reasons why someone would want to participate in military tourism, two categories were created: personal and educational.

Our review concluded that tourists participate in this type of tourism mainly due to "family connections", "childhood memories", and "military backgrounds". However, the "revived interest in war sites all over the world", "feeling drawn to excitement", "desire for novel experiences", and "affirming personal beliefs" are additional personal reasons identified in literature. Moreover, educational antecedents were also identified as mentioned previously, such as "learning about a specific war, the past, or different cultures", "storytelling", to get a "patriotic education", and to perfect "critical thinking".

Additionally, the ADO framework enables us to identify the key criteria that influence tourists' decisions on which activity or destination to choose when engaging in military tourism (that is, the "decisions"). The sampled articles refer to aspects such as "destination image", "innovation", "accuracy", "safety", "quality", "authenticity", "information available", and "empathy" as of extreme importance for visitors when making the final decision of going to a specific military site or activity. Lastly, the use of this framework showed us that the impacts are closely related to the antecedents, such as the growth of a "patriotic instinct", "self-development", and a better "sense of belonging, identity, and national heritage".

Other vital consequences found in prior research include "local economic development," "overall tourism development," and "heritage preservation and protection".

Finally, within the context of the TCM and ADO frameworks, the suggested research avenues provide a path forward for expanding our knowledge of military tourism and answer the question "where is it heading?" To enhance our understanding of this specialized field, researchers can make valuable contributions by promoting the integration of multiple theories, expanding the contextual scope, and examining the psychological and cross-cultural aspects of tourist behavior. As advocated in the recent study of Alabau-Montoya and Ruiz-Molina (2020), insights from historical events, technological advancements, and the environmental and social effects of military tourism can be used to improve tourism management and guide sustainable practices. Furthermore, the suggested emphasis on longitudinal studies makes it easier to recognize the dynamic character of visitor attitudes over time and track changing trends. The answer to RQ4 the research directions that have been suggested highlight the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and encourage scholars to investigate the intersections of military history, heritage preservation, and dark tourism, thereby enriching the existing literature and contributing valuable insights to the broader field of historical and cultural tourism, Çakar (2020) and Dunkley at al., 2011 also found that that motivations and tourists experiences in the context of dark tourism are similar to military tourism.

6. CONCLUSION

This study serves as a guide for future scholars to conduct more targeted research, contributing to a better understanding of military tourism and its future direction. Military tourism had not yet been the focus of bibliometric studies, which had already been successful in exploring related subjects like dark tourism (Fauzi, 2023). By precisely outlining the key distinctions between military tourism, dark tourism, and heritage tourism, we were able to determine which publications fell into the military tourism category.

Synthesizing systematic literature review analysis with the TCM and ADO frameworks makes it easier for scholars to understand what has been studied and what needs further development. For example, essential models and theories were discovered in military tourism-related articles. However, other theories may be relevant and can help explain certain behaviors in this sector. For example, the Place Attachment Theory explains how people become attached to a specific location they have visited, and it was used in Dwyer et al.'s (2019) study. Although it was not identified in the papers selected for this study, this theory can easily be associated with military tourism, as "place attachment" is one of the outcomes when participating in this type of tourism.

In addition, the findings of this study contribute to academic knowledge of military tourism by illuminating factors such as motivations, impacts, and behaviors associated with this form of tourism, thereby extending the work of Bornarel and colleagues (2021).

Finally, the comparison of different applications of TCM and ADO frameworks provides insights not only for the military tourism industry but also in the general tourism industry. For example, the TCM used by Lim et al. (2021) to analyze home sharing is like the present study. For example, "case studies" and "content analysis" were two of the most frequently employed methodologies in Lim et al. (2021) and the present study, demonstrating that these techniques are most appropriate for the tourism industry. Similarly, identifying theories and/or methodologies applied in other areas of research may pinpoint other research opportunities. In particular, the theme analysis, simulated experiments, and single experiments were all listed as methodologies in Lim et al. (2021), but not herein. Hence, military tourism researchers may import such methods from other areas.

Limiting the search to peer-reviewed articles in English may have excluded conference articles, books, and non-English-language publications that may contain significant research contributions.

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A REVIEW OF THE PORTUGUESE STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE: THE RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48006

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the structural reconfigurations of the Strategic Concept of National Defence (SCND), analysing the influence of the dynamics of a volatile international system and the way in which Portuguese foreign policy adapts to these dynamics. A qualitative, interpretative methodology was adopted, based on a review of the literature and a comparative documentary analysis between the 2013 SCND and the 2023 Major Options of the SCND (MOSCND), supplemented by the study of official speeches and interviews. The first part provides a historical contextualisation of Portuguese foreign policy, with particular attention to priority areas and the planning of means of action within the international system, highlighting the evolution of core priorities. Subsequently, the current changes in the international landscape are analysed, demonstrating the need for a new approach in the face of emerging threats. The analysis identifies the main concerns for Portugal, highlighting the need for a rigorous new SCND to address structural weaknesses. It is concluded that, although Portugal maintains its traditional pillars (European, Atlantic and Lusophone), the effectiveness of the new Strategic Concept depends on overcoming weaknesses in the national strategic culture, greater investment in the Armed Forces and greater mobilisation of civil society around security and defence issues.

Keywords: Portuguese Foreign Policy; National Defence; Strategic Concept of National Defence; International Security.

RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda as reconfigurações estruturais do Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional (CEDN), analisando a influência das dinâmicas de um sistema internacional volátil e a forma como a política externa portuguesa se adapta a essas dinâmicas. Foi adotada uma metodologia qualitativa e interpretativa, assente na revisão da literatura e na análise documental comparativa entre o CEDN de 2013 e as Grandes Opções do CEDN de 2023 (GOCEDN), complementada pelo estudo de discursos oficiais e entrevistas. Numa primeira parte, procede-se à contextualização histórica da política externa portuguesa, com especial atenção às áreas prioritárias e ao planeamento dos meios de ação no sistema internacional, destacando a evolução das prioridades centrais. Posteriormente, analisam-se as transformações atuais do panorama internacional, evidenciando a necessidade de uma nova abordagem face às ameaças emergentes. A análise identifica as principais preocupações para Portugal, salientando a necessidade de um novo CEDN rigoroso, capaz de responder às fragilidades estruturais existentes. Conclui-se que, embora Portugal mantenha os seus pilares tradicionais — europeu, atlântico e lusófono —, a eficácia do novo Conceito Estratégico depende da superação das fragilidades da cultura estratégica nacional, de um maior investimento nas Forças Armadas e de uma maior mobilização da sociedade civil em torno das questões de segurança e defesa.

Palavras-chave: Política Externa Portuguesa; Defesa Nacional; Conceito Estratégico de Defesa Nacional; Segurança Internacional.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the international landscape has been marked by high instability, characterised by the emergence of new threats and priorities, necessitating the rapid adaptation of national strategies in the face of major emerging powers. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a reconfiguration has become evident, with direct impacts on the formulation of states' foreign policies. The new dynamics of the international system have defined the domains of security and defence as priorities, making rapid adaptation to new challenges and demands imperative (Rodrigues, 2021; NATO, 2025).

The Portuguese situation, influenced by this external context and, domestically, by structural and political weaknesses, highlights the urgency of reviewing the priorities, potential and vulnerabilities of the Strategic Concept. Within this framework, this article seeks to answer the following question: How have transformations in the international system shaped the priorities and operating model of Portuguese foreign policy?

This article analyses how Portuguese foreign policy is simultaneously influenced by changes in the international system, as reflected in changes to the concept of National Defence. Furthermore, it aims to assess the potential and limitations of Portuguese foreign policy in the face of the new dynamics of the international system.

2. METHODOLOGY

This article adopts a qualitative approach, focused on an interpretative analysis of the evolution of Portuguese foreign policy in the context of changes in the international system. The research is based on a documentary analysis and a review of the literature, enabling an in-depth understanding of the evolution of the Portuguese SCND.

In the first phase, a review of the relevant academic literature was conducted, incorporating theoretical contributions in the field of the evolution of the concept of security, changes in the international system and Portuguese foreign policy. The aim of this phase was to establish the conceptual framework for the research. In a second phase, a comparative documentary analysis of various sources was carried out, focusing primarily on the 2013 SCND and the recent proposal to revise the 2023 MOSCND. This analysis aimed to gain an understanding of the continuity and changes in national strategic priorities. In a third phase, open-ended interviews were conducted with Major-General João Vieira Borges and Professor Licínia Simão, which allowed for a deeper exploration of the topics already analysed.

Furthermore, the research begins with a historical contextualisation of Portuguese foreign policy, moving on to an analysis of contemporary transformations in the international system and concluding with an analysis of the implications encompassed by the MOSCND.

3. THE EVOLUTION OF PORTUGUESE FOREIGN POLICY: POST-1974 TO 2013

The revolution of 25 April 1974 marked a turning point in Portugal's role within the international system, leading to a redefinition of its priorities and foreign policy stance. Portugal's democratic transition took place against an international backdrop characterised by the divergence between the world's major powers, the US and the USSR, and the emergence of the European Economic Community (Rezola, M. 2016). Against this backdrop, three crucial pillars were established in Portuguese foreign policy: rapprochement with the European continent through the consolidation of diplomatic ties with the main European states; the building of diplomatic relations with Portuguese-speaking African states; and the deepening of the Atlantic link, which was imperative for security and defence (Magone et al., 2006). With the end of the Colonial War, the authoritarian and imperial past also came to a close, giving way to a transformation into an integrated and consolidated democracy within the European sphere. The so-called 'European option', according to Nuno Severiano Teixeira, constitutes the main innovation, representing both an economic and strategic opportunity and bringing new dimensions to defence (Teixeira, 2004).

Gradually, Portuguese foreign policy came to be based on Portugal's geographical position on the western semi-periphery, focusing on the European and

Atlantic axes, both of which remain imperatives today (Teixeira, 2004). This was also the case in the establishment and strengthening of diplomatic and cooperative relations, particularly with Brazil, Spain and Portuguese-speaking countries. In this regard, the CPLP Project was implemented, which enhanced the projection and reinforcement of Portugal's distinctiveness, becoming a platform for dialogue and trade between the hemispheres (Galito, 2019).

In the field of security and defence, there has been a shift from the traditional defensive approach to a cooperative and shared security approach. National Defence came to be understood as an extension of diplomacy, with the Portuguese Armed Forces operating in various theatres of operations, within the scope of peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations, notably in Africa and the former Yugoslavia. This national military presence reaffirmed Portugal's participation in the international peace and security agenda and its commitment to a new role within the international system. This commitment was also demonstrated through Portugal's involvement in the independence process of East Timor, which highlighted Portugal's role as part of the global governance system (Magone, 2006). NATO proved to be a platform for promoting strategic-military multilateralism in the Atlantic axis, as well as serving as a means for the modernisation of the national Armed Forces (Galito, 2019).

With the end of the Cold War, it was understood that a period of peace and stability was beginning, leading to defence issues taking a back seat in favour of cooperation and diplomacy. This scenario proved to be out of step with reality at the start of the 21st century, with the direct attack on the United States on 11 September 2001. An international landscape emerged characterised by non-state threats, notably transnational terrorist organisations, and the invocation of the principle of collective defence within international alliances. The reorientation of US foreign policy towards a new, more aggressive and interventionist national security strategy had a significant impact on relations with Portugal. Faced with the American ambition to intervene in Iraq, this gave rise to strong tensions and differences within the national political context regarding Portugal's position on the American intention. Portugal ultimately chose to support its ally, as evidenced by the Lajes Summit in 2003, which marked the starting point for the future invasion of Iraq. Furthermore, the series of Russian cyberattacks against Estonia in 2007 presented a new priority scenario for defence and the need to reconfigure defence strategies to provide more robust responses to new hybrid threats (Cabrita, 2019; Nunes, 2022).

Gradually, the international situation deteriorated, marked by events such as the 2008 financial crisis and the escalation of regional instability in the Middle East and North Africa. Consequently, the 2013 SCND reflected this instability and insecurity, highlighting the need for operational cooperation and a strengthening of its contribution to international security, particularly in the context of the commitments arising from its alliances and membership of international organisations (Dias, 2021). This Strategic Concept was characterised by a more comprehensive and broad-based approach in terms of the challenges, priorities and opportunities for Portuguese foreign policy. In this regard, the involvement of the Portuguese Armed Forces in various theatres of operations – notably the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, Operation Sophia (the European Union's military operation EUNAVFOR MED SOPHIA), and participation in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), have cemented recognition of their proficiency and ability to adapt to diverse operational demands (Dias, 2021). Furthermore, its involvement in regions such as the Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa represents the convergence of national and shared interests and the deepening of cooperation within NATO and the EU. In this context, integration into initiatives such as the 5+5 Initiative, which is an intergovernmental forum for cooperation in the Western Mediterranean, has proved fundamental for participation in joint military exercises and the acquisition of specialised skills. These elements have been crucial for asserting the country's presence on the world stage and its contribution to the promotion of international peace and security.

At the same time, the impact of the economic and financial crisis led to a greater emphasis on diplomacy and economic cooperation between 2011 and 2014, as well as the implementation of fiscal austerity measures. In this context, the

Portuguese economy was particularly constrained due to the intervention of three institutions: the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank. Consequently, Portuguese foreign policy has been marked by the emergence of economic diplomacy as a priority for Portuguese diplomatic missions. Thus, embassies and consulates have taken on the role of economic agents to promote Portuguese companies, products and brands abroad, with the aim of internationalising the Portuguese economy. The aim is to boost the activities of economic agents and stimulate foreign direct investment, with the central objective of increasing employment and external competitiveness and, consequently, revitalising the national economy (Sousa, 2019). In this regard, priority was given to restoring national credibility abroad, primarily through the country's economic improvement and the capacity and initiative of Portuguese diplomacy in attracting foreign investment (Lopes, 2017).

4. MAJOR OPTIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Over the last decade, there has been a marked increase in instability and insecurity within the international system, with repercussions at the domestic level. This highlights the substantial internationalisation of conflicts and the intensification of geopolitical divergences, with increasing complexity, involving both regional and international actors, who are exploited to achieve national objectives (Rodrigues, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the growing interdependence between states and the need for investment in critical infrastructure and crisis management. The resurgence of Russian expansionist ambitions with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 served to demonstrate to Europe the imperative need for European states to rethink their security and defence strategies in the face of a classic interstate war, as well as the need for the European Union's strategic autonomy in the fields of security and defence, as highlighted by Professor Licínia Simão in an interview (personal communication, 13 May 2025).

Similarly, as evidenced in the latest SCND and the MOSCND, there is a continuing need to strengthen national capabilities in critical infrastructure, particularly in the energy, water, food and cybersecurity sectors, ensuring security that is developed across all sectors of society (Licínia Simão, personal communication, 13 May 2025).

Furthermore, the stance of the new Trump administration in the United States has demonstrated a redefinition of its traditional partnerships and a new position within the international system, with repercussions primarily on its actions within NATO. In this regard, Order No. 9986/2022 established the Council for the Review of the National Defence Strategic Concept, in order to adapt priorities and modes of operation in the face of new global challenges and dynamics (Presidency of the

Council of Ministers & Ministry of National Defence, 2022). The draft MOSCND was drawn up, setting out structural changes in terms of priorities, threats and the main means of action and investment (Assembly of the Republic, 2023b). At present, this draft has been approved for submission to the Assembly of the Republic for debate. This document outlines clear structural changes compared to previous SCNDs, presenting a different and more structured vision in light of the current international system.

In light of this new global environment, a cohesive and forward-looking strategy is imperative, one that is prepared to respond to new threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Borges, 2006). With this in mind, and to avoid delays in updating the SCND, it is proposed that the review be carried out every five years, as well as the creation of a monitoring process to ensure the implementation of strategic guidelines across the various sectoral government areas (Assembly of the Republic, 2023b).

Given the context of instability described above, the document demonstrates an understanding of the imperative need to strengthen a global strategic vision, reinforcing Portugal's previous commitments as a contributor to and promoter of the international security architecture. It highlighted the need for European states to take greater responsibility for the development of their security and defence, in order to respond to growing threats. In this regard, the document highlights the need for greater investment in and modernisation of the Armed Forces to ensure integrated and enhanced action across the operational domains of land, sea, air, cyberspace and space. It also highlights the importance of strengthening national strategic autonomy by fostering the defence economy and national scientific and technological capabilities. In general, the new MOSCND proposal is based on reinforcing the commitments and priority areas already present in the SCND, currently in force, but with a greater commitment to developing better strategic planning and promoting investment in Armed Forces capable of ensuring national integrity and sovereignty, as well as cooperating to ensure peace and stability in the international system (Assembly of the Republic, 2023b).

5. AREAS OF INVESTMENT

The Armed Forces are an active element of a state's defence policy, and there is currently a clear need to develop the Portuguese military structure in order to ensure a continuous response to the new challenges posed by a highly complex and unstable international system (Bernardino, 2019). To achieve this goal, it is imperative to reassess human, material and financial resources. To this end, the current government has committed to increasing investment to 2% of GDP and focusing on the development of the defence economy. In March 2026, Defence Minister Nuno Melo confirmed compliance with this target set at the NATO Summit in The Hague, in accordance with the criteria validated by the organisation. However, data from the NATO Secretary General's 2025 Annual Report indicate that only 21.2% of this investment was directed towards expenditure on equipment, whilst 45.24% was concentrated on personnel costs, including military and civilian personnel costs and pensions. Despite the increase in defence investment, Portugal remains below the average compared to the budgetary efforts of the other allies, both within NATO and the EU, with regard to the modernisation and strengthening of military capability, highlighting the need for a greater budgetary allocation to ensure greater readiness in the face of new demands and challenges (NATO, 2025).

The Military Programming Law No. 1/2023 represents one of the approaches aimed at modernising, operationalising and sustaining the armed forces system, which seeks to address certain shortcomings by planning for increased public investment in armaments and equipment. This law provides for substantial expenditure, with a particular focus on the Navy and Air Force, which are imperative given Portugal's Atlantic position (Assembly of the Republic, 2023a).

Furthermore, it focuses on boosting investment in the national economy within the defence industry, through support for innovation and development and the creation of skilled jobs, in order to enhance Portuguese competitiveness and contribute to the European effort towards strategic autonomy (Assembly of the Republic, 2023a). According to Nuno Melo, since the end of 2023 there has been a

40% growth in the defence industry, ensuring an increase in skilled employment. Additionally, in line with the Army's 'Land Force 2045' programme, significant investment has been allocated towards the modernisation of the Portuguese Army.

With regard to human resources in the Armed Forces, Lieutenant-General PilAv Alfredo Pereira da Cruz highlights shortcomings that require special attention, particularly in terms of recruitment due to a lack of incentives and interest among young people in military life, and the retention within the military institution of specialist staff, sergeants and officers (Cruz, 2004).

To achieve this dominance in the defence and security sector, an informed and mobilised Portuguese civil society is necessary to support this strengthening of military capabilities. This element is essential for the implementation and viability of the national strategy, so as to operationalise potential capabilities, converting them into tangible and functional resources to guide a specific objective (Reis, 2013).

Thus, the institutionalisation of a new culture and structures for debate and strategic consultation has proved to be an asset, through the promotion of platforms for discussion and decision-making on planning in terms of risks and opportunities in relevant areas (Reis, 2013).

At the same time, there are significant gaps in Portuguese strategic culture, as noted by Bruno Cardoso Reis (2019): "We lack the capacity for analysis, planning and coordination of all state resources to anticipate or respond to attacks, crises and emergencies”. This gap was also highlighted by the Strategic Concept Review Cycle, which proposes the creation of a National Security Council (NSC) as a solution. As emphasised by Major-General João Vieira Borges in an interview (personal communication, 2 May 2025), “The current Superior Council of National Defence is confined to the area of National Defence, alongside the functioning of other advisory bodies in the security sector, but reporting to the Prime Minister rather than the President of the Republic (Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces). The CSN would facilitate the integration of information and the coordination of actions, particularly at the level of decision-making, with considerable advantages in terms of security and defence”. In this way, an integrated and realistic view of the essential elements for national security could be achieved.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this article leads to the conclusion that the formulation of the SCND, and consequently of foreign policy, has been profoundly shaped by structural changes in the international system, reflecting a continuous adaptation to an environment of instability. This research faces certain limitations; notably, the analysis focuses on the MOSCND approved by the Council of Ministers in 2023, which is still under consideration for parliamentary debate, making it impossible to assess concrete results of its implementation. Furthermore, the qualitative approach based on documentary analysis, literature review and official discourses limits the analysis to some extent to the institutional perspective of the State.

Since the Revolution of 25 April 1974, Portugal has consolidated a model of international integration based on three structural pillars: European, Atlantic and Lusophone. The evolution of the SCND thus highlights the strengthening of Portugal's commitment as a provider of international security and stability through the participation of its Armed Forces in NATO, UN and EU missions, taking on an assertive stance and capitalising on opportunities and the political returns from its contribution.

However, the current dynamics of the international system, in particular the increase in conflicts and threats, have highlighted the imperative need for a strategic reconfiguration of the 2013 SCND. The 2023 MOSCND reflect this need, introducing a more comprehensive approach to contemporary threats in areas such as cyberspace and national resilience, whilst also providing an action plan to address existing gaps within the Armed Forces framework to ensure internal and external integrity and security.

In this regard, investment programmes have been established within the Armed Forces and the defence industry to address some of these gaps and contribute to the European effort to achieve a degree of strategic autonomy. However, certain limitations persist that constrain the effective implementation and scope of a coherent strategy, notably a lack of commitment from civil society and certain shortcomings in Portugal's strategic culture.

It is concluded that in these times of high complexity and instability in the international system, it is vital to establish a SCND that reflects the dynamics of the international system and aligns strategic objectives with available resources, anticipating challenges and opportunities. Thus, to achieve this, a structural strengthening of defence investment is required, along with the promotion of strategic culture and the mobilisation of civil society; all these elements are crucial for guaranteeing national security and affirming Portugal's position in the international system.

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O PAPEL COMPLEMENTAR DA ONU E DA OTAN NA GARANTIA DA SEGURANÇA HUMANA

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48007

ABSTRACT

The concept of human security represents a paradigm shift by refocusing protection on individuals and addressing the multidimensional threats they face. This article examines the concept of human security in the twenty-first century, emphasising the complementary roles of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in safeguarding human rights. Using a qualitative and comparative methodology, the analysis was structured around five categories: institutional mandate, normative framework, protection of civilians, gender perspective, and the Responsibility to Protect. The findings reveal complementarities between the United Nations' normative legitimacy and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's operational robustness, despite differing organisational cultures. The study concludes that enhanced cooperation is essential to operationalise people-centred security and to strengthen multilateral global governance.

Keywords: Human Security; Human Rights; United Nations; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Global Governance.

RESUMO

O conceito de segurança humana representa uma mudança paradigmática ao recentrar a proteção do indivíduo contra ameaças multidimensionais. Este artigo analisa o conceito segurança humana no século XXI, enfatizando o papel complementar da Organização das Nações Unidas e da Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte na proteção de direitos humanos. Através de uma metodologia qualitativa e comparativa, a análise estruturou-se em cinco categorias: mandato institucional, enquadramento normativo, proteção de civis, perspetiva de género e responsabilidade de proteger. Os resultados revelam complementaridades entre a legitimidade normativa da Organização das Nações Unidas e a robustez operacional da Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte, apesar de diferenças de cultura organizacional. Conclui-se que a cooperação reforçada é essencial para operacionalizar uma segurança centrada nas pessoas e fortalecer a governação global multilateral.

Palavras-chave: Segurança Humana; Direitos Humanos; ONU; Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte; Governação Global.

1. INTRODUÇÃO

O conceito de segurança humana emergiu no período pós-Guerra Fria como uma resposta crítica às limitações das abordagens de segurança estritamente centradas no Estado. A persistência de conflitos intraestatais, crises humanitárias, terrorismo e ameaças globais como pandemias demonstrou que a integridade territorial não garante, por si só, a segurança individual. Esta mudança paradigmática desloca a análise para o indivíduo, enfatizando a proteção da vida, da dignidade e dos direitos fundamentais, articulando as dimensões da "liberdade face ao medo" e da "liberdade face à necessidade". A preservação destes valores — segurança, liberdade e bem-estar — alicerçam a atuação de organizações internacionais. Este estudo analisa como a Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU) e a Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte (OTAN) incorporam os princípios da segurança humana nas suas doutrinas e de que forma os seus papéis se complementam na proteção dos direitos humanos. O objetivo central consiste em comparar as abordagens, destacando a legitimidade normativa da ONU e a capacidade operacional da OTAN. Metodologicamente, adota-se uma abordagem qualitativa de natureza descritiva, analítica e comparativa, baseada em fontes primárias, entre 1994 e 2024, selecionadas pela sua credibilidade e pertinência, conforme exposto na tabela 1.

Fontes	Tipo de Documentos
Documentos Internacionais (Cartas, Tratados, Resoluções)	Carta das Nações Unidas; Tratado do Atlântico Norte; Resoluções do Conselho de Segurança da ONU
Políticas Internacionais	Política de Proteção de Civis da ONU (2015, revista em 2023), a Política de Proteção de Civis da OTAN (2016).
Relatórios Internacionais	Desenvolvimento Humano de 1994 do Programa da ONU para o Desenvolvimento; Comissão Internacional sobre Intervenção e Soberania Estatal (2001) e o Doutrina de Segurança Humana para a Europa (2004).
Investigações, Trabalhos e Pesquisas dos demais autores	Citados no texto e descritos das referências

Tabela 1. Documentos utilizados.
Fonte: Elaboração dos autores.

A análise estruturou-se em cinco categorias, apresentadas na tabela 2, que são a estrutura de análise à ONU e à OTAN, permitindo a comparação analítica.

Categoria	Descrição
Mandato institucional	Base jurídica e objetivos formais que orientam a atuação de uma organização no domínio da segurança humana (Carta da ONU, 1945, art^{os}. 1.º e 55.º; Tratado do Atlântico Norte, 1949, art. 1.º).
Enquadramento normativo	Conjunto de princípios, normas e doutrinas que orientam a incorporação da segurança humana na ação institucional (Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento, 1994, pp. 22–26).
Proteção de civis	Princípio e conjunto de políticas destinadas a prevenir, minimizar e responder a danos causados a populações civis em contextos de conflito armado (Nações Unidas, 2015, pp. 7–9).
Perspetiva de género	Integração das dimensões de género na prevenção de conflitos, manutenção da paz e reconstrução pós-conflito, reconhecendo vulnerabilidades específicas e o papel das mulheres como agentes de paz (Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas, 2000, pp. 1–2).
Responsabilidade de Proteger	Princípio segundo o qual os Estados têm a responsabilidade primária de proteger as suas populações de crimes atrozes, cabendo à comunidade internacional agir quando essa proteção falha (ONU, 2005, paras. 138–139).

Tabela 2. Categorias em análise.
Fonte: Elaboração dos autores.

O estudo organiza-se nas seguintes secções: introdução; enquadramento conceptual; relação entre a ONU e a segurança humana; relação entre a OTAN e a segurança humana; a análise e a discussão dos resultados; as notas conclusivas e limitações.

2. DO CONCEITO DE SEGURANÇA HUMANA À GOVERNAÇÃO GLOBAL

A segurança humana oferece um quadro conceptual que integra o conjunto dos direitos humanos civis, políticos, económicos, sociais e culturais, colocando-os no centro da agenda da segurança (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007; Newman, 2010). Neste sentido, a proteção dos indivíduos deixa de ser apenas um objetivo normativo e passa a constituir um elemento estruturante das políticas de segurança.

Como sublinha Mary Robinson (2003), a segurança humana constitui um quadro de direitos humanos para a ação, ao traduzir princípios jurídicos e morais em orientações práticas para a prevenção da violência e proteção das populações. Esta ligação conceptual encontra um antecedente fundamental na Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos, de 1948, cuja afirmação de um mundo em que os seres humanos sejam livres do medo e da miséria antecipa claramente os pilares centrais da segurança humana (PNUD, 1994). Ao centrar-se na dignidade e no valor intrínseco da pessoa humana, a segurança humana reforça a ideia de que a proteção dos direitos humanos não constitui apenas um imperativo ético, mas é também um elemento essencial para a promoção da paz sustentável e da segurança em contextos nacionais e internacionais (Paris, 2001; Kaldor, 2007).

Ao percorrermos a história deste conceito observamos que, durante diferentes períodos, a segurança humana é abordada como uma ferramenta útil a todas as pessoas, sendo que o principal objetivo é a proteção do indivíduo e de todos os seus direitos sem exceção, percorrendo também a proteção das comunidades contra ameaças externas como a guerra e ameaças como a fome e a doença.

A amplitude do conceito proposto pelo Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD) gerou um intenso debate académico. Autores como Paris (2001) criticaram a sua ambiguidade, argumentando que a definição era tão vasta que corria o risco de se tornar num conceito demasiado vago para orientar a investigação ou a formulação de políticas. Esta crítica deu origem a uma distinção entre uma abordagem ampla, associada à "liberdade face à necessidade" e ao desenvolvimento, e uma abordagem restrita, direcionada para a "liberdade face ao medo" e para a proteção contra a violência organizada. Outros Autores como Mack (2005) defenderam a visão restrita, argumentando que proporciona maior clareza analítica e utilidade política. Já autores como Kaldor (2007) defenderam uma visão mais abrangente, centrada na proteção dos indivíduos, em contextos de conflito e de violência organizada, propondo uma "segurança humana a partir de baixo" que combina a proteção dos direitos humanos com a participação da sociedade civil. Esta perspetiva, influenciou a redação do Relatório de Barcelona sobre uma Doutrina de Segurança Humana para a Europa, em 2004, que defendia que a segurança europeia deveria basear-se na primazia dos direitos humanos, no multilateralismo e no uso da força apenas como último recurso e de forma proporcional, combinando intervenção militar com operações de construção da paz civil (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, 2004).

A segurança humana representa uma rutura conceptual face às abordagens tradicionais de segurança centradas exclusivamente no Estado, ao deslocar o foco da análise para a proteção dos indivíduos. A sua definição foi apresentada no Relatório do Desenvolvimento Humano de 1994, que entende a segurança humana como a garantia da "liberdade face ao medo" e da "liberdade face à necessidade". A primeira refere-se à proteção dos indivíduos contra a violência direta, incluindo conflitos armados, repressão pelo Estado e criminalidade organizada, enquanto a segunda diz respeito à proteção contra ameaças ao bem-estar humano, como a fome, a pobreza extrema e a doença. Uma das principais inovações deste conceito reside na sua natureza holística e multidimensional, assente nas sete dimensões da segurança humana: a económica, a alimentar, a sanitária, a ambiental, a pessoal, a comunitária e a política. Simultaneamente, estas dimensões refletem a diversidade de ameaças que afetam a vida e a dignidade das pessoas (PNUD, 1994). Assim, esta abordagem permite compreender a segurança humana como um fenómeno interdependente ancorado na articulação de fatores económicos, sociais, políticos e ambientais.

Contudo, a operacionalização da segurança humana exige um conjunto de princípios normativos que orientem a ação coletiva. O Relatório de Barcelona, de 2004, constitui uma referência fundamental ao propor uma abordagem centrada na primazia dos direitos humanos, defendendo que a proteção da dignidade humana deve constituir o objetivo central de qualquer ação de segurança (Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, 2004). Além disso, sublinha a importância do multilateralismo cooperativo, do envolvimento das comunidades locais e da utilização da força apenas como último recurso, em conformidade com o direito internacional.

Uma das expressões normativas da segurança humana é a doutrina da responsabilidade de proteger (R2P) que foi desenvolvida na sequência de incapacidades pela comunidade internacional em prevenir atrocidades em massa, durante os conflitos da década de 1990 (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Simultaneamente, esta doutrina redefine a soberania do Estado, associando-a à R2P as populações que naquele espaço territorial habitam (International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 2001). Esta doutrina foi formalmente adotada pelos Estados na Cimeira Mundial da ONU, em 2005, e assenta em três pilares fundamentais. Em primeiro lugar, cada Estado tem a responsabilidade primária de proteger a sua população contra genocídio, crimes de guerra, limpeza étnica e crimes contra a humanidade. Em segundo lugar, a comunidade internacional tem a responsabilidade de apoiar os Estados no cumprimento dessa obrigação, através de meios diplomáticos, humanitários e de capacitação. Em terceiro lugar, caso um Estado falhe manifestamente na proteção da sua população, a comunidade internacional deve estar preparada para agir de forma coletiva e decisiva, através do Conselho de Segurança da ONU e em conformidade com a Carta da ONU (ONU, 2005).

A R2P encontra-se estritamente associada à dimensão da "liberdade face ao medo" pois intervém na prevenção e na resposta a crimes mais graves contra as populações civis. Importa, contudo, sublinhar que a doutrina não se limita à intervenção militar, a qual constitui apenas um último recurso. Contrariamente, esta doutrina privilegia uma abordagem preventiva e multifacetada, reforçando a centralidade da proteção dos indivíduos no sistema internacional (Bellamy, 2009).

A abordagem da segurança humana pressupõe também a existência de mecanismos de cooperação internacional, tendo em conta o carácter transnacional e interdependente das ameaças mencionadas, associando-se a conceitos como a governação global e o multilateralismo. A governação global refere-se ao conjunto de instituições, normas, regras e processos formais e informais que permitem a coordenação da ação coletiva dos Estados e de outros atores internacionais, na ausência de uma autoridade central global (Karns, Mingst, & Stiles, 2015). Já o multilateralismo constitui um elemento essencial da governação global, ao possibilitar respostas coletivas a desafios que excedem as capacidades individuais dos Estados, como são exemplo os conflitos armados, as crises humanitárias e as violações sistemáticas dos direitos humanos (Ruggie, 1992; Weiss, 2013). Permite também articular diferentes capacidades políticas, normativas, civis e militares, em prol da proteção das populações.

No contexto de um sistema de governação global e multilateral, a ONU e a OTAN assumem papéis distintos, mas potencialmente complementares. A ONU dispõe de legitimidade universal e de um mandato central na promoção dos direitos humanos e da paz internacional, enquanto que a OTAN possui capacidades operacionais que podem ser mobilizadas em contextos específicos. Assim, a cooperação entre estas duas organizações internacionais revela-se crucial para a implementação real da segurança humana (Thakur, 2016).

3. A ONU E A SEGURANÇA HUMANA

A ONU é a pedra angular da governação global e a principal promotora do conceito de segurança humana. Desde a sua fundação, a ONU tem procurado equilibrar a soberania dos Estados com a proteção dos direitos individuais, e a sua evolução reflete uma crescente orientação para uma segurança centrada nas pessoas.

3.1. MANDATO E ENQUADRAMENTO NORMATIVO

A missão da ONU é manter a paz e a segurança internacional, proteger os direitos humanos e apoiar o desenvolvimento social e económico, sendo que nunca foi criada para fazer do mundo um paraíso, mas para protegê-la do "inferno" (Hammarskjöld, 1954). Embora a Carta da ONU tenha sido redigida numa era dominada pela segurança centrada no Estado, os seus princípios fundamentais, especialmente o compromisso com os direitos humanos (Art.º 1.º), forneceram a base normativa para a posterior evolução do conceito de segurança humana. A Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos (1948), embora não sendo juridicamente vinculativa, estabeleceu um padrão universal de dignidade humana que prefigura a agenda da segurança humana, ao proclamar o direito à vida, à liberdade e à segurança da pessoa (Art.º 3.º) e o direito a um nível de vida adequado (Art.º 25.º). Já a Resolução 66/290 da Assembleia Geral, em 2012, reconheceu a segurança humana como uma abordagem para ajudar os Estados a identificar e a enfrentar os desafios generalizados e transversais à sobrevivência, aos meios de subsistência e à dignidade dos seus povos. A Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável, com os seus 17 Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS), representa a mais completa manifestação da componente "liberdade face à necessidade". Ao visar a erradicação da pobreza (ODS1), a fome zero (ODS2), a saúde e o bem-estar (ODS3) e a paz, justiça e instituições eficazes (ODS16), a Agenda 2030 aborda as causas profundas da insegurança e da instabilidade (ONU, 2015).

3.2. MECANISMOS INSTITUCIONAIS

A ONU possui uma ampla rede de órgãos e de agências para executar a sua agenda de segurança humana. O Conselho de Segurança detém a responsabilidade principal pela paz e segurança internacionais, podendo autorizar sanções e o uso da força, sendo central na R2P e na proteção de civis (PoC). A Assembleia Geral, como órgão deliberativo, contribui para a definição de normas e a promoção da segurança humana. O Conselho de Direitos Humanos monitoriza violações globais, enquanto que, a Agência global para o desenvolvimento, a Agência para os refugiados e a Agência para a defesa e promoção dos direitos das crianças atuam no terreno em contextos de crise. Contudo, apesar do papel central, a ONU enfrenta desafios significativos na implementação da segurança humana. O mais proeminente é a tensão que opõe a soberania do Estado e a intervenção humanitária, onde a primeira está a ser reestruturada, ou seja, os Estados são vistos como instrumentos ao serviço das suas populações (Annan, 1999). Esta tensão é mais visível no Conselho de Segurança, onde o poder de veto dos cinco membros permanentes pode paralisar a ação coletiva. A coordenação entre as múltiplas Agências e a implementação de mandatos complexos são também desafios operacionais.

3.3. CAPACIDADES OPERACIONAIS

As operações de manutenção da paz da ONU — vulgos capacetes azuis — são a ferramenta mais visível da organização para a gestão de conflitos. Desde os anos 90, estas missões evoluíram de uma simples monitorização de cessar-fogo para operações multidimensionais complexas, que incluem tarefas como o desarmamento, a reforma do setor de segurança, a organização de eleições e, crucialmente, a PoC que é um mandato explícito na maioria das missões de paz da ONU.

A Política da ONU sobre PoC em operações de manutenção da paz, elaborada em 2015 e revista em 2023, estabelece um quadro de ação em três níveis: (1) proteção através do diálogo e do processo político; (2) proteção contra a violência física; e (3) estabelecimento de um ambiente protetor (Departamento de Operações de Paz da ONU, 2015). Apesar dos esforços, a eficácia da ONU na PoC é frequentemente limitada por recursos insuficientes, mandatos pouco claros e ausência de vontade política dos Estados.

3.4. PERSPETIVA DE GÉNERO

A ONU tem sido pioneira na promoção da Agenda Mulheres, Paz e Segurança, iniciada com a Resolução 1325 do Conselho de Segurança, em 2000. Esta Agenda assenta em quatro pilares: a participação, que visa aumentar a participação das mulheres em todos os níveis do processo de tomada de decisão; a proteção, para proteger mulheres e meninas da violência sexual e baseada no género; a prevenção, para prevenir a violência contra as mulheres através da promoção da igualdade de género; e a reconstrução para garantir que as necessidades das mulheres são tidas em conta nos esforços de recuperação pós- conflito (Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas, 2000).

4. A OTAN E A SEGURANÇA HUMANA

A OTAN, apesar de ter sido criada como uma aliança de defesa coletiva de natureza essencialmente militar, tem vindo a integrar, de forma progressiva, elementos associados à segurança humana nas suas doutrinas, políticas e práticas operacionais. No contexto pós-Guerra Fria, caracterizado pelo aumento de conflitos assimétricos, de crises humanitárias e de ameaças transnacionais, a OTAN reconheceu que a segurança dos Estados aliados está intrinsecamente ligada à segurança das populações civis.

4.1. MANDATO E ENQUADRAMENTO NORMATIVO

O mandato da OTAN encontra-se consagrado no Tratado do Atlântico Norte de 1949, cujo objetivo fundamental é salvaguardar a liberdade e a segurança dos seus membros através da defesa coletiva (Art.º 5.º). Embora o Tratado não faça referência explícita ao conceito de segurança humana, os princípios fundadores, como a defesa da democracia, da liberdade individual e do Estado de direito, constituem uma base normativa que permite uma aproximação progressiva a uma abordagem centrada nas pessoas (Risse, 2012). Com o fim da Guerra Fria, a OTAN iniciou um processo de adaptação estratégica, refletido nos seus sucessivos conceitos estratégicos, reconhecendo que as ameaças à segurança internacional incluem não apenas agressões militares clássicas, mas também crises humanitárias, colapsos de Estados e violações sistemáticas dos direitos humanos (Wallander, 2000; Kaplan, 2004). Este alargamento conceptual conduziu à integração gradual de preocupações relacionadas com a PoC e estabilização pós-conflito. Atualmente, o conceito estratégico da OTAN, de 2022, reconhece a importância da PoC, do respeito pelos direitos humanos e da integração da perspetiva de género como elementos essenciais para a legitimidade e eficácia das operações da Aliança (OTAN, 2022).

4.2. MECANISMOS INSTITUCIONAIS

Ao longo da última década, a OTAN desenvolveu, um conjunto de políticas destinadas a integrar preocupações associadas à segurança humana. Um dos instrumentos mais relevantes é a política de PoC da OTAN, adotada em 2016, que estabelece orientações para prevenir danos à população civil, minimizar vítimas colaterais e reforçar a responsabilização durante operações militares (OTAN, 2016). Estas orientações visam assegurar que o planeamento e a condução das operações militares tenham em consideração os impactos sobre as populações afetadas, reforçando a necessidade de uma atuação compatível com o direito internacional humanitário e com os princípios fundamentais dos direitos humanos.

4.3. CAPACIDADES OPERACIONAIS

No período pós-Guerra Fria, as operações da OTAN revelam uma crescente preocupação com a proteção de civis. Intervenções nos Balcãs e no Kosovo demonstram a transição de uma lógica defensiva para missões de gestão de crises, estabilização e apoio à paz (Chandler, 2000; Dwan, 2004). Assim, a OTAN passou a assumir responsabilidades na criação de condições de segurança, no apoio à reconstrução institucional e na prevenção da violência contra civis. Embora a proteção de civis não constitua um mandato autónomo, tornou-se um elemento transversal das suas operações, refletindo a relação entre eficácia militar, confiança e segurança das populações locais (Paris, 2004; Barnett, 2011).

4.4. PERSPETIVA DE GÉNERO

Em consonância com as resoluções do Conselho de Segurança da ONU, a OTAN integrou a Agenda Mulheres, Paz e Segurança nas suas políticas e operações, reconhecendo que a perspetiva de género melhora a compreensão dos conflitos, a proteção de grupos vulneráveis e a eficácia das missões (Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas, 2000; Kaldor, 2007). Assim, promoveu a formação militar e a incorporação destas preocupações no planeamento estratégico, reforçando a ligação entre segurança humana e segurança internacional, ao considerar a proteção dos direitos das mulheres essencial para uma paz sustentável (Smith, 2010).

5. ANÁLISE E DISCUSSÃO DOS RESULTADOS

Esta secção analisa e discute os resultados com base no enquadramento conceptual definido. A Tabela 3 sintetiza diferentes abordagens académicas sobre a definição e caracterização da segurança humana, evidenciando a evolução e consolidação deste conceito entre 1994 e 2024.

Autor(es)	**Definição/caracterização de segurança humana**
PNUD 1994, p. 23	… consiste na proteção das pessoas contra ameaças diversas, como a fome, a doença, o desemprego e a violência.
Alkire 2003, p. 2	… é centrada nas pessoas, sendo o objetivo principal a segurança de cada uma delas e de toda a sua comunidade.
Human Security Study Group 2007, p. 3	… diz respeito às necessidades básicas de indivíduos e das comunidades em períodos de perigo. Trata-se de sentir-se protegido pelos seus direitos.
Churruca Muguruza 2007, p. 15	… é centrado no ser humano, e não na ameaça, dando prioridade à saúde e bem-estar do mesmo bem como oferecer-lhe segurança.
Holliday & Howe 2011, p. 76	… consiste em proteger indivíduos e comunidades de qualquer forma de ameaça ao seu bem-estar, ou mesmo à sua própria existência.
Kaldor 2012, p. 4	… diz respeito à segurança cotidiana dos indivíduos e das comunidades em que vivem, existindo um esforço comum, nomeadamente do Estado, para garantir a segurança das pessoas.
Koundouri & Dellis, 2023, p. 31	… é tanto o bem-estar de cada indivíduo individualmente, bem como da sociedade em que ele se insere.

Tabela 3. Evolução Conceito de Segurança Humana.
Fonte. Elaboração dos autores.

O ponto de convergência fundamental entre os conceitos dos Autores citados é a centralidade do indivíduo e da comunidade como objetos prioritários de proteção. Esta abordagem representa uma rutura com a segurança tradicional focada no Estado, privilegiando a resposta a ameaças multidimensionais que afetam a segurança, o bem-estar e a liberdade das pessoas. Verifica-se igualmente que o conceito de segurança humana se consolida temporalmente: o PNUD estabelece as bases ao identificar e articular as liberdades "face ao medo" e "face à necessidade"; entre 2003 e 2012, os Autores mencionados reforçam a prioridade centrada nas necessidades básicas e na segurança, e as definições mais recentes, expõem a associação do conceito de segurança humana à valorização dos interesses da sociedade. Daqui subentende-se que o desenvolvimento é essencial para salvaguardar a segurança humana.

Figura 1. Nuvem de Palavras.
Fonte. *NVivo 15*.

Para validar, aprofundar e reforçar visualmente esta análise, foi criada a nuvem de palavras, representada na Figura 1, que resulta de uma análise qualitativa sistemática efetuada no *software NVivo 15*, com base nas obras dos autores referidos na Tabela 3 e de referências referidas no enquadramento conceptual.

O processo metodológico consistiu na codificação seletiva de excertos que definem e caracterizam do conceito de segurança humana. A análise da frequência das palavras revela a centralidade do termo *development*, que simultaneamente corrobora a articulação entre o conceito de segurança humana e o de desenvolvimento humano, introduzido pelo PNUD (1994).

A presença de termos como *peace*, *cooperation* e *intervention* direciona para a extensão do conceito à sua dimensão operacional, em que a PoC requer a governação multilateral. Isto é, a dimensão operacional, que inclui a cooperação entre vários Estados e entidades e a intervenção (por vezes militar), tanto para salvaguardar a proteção dos direitos humanos ou para impor e manter a paz, revela o objetivo comum de proporcionar o bem-estar a cada indivíduo (Koundouri & Dellis, 2023). O mapa conceptual da Figura 2 reforça a análise da tabela 3 e da imagem 1, confirmando uma convergência conceptual entre as organizações internacionais em estudo: a ONU e OTAN.

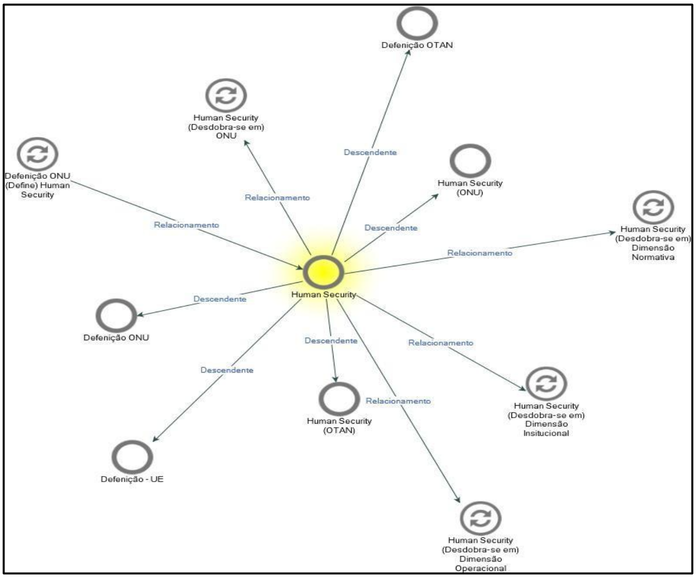

Figura 2. Mapa Conceptual.
Fonte. *NVivo 15*.

O conceito estrutura-se em três dimensões essenciais: a normativa que inclui os princípios e os direitos; a institucional referente a mandatos e a políticas e a operacional, sobre as capacidades de intervenção e de cooperação. Tal facto, fortalece a transição do paradigma de mera proteção contra ameaças individuais para uma responsabilidade coletiva que aparenta tender para a governação global e multilateral. A análise das abordagens da ONU e da OTAN à segurança humana evidencia diferenças estruturais significativas, mas também importantes áreas de complementaridade. Estas decorrem, sobretudo, da natureza distinta dos respetivos mandatos, dos enquadramentos normativos, dos mecanismos institucionais e das capacidades operacionais de cada organização, conforme analisado nas secções anteriores.

A ONU distingue-se pela sua legitimidade universal e pelo seu papel central na construção e promoção do enquadramento normativo da segurança humana. Através da Carta da ONU, da Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos, da Agenda 2030 para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável e da doutrina da R2P, a ONU afirma uma abordagem abrangente e multidimensional da segurança, centrada na proteção da dignidade humana, dos direitos fundamentais e do bem-estar das populações (ONU, 1945; ONU, 2005; ONU, 2015;). Esta orientação traduz-se numa atuação que privilegia a prevenção de conflitos, a PoC e a integração de dimensões civis, políticas, sociais e humanitárias na resposta a crises (Departamento de

Operações de Paz da ONU, 2015). Por seu lado, a OTAN aborda a segurança humana de forma mais restrita e operacional. A integração progressiva de preocupações centradas nas pessoas resulta de um processo de adaptação estratégica no contexto pós-Guerra Fria, refletido nos conceitos estratégicos e, mais recentemente, no de 2022, que reconhece a importância da PoC, do respeito pelos direitos humanos e da integração da perspetiva de género para a legitimidade e eficácia das operações da Aliança (OTAN, 1949; OTAN, 2022). Contudo, estas dimensões permanecem subordinadas ao mandato principal da OTAN, centrado na defesa coletiva e na gestão de crises (Kaplan, 2004; Risse, 2012). A tabela 4 sintetiza a análise que compara a adoção institucional do conceito de segurança humana pela ONU e pela OTAN, espelhando a transição da formulação teórica para a operacionalização prática.

Cat	ONU	OTAN	COMPARAÇÃO
Mandato e Enquadramento Normativo	• Legitimidade universal; • Papel central na construção e promoção do quadro normativo da segurança humana	• Organização de defesa coletiva (predominantemente militar); • Integração progressiva de preocupações “centradas nas pessoas”, subordinada ao Tratado e a conceitos estratégicos	• Complementaridade: - A ONU fornece autoridade político-jurídica; - A OTAN fornece capacidade operacional para atuar em crises e estabilização.
Mecanismos Institucionais	• Atuação multidimensional (política, humanitária, direitos humanos, desenvolvimento); Capacidade de definir mandatos e princípios orientadores.	Desenvolvimento de políticas e enquadramentos operacionais com foco na condução de operações: ex.: proteção de civis; integração de perspetiva de género.	• Cooperação reforça coerência: - A ONU pode beneficiar da robustez operacional da OTAN em certos teatros - A OTAN tende a beneficiar do

			enquadramento da ONU.
Proteção de Civis	• Prioriza a prevenção, a proteção de civis e resposta integrada a crises; Dá ênfase a dimensões civis e humanitárias.	• Abordagem mais operacional; • Capacidade de atuação em ambientes de elevada instabilidade; Proteção de civis como dimensão transversal nas operações.	• A articulação permite conjugar: - a legitimidade normativa da ONU - com a capacidade de estabilização e de projeção da OTAN em crises complexas.
Perspetiva de género	• Referencial normativo Resolução 1325 e agenda subsequente com enfase na participação, na proteção, na prevenção e reconstrução	Integração progressiva da perspetiva de género em políticas, formação e planeamento, em alinhamento com a agenda da ONU.	• Convergência crescente com diferenças de natureza: - A ONU (normativa / mandatos) - OTAN: integração operacional/planeamento
Capacidades Operacionais	Capacidade de coordenação e presença no terreno, condicionada por recursos e pelo poder de veto do Conselho de Segurança	Vantagem em meios militares, logísticos e capacidade de mobilização.	• Complementaridade funcional: - A ONU enquadra/legítima e sustenta; - A OTAN projeta/estabiliza quando aplicável e politicamente viável.
Desafios e Limitações	• Condicionada por dinâmicas do CSNU (incluindo bloqueios políticos); Dependência de contribuições e coordenação entre múltiplos Agências.	• Limitação de legitimidade universal; • Diversidade de posições entre aliados; Predominância militar pode dificultar a integração plena de dimensões civis da segurança humana.	• Tensões possíveis por diferenças de mandato/cultura organizacional; Necessidade de mecanismos de coordenação e de articulação estratégica contínua.

Tabela 4. Comparação entre a ONU e a OTAN.
Fonte: Elaboração dos autores.

A comparação entre a ONU e a OTAN demonstra que, apesar das suas diferenças institucionais, ambas desempenham papéis complementares na promoção da segurança humana. A ONU dispõe da autoridade política, da legitimidade jurídica e da capacidade normativa necessárias para definir mandatos, estabelecer princípios orientadores e assegurar a conformidade das intervenções com o direito internacional. Por sua vez, a OTAN possui capacidades militares, logísticas e operacionais que lhe permitem atuar de forma rápida e eficaz em contextos de elevada instabilidade, contribuindo para a criação de condições mínimas de segurança no terreno e para a PoC (Chandler, 2000; Barnett, 2011).

A cooperação entre ambas assume um papel crucial na implementação prática da segurança humana. Em vários contextos, as operações militares da OTAN dependem do enquadramento jurídico e político proporcionado pelas resoluções do Conselho de Segurança da ONU, enquanto as missões da ONU beneficiam da capacidade operacional da Aliança para estabilizar ambientes de conflito e apoiar a PoC (ONU, 2005; OTAN, 2016). Esta articulação permite conjugar a legitimidade normativa da ONU com a eficácia operacional da OTAN, reforçando a coerência das respostas internacionais a crises complexas (Paris, 2001; Kaldor, 2007). Todavia, esta cooperação não está isenta de desafios. As diferenças de mandato, de cultura organizacional e de prioridades estratégicas podem gerar tensões na coordenação entre ambas organizações. A ONU enfrenta limitações decorrentes da dependência da vontade política dos Estados-membros e das dinâmicas internas do Conselho de Segurança, enquanto a OTAN vê a sua atuação condicionada pela ausência de um mandato universal e pela diversidade de posições políticas dos seus membros (Annan, 1999; Kaplan, 2004). Estas limitações reforçam a necessidade de mecanismos de coordenação mais eficazes e de uma articulação estratégica contínua. Assim, a cooperação entre estas organizações constitui um elemento indispensável para a consolidação de uma abordagem de segurança centrada nas pessoas num contexto que tende para a governação global e multilateral.

6. CONCLUSÕES

O estudo conclui a segurança humana serve de referencial para compreender as dinâmicas de proteção dos direitos humanos. O indivíduo emerge como sujeito central de segurança, e a atuação complementar da ONU e OTAN demonstra a possibilidade de operacionalizar uma segurança centrada nas pessoas através da articulação entre legitimidade normativa e capacidade operacional militar, em que as duas organizações se complementam na governação global e multilateral. A ONU oferece a autoridade político-jurídica e o enquadramento internacional, enquanto a OTAN oferece a capacidade operacional e os meios militares para atuar no terreno. Desta forma, a união entre a legitimidade da ONU e as capacidades da OTAN poderá ser essencial para garantir uma segurança centrada nas pessoas.

Entre as limitações reconhece-se que o estudo se centra na análise conceptual e normativa da segurança humana, sem dados empíricos, não tendo como objetivo avaliar a eficácia operacional das intervenções das organizações internacionais estudadas, área que poderá ser explorada futuramente. A inclusão da União Europeia poderia oferecer outras perspetivas complementares.

DECLARAÇÃO DE ÉTICA

Na elaboração deste artigo científico, os autores declaram ter recorrido às ferramentas de Inteligência Artificial para apoio na redação, especificamente na revisão linguística, reformulação de texto e melhoria da clareza. Posteriormente, os autores realizaram a revisão e a edição de todo o conteúdo, analisando-o criticamente. A versão final é da exclusiva responsabilidade dos autores, que assumem na íntegra a sua integridade e exatidão.

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PORTUGAL, NATO AND DEFENCE EXPENDITURE: RECENT TRENDS, BUDGET STRUCTURE, AND STRATEGIC REINFORCEMENT

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48008

ABSTRACT

This article examines Portuguese defence expenditure between 2014 and 2024, with particular attention to its recent trajectory, its share of gross domestic product, and its internal budget structure. Although debates on burden sharing within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) frequently focus on the 2% of gross domestic product benchmark, the interpretation of defence effort also requires consideration of expenditure composition and the strategic setting in which it is situated. Using a descriptive and contextual approach, the article shows that Portugal increased defence expenditure in both absolute and relative terms, while remaining below the NATO reference threshold and maintaining a budget structure centred on personnel expenditure. The analysis places this trajectory within the post-adjustment decade that followed the international financial assistance programme, situates it in the recent European context of strategic reinforcement, and points to the need for further examination of the budgetary conditions associated with more demanding commitments.

Keywords: Portugal, NATO, Defence Expenditure, Burden Sharing, Budget Structure, Strategic Reinforcement

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a despesa com defesa em Portugal entre 2014 e 2024, com particular atenção à sua trajetória recente, ao seu peso no produto interno bruto e à sua estrutura orçamental interna. Embora o debate sobre a partilha de encargos no quadro da Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte (OTAN) se concentre frequentemente na referência de 2% do produto interno bruto, a interpretação do esforço de defesa requer também a consideração da composição da despesa e do contexto estratégico em que esta se insere. Com base numa abordagem descritiva e contextual, o artigo mostra que Portugal aumentou a despesa com defesa em termos absolutos e relativos, permanecendo, contudo, abaixo do limiar de referência da OTAN e mantendo uma estrutura orçamental centrada na despesa com pessoal. A análise enquadra esta trajetória na década posterior ao programa de assistência financeira internacional, situa-a no contexto europeu recente de reforço estratégico e assinala a necessidade de examinar com maior detalhe as condições orçamentais associadas a compromissos mais exigentes.

Palavras-chave: Portugal, OTAN, Despesa com Defesa, Partilha de Encargos, Estrutura Orçamental, Reforço Estratégico

1. INTRODUCTION

The share of gross domestic product allocated to defence has become a reference point in public and political debate across member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) (NATO, 2025a, 2026). Recent changes in the European security environment have made this issue more frequent in policy debate, as military expenditure has risen across the continent and alliance expectations have moved beyond the earlier 2% reference towards more demanding commitments (NATO, 2025a, 2025b; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2025). That metric, however, does not exhaust the meaning of defence effort since military spending is analysed as a one-size-fits-all benchmark applied to countries with very different fiscal and budget constraints (Hartley, 2010).

Indeed, it does not show how this expenditure evolves, how additional resources are distributed within the national budget, or how military expansion is accommodated under specific macrofiscal conditions (Hartley & Sandler, 1999; Kim & Sandler, 2020). The same share of domestic product may therefore correspond to different processes of accommodation across allied states. In countries that have experienced fiscal adjustment, additional defence expenditure must therefore be interpreted not only in relation to alliance expectations, but also in relation to the broader conditions under which public spending has evolved.

These questions are present in the Portuguese case. In the years following the sovereign debt crisis, Portugal maintained fiscal consolidation while increasing defence expenditure relative to the NATO 2% benchmark (Ferraz, 2025).

The contribution of this study is descriptive and contextual, examining Portuguese defence expenditure over the last decade. The selected 2014 to 2024 period covers the conclusion of Portugal's international financial assistance programme, allowing those expenditures to be examined not at the height of the sovereign debt crisis but during the subsequent phase of fiscal consolidation, debt reduction, and budgetary adjustment after the assistance programme (Conselho das Finanças Públicas, 2026; European Commission, 2025).

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. The next section situates defence expenditure within the current strategic setting of European and Atlantic reinforcement. Section 3 presents the recent evolution of Portuguese defence expenditure. Section 4 analyses its budgetary structure. Section 5 places Portugal in the NATO and European context. The final section presents the concluding remarks.

2. DEFENCE EXPENDITURE AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Defence expenditure has returned to the European and Atlantic political debate as geopolitical tensions have increased attention to military preparedness, alliance commitments, and the resources required to sustain them.

NATO reports an increase in allied defence spending (Figure 1), while discussions within the alliance have also moved beyond the historical spending target towards more demanding commitments (NATO, 2025a, 2025b, 2026). Recent SIPRI data show that Europe has been among the regions where this trend has been recorded (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2025).

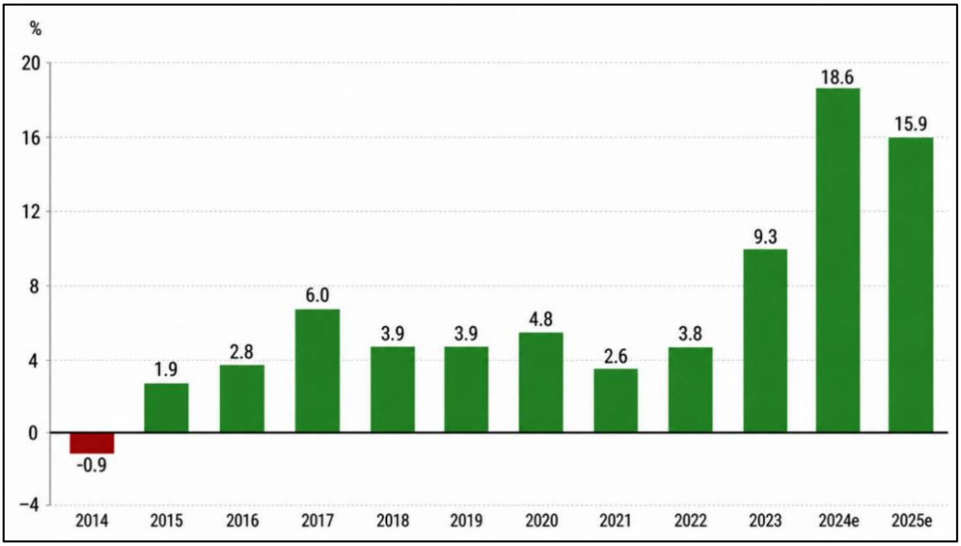

Figure 1. NATO Europe and Canada defence expenditure growth, 2014–2025e (annual real change, based on 2021 prices and exchange rates; figures for 2024 and 2025 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a).

However, allied defence effort continues to be assessed largely through this benchmark, which remains the principal basis for comparing the relative commitment of member states (NATO, 2025a, 2026). Its persistence reflects its political and communicative utility, as it offers a standardised indicator of proportional commitment across allied economies.

Yet, this measure is more limited than its prominence might suggest. One country may increase military spending mainly through personnel expenditure and maintenance, whereas another may allocate a larger share of additional resources to equipment acquisition, technological upgrading, or capability modernisation.

Consequently, similar expenditure ratios may mask distinct patterns of military adjustment (Becker & Dunne, 2023; Hartley, 2010).

Earlier work on burden sharing has shown that expenditure-to-GDP ratios do not fully capture the structure of allied effort across military roles, strategic conditions, and internal budget priorities (Hartley & Sandler, 1999; Kim & Sandler, 2020; Murdoch & Sandler, 1984).

The current concern is no longer solely the maintenance of defence budgets at previously accepted levels, but also the adaptation of military spending to the demands of a changing strategic environment. In practical terms, the analysis should consider not only the increase in total outlays, but also the type of military structure that this growth supports, particularly in countries whose armed forces expand gradually under conditions of budgetary restraint. In such cases, the composition of expenditures may reveal whether additional resources are financing transformation, maintenance, or both.

From the standpoint of defence economics, this raises two related questions: the overall level of military spending relative to national output, and the internal allocation across personnel, equipment, infrastructure, research, and other categories. These dimensions should not be conflated.

Indeed, the literature has shown that military expenditure has been analysed as a strategic variable and in relation to growth, investment, technological spillovers, and opportunity costs (Alptekin & Levine, 2012; Alsmadi et al., 2024; Dunne et al., 2005).

Expenditure concentrated in personnel, for example, has a different meaning from expenditure associated with equipment or research, both in budgetary and capability terms (Becker & Dunne, 2023). Therefore, the contemporaneous defence expenditure should be interpreted not only in terms of aggregate growth but also in terms of its strategic and budgetary composition.

Recent work has already shown that Portugal remained below the NATO benchmark and presented an internal budget structure distinct from that of several allies (Ferraz, 2025).

Those findings make clear that Portugal cannot be understood solely in terms of its distance from the benchmark. The country must also be analysed through its internal military budget structure and the strategic environment in which recent expenditure growth has occurred.

This article adopts a descriptive and contextual perspective on military spending. At the aggregate level, expenditure as a share of GDP alone does not fully reflect the distribution of resources within armed forces budgets.

To illustrate this point, Figure 2 presents NATO member states' military spending as a share of GDP on the horizontal axis and equipment expenditure as a share of total military budgets on the vertical axis for 2024e. The figure highlights variation among member states in the allocation of resources between personnel and equipment, as well as each country's position relative to the NATO 2% guideline and the 20% equipment expenditure benchmark.

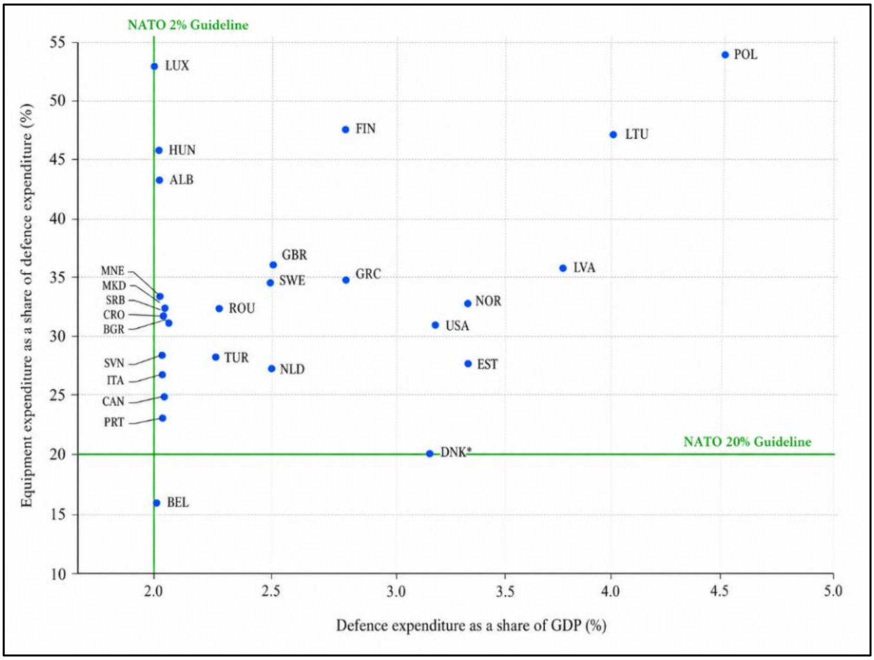

Figure 2. Defence expenditure as a share of GDP and equipment expenditure as a share of defence expenditure, 2024e (figures for 2024 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a).

3. RECENT EVOLUTION OF PORTUGUESE DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

The recent trajectory of Portuguese defence expenditure shows a gradual expansion over the decade under consideration. This evolution requires contextual interpretation because it does not correspond to sudden military reorientation or to an abrupt budgetary break. Instead, it reflects an increase in expenditure that unfolded across the period, in line with a wider increase in allied defence expenditure in Europe, without removing Portugal from the group of allies that remain below the NATO benchmark.

Portugal recorded military spending of approximately USD 4.5 billion in 2024e, measured at constant 2021 prices and exchange rates. This corresponds to a cumulative real increase of approximately 48% between 2014 and 2024e (Figure 3). Even before the comparison with other allies, this trajectory indicates an increase in the financial scale of national defence policy.

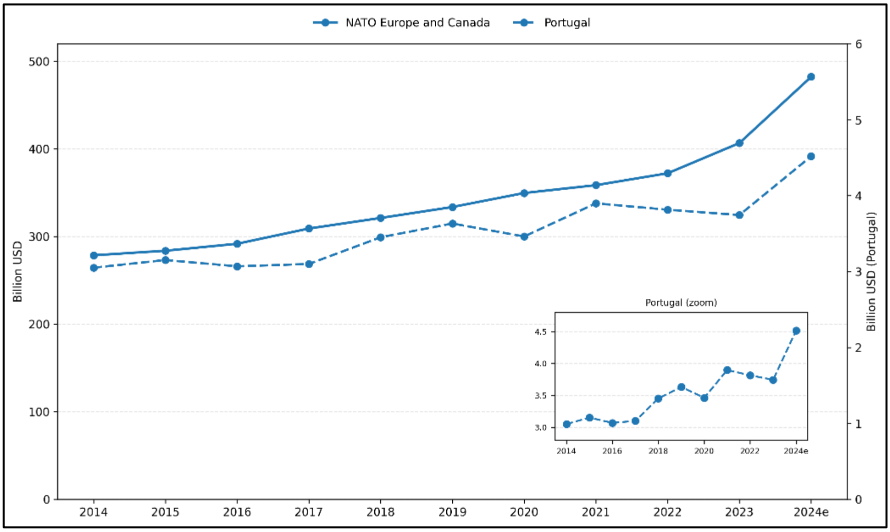

Figure 3. NATO Europe and Canada vs Portugal: defence expenditure evolution, 2014–2024e (billion USD, constant 2021 prices and exchange rates; figures for 2024 are estimates)
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 2.

When examining the temporal profile of Portuguese military spending in current USD prices and exchange rates, annual outlays increased from approximately USD 3.0 billion in 2014 to USD 4.8 billion in 2024e, as illustrated in Figure 4. The series shows an overall upward trend over the decade, though it is punctuated by intermediate fluctuations associated with current prices and exchange rate effects. This pattern indicates a gradual reinforcement of the military budget, reflecting a sustained allocation of resources rather than an abrupt budgetary adjustment.

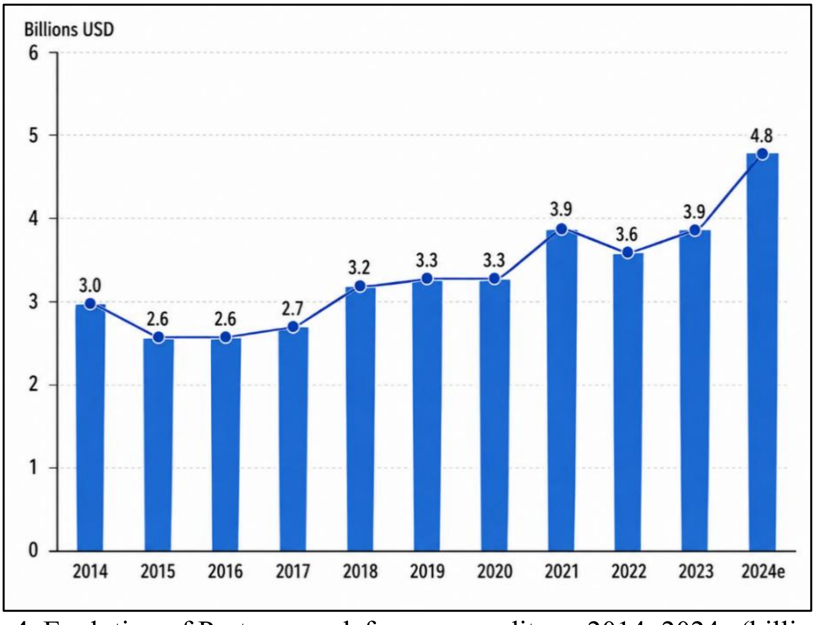

Figure 4. Evolution of Portuguese defence expenditure, 2014–2024e (billion USD, current prices and exchange rates; figures for 2024 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 2.

Portuguese defence expenditure reached 1.58% of GDP in 2024e, remaining below the NATO 2% benchmark (Figure 5). This combination of growth and continued distance from the benchmark is central to interpreting the recent period. Portugal did not remain static; proportional effort increased over time, though this movement did not achieve sufficient convergence to move the country above the alliance reference threshold.

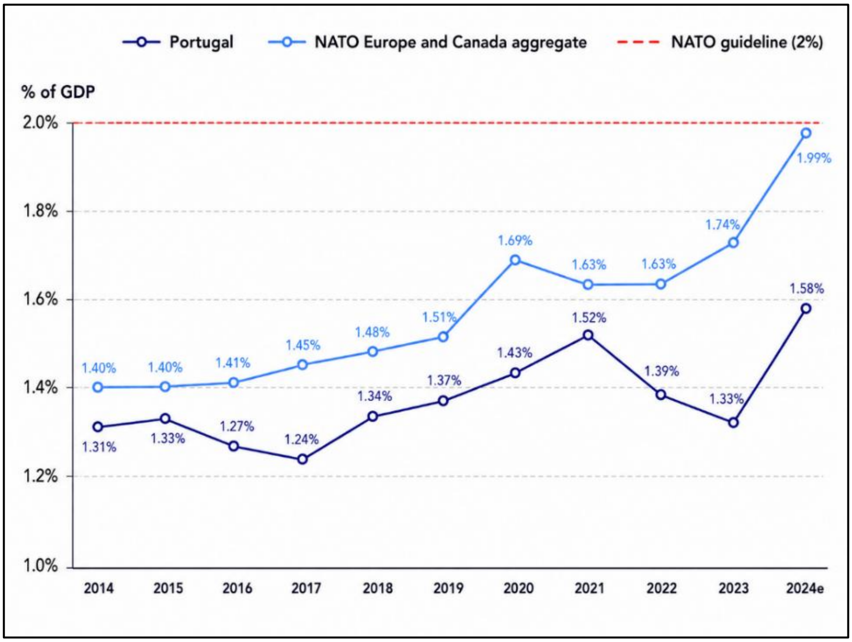

Figure 5. Portuguese defence expenditure as a share of GDP compared with NATO Europe and Canada, 2014–2024e (figures for 2024 are estimates; values are based on 2021 prices).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 3.

This feature affects the interpretation of burden sharing because it shows that the Portuguese case cannot be reduced to a binary distinction between compliance and non-compliance with the benchmark. The Portuguese case records neither stagnation nor full convergence. Instead, it records a trajectory in which expenditure rises in both absolute and relative terms. At the same time, the country nonetheless remains outside the group of allies that meet or exceed the benchmark. Recent Portuguese defence expenditure should therefore be interpreted as a process of gradual reinforcement within a context of incomplete convergence.

The wider European context reinforces this interpretation. The increase in Portuguese military spending is part of a broader continental trend of rising budgets, situating Portugal within a common strategic movement rather than presenting the country as an isolated case. At the same time, the Portuguese trajectory preserves a specific relative position: the country participates in the broader cycle of reinforcement without reaching the upper levels of proportional effort observed among some allies.

At a descriptive level, the recent evolution of Portuguese military expenditure may therefore be summarised through three related features. First, spending increased in absolute terms over the period. Second, it also increased as a share of GDP. Third, this dual increase occurred without Portugal reaching the NATO benchmark. These points indicate that the recent Portuguese trajectory should be read as one of sustained but gradual reinforcement.

The importance of this finding lies less in the magnitude of any single annual increase than in the overall form of the trajectory. Portugal's recent military spending records a decade of upward adjustment, while remaining situated below the principal benchmark structuring alliance debate. This combination supports a descriptive examination of the Portuguese case because it records a pattern of reinforcement without full convergence.

4. BUDGET STRUCTURE OF PORTUGUESE DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

The internal composition of Portuguese military spending constitutes a central aspect of the national case. In 2024e, personnel accounted for 55.15% of total Portuguese defence expenditure, equipment for 19.03%, infrastructure for 3.65%, and other expenditure for 22.17% (Figure 6). Compared with the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate, Portugal presents a higher concentration of expenditure in personnel and a lower relative share of equipment. The weighted aggregate records approximately 36.53% for personnel, 28.43% for equipment, 3.65% for infrastructure, and 31.39% for other expenditure. This comparison indicates that the Portuguese budget structure differs from the wider NATO Europe and Canada profile, especially in the relative weight assigned to personnel and equipment.

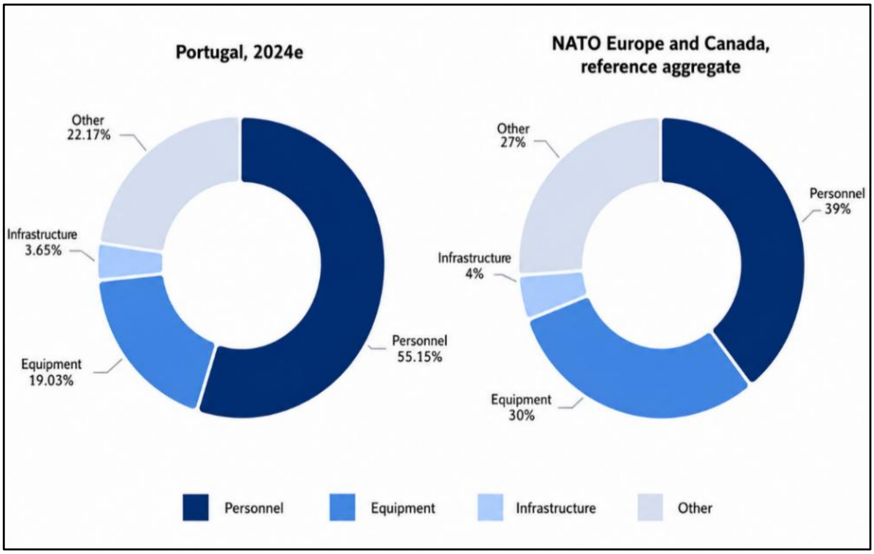

Figure 6. Budget structure of Portuguese defence expenditure and NATO Europe and Canada aggregate, 2024e (% of total defence expenditure; figures for 2024 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Tables 2, 8a and 8b.

This structure requires attention because not all increases in defence expenditure carry the same implications. In the Portuguese case, the predominance of personnel indicates that a large share of the budget is devoted to sustaining existing force structures. Equipment remains part of the budget structure, but its relative weight (19.03%) is below that observed in the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate. The category "other" also requires attention, since NATO includes within it operations and maintenance, other research and development, and expenditure not allocated among the other categories. Consequently, Portuguese defence expenditure should be interpreted not only by its total scale, but also by the internal allocation that this expansion reinforces. At a descriptive level, the budget structure shows that personnel remains the primary expenditure category in Portugal. This feature distinguishes expenditure growth centred on force support from growth driven mainly by equipment acquisition, infrastructure, or broader operating expenditure. Even without moving beyond a descriptive framework, the Portuguese case shows that military spending should be read not only in terms of scale, but also in terms of budgetary composition.

5. PORTUGAL IN THE NATO AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Portugal's position within the NATO and European context can be examined through its relative defence expenditure in 2024e. In that year, Portugal remained below the NATO 2% guideline, with expenditure corresponding to 1.58% of GDP (Figure 7). This value also remained below the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate, which stood at 1.99% in the same year. Countries such as Poland, Estonia, Latvia, the United States, Lithuania, and Greece occupied the upper part of the distribution, while Portugal remained closer to the lower range of allied proportional effort despite the increase recorded in recent years.

This relative position should not be interpreted only as a ranking. The comparison indicates that Portugal participates in the broader trend of increased defence expenditure, but does not join the group of allies that record the highest proportional effort. The Portuguese trajectory is therefore characterised by an upward movement and continued distance from the benchmark.

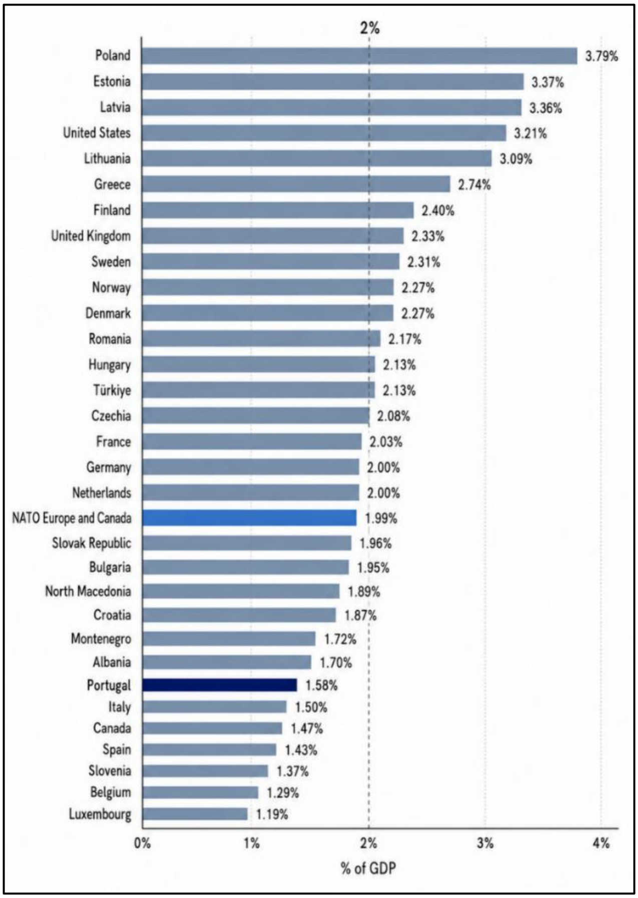

Figure 7. Defence expenditure as a share of GDP among NATO members, 2024e (figures for 2024 are estimates; the vertical line represents the NATO 2% guideline).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 3.

Data based on constant 2021 prices and exchange rates indicate that both Portugal and NATO Europe and Canada aggregate increased defence expenditure between 2014 and 2024e (Figure 8). The use of an index with 2014 as the base year allows the comparison to focus on relative growth rather than on absolute spending levels, which differ substantially between Portugal and the aggregate. This approach supports assessing whether the Portuguese trajectory followed the broader allied trend over the same period.

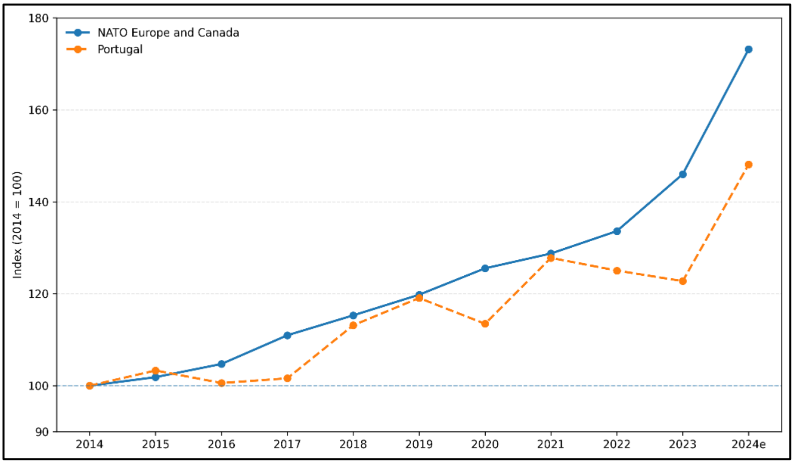

Figure 8. Indexed defence expenditure growth in NATO Europe and Canada and Portugal, 2014–2024e (2014 = 100; values are based on constant 2021 prices and exchange rates; figures for 2024 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 2.

The indexed series shows that both trajectories moved above the 2014 baseline, but with different intensity. The NATO Europe and Canada aggregate increased from 100 in 2014 to approximately 173.2 in 2024e, while Portugal increased from 100 to approximately 148.1. Portugal is therefore part of the wider process of strategic reinforcement, but its cumulative real growth remained below the aggregate trajectory by the end of the period. This result indicates that the Portuguese case records a pattern of reinforcement without full convergence with the broader allied pace of expansion.

A population-adjusted reading adds another comparative perspective. Defence expenditure per capita does not replace the GDP-based indicator, but records defence spending per inhabitant and therefore provides an additional measure of scale (Figure 9). This perspective allows assessing whether the increase observed in aggregate and GDP-relative terms is also reflected when expenditure is adjusted for population.

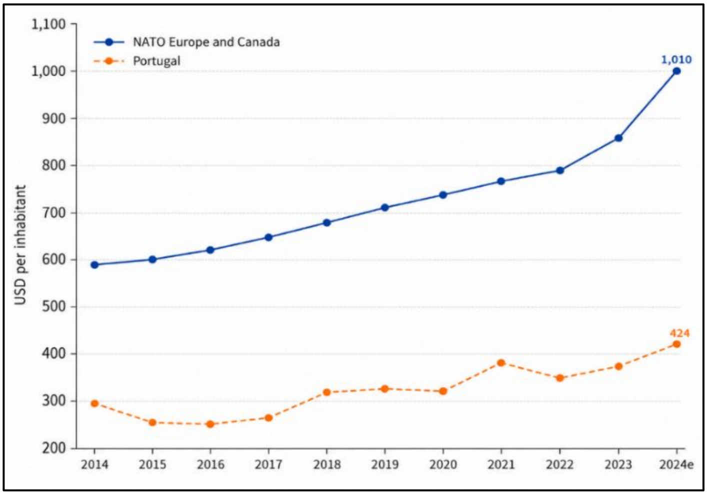

Figure 9. Defence expenditure per capita in Portugal and NATO Europe and Canada, 2014–2024e (USD per inhabitant; figures for 2024 are estimates).
Source. Author's elaboration based on NATO (2025a), Table 6.

In this dimension, Portugal records growth over the period, rising from approximately USD 293 per inhabitant in 2014 to USD 424 in 2024e. However, the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate remains higher throughout the period, rising from approximately USD 590 to USD 1,010 per inhabitant. The comparison therefore shows that Portuguese defence expenditure increased on a per capita basis, but that the distance from the aggregate persisted throughout the period.

These elements place Portugal within a pattern of gradual reinforcement in the NATO and European context. The country records expenditure growth, remains below the benchmark, presents lower defence expenditure per capita than the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate, and maintains an internal budget profile that differs from the aggregate. The Portuguese case, therefore, reflects a gradual process of adaptation to allied expectations within national budgetary conditions.

6. CONCLUSION

The analysis developed in this article allows three main conclusions to be drawn. First, Portugal increased defence expenditure between 2014 and 2024e, both in absolute terms and as a share of GDP. Second, this increase occurred while the country remained below the main NATO reference threshold and below the NATO Europe and Canada aggregate in proportional and per capita terms. Third, the internal composition of expenditure remained centred on personnel, with equipment, infrastructure, and other expenditure occupying smaller relative positions in the national budget structure.

These results indicate that the recent Portuguese trajectory should be read at two levels. At one level, it forms part of a broader European and Atlantic process of strategic reinforcement. At another, it preserves specific national features, namely a moderate relative position within NATO and an internal allocation profile distinct from the aggregate. This combination records a pattern of gradual reinforcement within the fiscal and institutional conditions that shape Portuguese defence policy.

The article adopted a descriptive and contextual approach. It did not aim to provide a macrofiscal assessment, to evaluate operational capability, or to estimate causal relationships among expenditure, military readiness, and budgetary constraints. Its purpose was more limited: to organise the recent Portuguese case in a clear and updated way and to situate it within the wider strategic setting in which allied defence expenditure has increased.

Within this scope, the article shows that the assessment of Portuguese defence effort should not rely exclusively on the GDP-based benchmark. The aggregate indicator supports comparison, but it does not capture the internal composition of expenditure, the per capita dimension, or the budgetary conditions under which future commitments may need to be accommodated. Further research should therefore examine how additional defence resources are distributed across personnel, equipment, infrastructure, operations, and technological investment, and how these allocations interact with Portugal's wider fiscal framework.

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GREECE AND THE EVROS BORDER: SECURITY, RIGHTS AND RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48009

ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze the Evros River border, which separates Greece from Turkey, as one of the main areas of tension in the European Union's migration and security policy. This region has become a symbol of the securitization of European borders, where controlling irregular migration is often prioritized over protecting human rights. After the 2015 migration crisis, when Turkey announced the opening of its borders, Greece significantly strengthened security measures in Evros, including the construction of fences, the use of surveillance technologies, and an increased military and police presence. These measures reflect a security narrative that frames migration as a threat to national sovereignty and stability. At the same time, reports of human rights violations, such as illegal returns, arbitrary detentions, and excessive use of force, have multiplied, raising serious questions about the compatibility of Greek and European policies with international law and European Union law. The analysis is based on official European Union documents, reports from human rights organizations, and the international legal framework applicable to the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. The article argues that Evros functions not only as a border for containing migration, but also as a functional space of exception, in which restrictive and legally ambiguous practices tend to be normalized in the name of European stability and security. It further argues that this model is reinforced by the European Union's political, financial, and operational support to Greece, as part of a logic of outsourcing and delegating migration governance to peripheral states. Thus, the case of Evros highlights a structural mismatch between security imperatives, geopolitical interests, and legal commitments, revealing the internal contradictions of the European project in the management of its external borders.

Keywords: European Union, securitization, migration, human rights, border, Evros

RESUMO

O presente artigo tem como objetivo analisar a fronteira do rio Evros, que separa a Grécia da Turquia, enquanto uma das principais áreas de tensão da política migratória e de segurança da União Europeia. Esta região tornou-se um símbolo da securitização das fronteiras europeias, onde o controlo da migração irregular é frequentemente priorizado em detrimento da proteção dos direitos humanos. Após a crise migratória de 2015, quando a Turquia anunciou a abertura das suas fronteiras, a Grécia reforçou significativamente as medidas de segurança em Evros, incluindo a construção de barreiras físicas, a utilização de tecnologias de vigilância e o aumento da presença militar e policial. Estas medidas refletem uma narrativa securitária que enquadra a migração como uma ameaça à soberania nacional e à estabilidade. Simultaneamente, multiplicaram-se os relatos de violações de direitos humanos, tais como devoluções ilegais, detenções arbitrárias e uso excessivo da força, suscitando sérias questões quanto à compatibilidade das políticas gregas e europeias com o direito internacional e o direito da União Europeia. A análise baseia-se em documentos oficiais da União Europeia, relatórios de organizações de direitos humanos e no quadro jurídico internacional aplicável à proteção de refugiados e requerentes de asilo. O artigo sustenta que Evros funciona não apenas como uma fronteira de contenção migratória, mas também como um espaço funcional de

exceção, no qual práticas restritivas e juridicamente ambíguas tendem a ser normalizadas em nome da estabilidade e segurança europeias. Defende-se ainda que este modelo é reforçado pelo apoio político, financeiro e operacional da União Europeia à Grécia, no âmbito de uma lógica de externalização e delegação da governação migratória para os Estados periféricos. Deste modo, o caso de Evros evidencia um desfasamento estrutural entre imperativos securitários, interesses geopolíticos e compromissos jurídicos, revelando as contradições internas do projeto europeu na gestão das suas fronteiras externas.
Palavras-chave: União Europeia; securitização; migração; direitos humanos; fronteira; Evros.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study addresses the topic "Greece and the Evros border: securitisation, rights and relations with Turkey"; to this end, it is essential to understand the political context between Greece and Turkey, and consequently the issues that shape this landscape, such as migration and, more specifically, the migration crisis. By deepening our understanding of the Greek approach to the migration crisis, this research describes and justifies the rationale behind the securitisation of Greece's migration policy. A state which, due to its geographical location, is, in the first instance, more exposed to migration flows from North Africa and the Middle East.

The Evros River border, which forms a significant part of the land border between Greece and Turkey, is one of the main points of contact between Europe and the Middle East. This territory constitutes both the EU's external border and

Greece's eastern border, and holds particular geostrategic importance in the context of contemporary European migration management. The Evros is a highly sensitive area, both politically and operationally, and is frequently identified as one of the most critical areas in terms of border surveillance and the control of irregular migration flows (Triandafyllidou, 2020, p. 559).

In recent years, mounting migratory pressures and the worsening humanitarian crises in the Middle East, Asia and North Africa have placed this border at the centre of the European debate on security and human rights. The response of Greece, and by extension the EU, has been characterised by an increasing securitisation of border policies, reflected in the strengthening of surveillance mechanisms, the construction of physical barriers and the intensification of the military presence in the region (Bialasiewicz, 2012, p. 843). This process reflects the tendency to frame migration not merely as a social or humanitarian phenomenon, but as a matter of national security and the defence of the European space.

The significance of the Evros is further underscored by the complex relations between Greece and Turkey, in which border management plays a central role. Turkey, as a transit country and signatory to the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement, plays an ambiguous role: on the one hand, it acts as a barrier to migrants entering Europe; on the other, it has used migration control as a tool for exerting political and diplomatic pressure on the EU (Kasparek, 2016, p. 59). In this way, the Evros border emerges as a symbolic and material space where dynamics of power, security and human rights intersect, reflecting the broader tensions between containment policies and humanitarian obligations within the European project.

Beyond its regional impact, the Evros case reveals a broader dimension of European migration control policy, characterised by the increasing externalisation of borders and the transfer of migration management to third countries. This trend, which aims to contain migration flows outside European territory, has raised serious ethical and legal questions regarding the EU's international responsibility for the protection of human rights (Moreno-Lax, 2018). At the same time, the strengthening of surveillance infrastructure and the use of control technologies such as drones, thermal sensors and biometric systems reflect a logic of 'security governance' that extends beyond the physical space of the Evros, forming part of a broader paradigm of the Europeanisation of borders (Guild, 2021). The Evros border is not limited to the Greek or Turkish context, but also allows for an analysis of the internal contradictions within the European project between the defence of its borders and the commitment to the universal principles of human dignity and solidarity. Despite the extensive literature on the securitisation of migration, there remains a lack of integrated analysis of the Evros as a space that is simultaneously militarised, legally ambiguous and geopolitically instrumentalised, a gap that this article seeks to fill.

In order to achieve the intended aim, it is essential to clearly identify and define the General Objective (GO) and the Central Question (CQ), which are presented, together with the Sub-Questions (SQ), in Table 1:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE To analyse Greece's border control policy on the Evros River, assessing the impact of its securitisation, the consequences for human rights, and the influence of geopolitical relations with Turkey and the European Union.		
CENTRAL QUESTION How do border policies (such as walls and surveillance) balance human rights obligations with security pressures and geopolitical considerations?		
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1 (SO1)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2 (SO2)	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3 (SO3)
To understand the border control measures implemented by Greece at the Evros border.	To analyse border control practices and how they affect respect for human rights and international law.	To assess and understand how the geopolitical interests of Greece and the EU influence the formulation of border policy.
SUB-QUESTION 1 (SQ1)	SUB-QUESTION 2 (SQ2)	SUB-QUESTION 3 (SQ3)
What are the main border control measures implemented by Greece at the Evros border?	To what extent do border control practices affect respect for human rights and international law?	How do the geopolitical interests of Greece and the EU influence the formulation of border policy?

Table 1. Central Question, Specific Objectives and sub-question
Source. Compiled by the authors.

Despite the extensive existing literature on the securitisation of migration and the governance of the European Union's external borders, there remains a persistent gap in the integrated analysis of the Evros border as a space where intensive militarisation, legal ambiguity and geopolitical instrumentalisation intersect in an inseparable manner. This study seeks to address this gap by going beyond a mere description of migration flows, proposing a multidimensional analysis that links Greek domestic policy with structural support from the EU and strategic pressure from Turkey.

The scientific contribution of this article lies in its conceptualisation of the Evros as a 'functional space of exception'. By analysing the period between 2015 and 2024, with a focus on the 2020 crisis, this study adds to the state of the art by demonstrating that securitisation in this region does not constitute a one-off reaction or an operational deviation, but rather an institutionalised strategic process supported by European structures. In this way, the research offers a new analytical depth to the debate on the erosion of international refugee protection regimes in the face of the consolidation of 'governance by containment' at Europe's peripheral borders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the Evros border forms part of a broader field of research on the securitisation of migration, the governance of the EU's external borders, the international protection of refugees, and the geopolitical dynamics between Greece, Turkey and the EU itself. The literature on the securitisation of migration emphasises that, since the end of the Cold War and, with greater intensity following the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015, migratory flows have increasingly been portrayed as threats to internal order, national identity and state security. Within this theoretical framework, migration ceases to be merely a socio-economic and humanitarian phenomenon and is reframed as a security issue, legitimising exceptional measures such as the expanded use of military forces, the construction of walls and the intensive use of surveillance technology.

In the European context, several authors demonstrate how this logic plays out at the EU’s external borders. Triandafyllidou (2020) highlights that the so-called ‘migration crisis’ of 2015 acted as a catalyst for the strengthening of control and containment policies, underscoring the central role of border countries, such as Greece, in the European migration management framework. These approaches allow us to understand the Evros not merely as a territorial boundary between two states, but as a strategic node in a broader system of border governance, in which the EU projects the containment of migration flows beyond its formal borders.

The literature on the externalisation of migration control explores this perspective in greater depth. Kasparek (2016) describes how the Dublin System and associated European policies redistribute responsibilities amongst Member States, placing a disproportionate burden on countries of first entry, such as Greece, whilst encouraging practices aimed at containing and turning away people on the move.

Moreno-Lax (2018) critically discusses the EU's international responsibility in the externalisation of borders, arguing that the transfer of control functions to third countries and to agencies such as Frontex cannot be used to dilute legal obligations regarding human rights and refugee protection. Den Heijer (2012), from a similar perspective, explores the limits of European jurisdiction and the issue of extraterritorial asylum, showing that, even when control takes place outside the EU's traditional territory, protection standards remain applicable. These contributions are particularly relevant to the Evros region, where the presence of Frontex and cooperation with Turkey illustrate precisely the mobile and externalised border described by the authors.

Frontex's activities have also come under increasing scrutiny in academic literature and institutional reports. Investigations by the European Parliament and the European Anti-Fraud Office indicate that the agency was aware of alleged pushbacks (European Parliament, 2021, p. 192) carried out by the Greek authorities and, in some cases, failed to take effective measures to prevent or report them, raising questions about its direct or indirect responsibility for the documented violations. This debate forms part of a wider discussion on the accountability of European agencies and the need for robust mechanisms of democratic and legal oversight of border control. The Evros border emerges, in this context, as a paradigmatic example of the difficulties in reconciling the logic of security and control with the legal obligation to protect people in vulnerable situations.

Finally, the literature on Greek-Turkish relations and regional geopolitics helps us to understand the Evros region as an arena of strategic rivalry and a tool for exerting political pressure. Turkey, as a transit country and an EU partner under the 2016 Agreement, is often portrayed as an ambivalent actor: simultaneously a barrier and a passageway for migrants. Studies on the instrumentalisation of migration show how Ankara uses migratory flows as a means of putting pressure on the EU at times of diplomatic tension, framing migration as a geopolitical resource. In response, Greece reinforces its rhetoric of threat and adopts heightened security measures, presenting itself as Europe's 'shield' in the defence of external borders, which reinforces the domestic and European legitimacy of the policies of militarisation of the Evros.

In summary, the existing literature reveals three main strands that form the theoretical framework of this study: the securitisation of migration as a discursive process that legitimises exceptional measures; the externalisation and technologisation of European border control, with particular focus on Greece's land and sea borders; and the persistent tension between security, geopolitics and human rights, evident in practices that directly challenge the international refugee protection regime. It is at this theoretical intersection that the Evros border becomes a particularly relevant case for analysing how national and European migration control policies produce a border space that is simultaneously securitised, legally ambiguous and politically instrumentalised.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach of an exploratory and analytically interpretative nature, suited to the study of complex phenomena such as border securitisation, state action and the impact of migration policies on human rights.

Set within a constructivist epistemological framework, this approach is based on the assumption that perceptions of threat, political discourses and institutional practices shape the way in which states define and respond to security challenges, making a contextual interpretation of the Evros case essential. To understand this process, a case study was developed focusing on the period between 2015 and 2024, with particular emphasis on the 2020 crisis, a time when border control measures intensified and reports of human rights violations multiplied. Data collection was based exclusively on documentary analysis, including official reports from the EU, the UN, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Frontex, Greek and European legislation, government communiqués from both states involved, journalistic investigations of recognised credibility, reports from non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the ECCHR, as well as relevant academic literature on securitisation, border governance and the geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean. These documents were selected on the basis of thematic relevance, institutional credibility, topicality and a plurality of perspectives, in order to ensure a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the political and security dynamics associated with the Evros.

The data analysis followed a thematic coding approach that enabled the identification of discursive and operational patterns relating to securitisation, technological surveillance, militarisation, pushback practices, the impact on international law and human rights, and the geopolitical influences of Greece, Turkey and the EU itself. In order to ensure the analytical rigour and replicability of the study, data processing followed a qualitative content analysis approach, structured in three distinct phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material, and processing of the results.

3.1. ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES AND CODING CRITERIA

The analysis was structured around four key analytical categories, derived from the theoretical framework of securitisation and the externalisation of borders:

a. Discursive Dimension (Securitisation): Focused on identifying speech acts that frame migration as an ‘existential threat’, ‘hybrid war’ or a risk to sovereignty. The coding criteria included the selection of keywords and metaphors (e.g. 'Europe's shield') in official speeches and government statements.

b. Operational Dimension (Militarisation and Technology): Categorisation of the physical and technological measures implemented, such as the length of the wall, the use of drones, thermal sensors and AI systems. The analysis focused on the role these measures play in 'governance through containment'.

c. Legal and Normative Dimension (Human Rights): Identification of patterns of violations of international standards, specifically the principle of non-refoulement and the right to asylum. The analysis was based on a comparison of reports from NGOs (Amnesty, HRW) with the legal framework of the Geneva Convention and the ECHR.

d. Geopolitical Dimension: An analysis of the power dynamics between Greece, Turkey and the EU, examining instances where migration flows have been exploited as tools of coercive diplomacy.

3.2. PROCESSING LOGIC AND INFERENCE

The approach to data analysis was inductive-deductive. We started from the theoretical concepts of 'space of exception' and 'securitisation' to examine the documents (deduction), whilst the patterns emerging from field reports (such as the normalisation of pushbacks) allowed us to refine our interpretation of the erosion of the refugee protection system (induction). This cross-referencing of sources (documentary triangulation) enabled us to validate the inferences regarding the imbalance between security imperatives and human rights obligations at the Evros border.

The subsequent analysis was interpreted in the light of securitisation theory and studies on the externalisation of European borders, enabling a link to be drawn between the discursive construction of migration as a threat and the operational measures implemented on the ground; this process provided an understanding of the consolidation of the Evros border as a highly securitised and legally ambiguous space, where exceptional practices are normalised in the name of territorial defence.

The analysis of these exceptional practices was framed by the way in which the Evros border is politically constructed as a space of existential threat, in which irregular migration is portrayed as an instrument of geopolitical pressure and hybrid warfare. This securitised framework legitimises the adoption of extraordinary measures that deviate from ordinary legal standards, subordinating the application of the right to asylum and procedural safeguards to imperatives of containment and deterrence.

The militarisation of the border, characterised by a heavy military presence, the use of advanced surveillance technology and the construction of physical containment infrastructure.

The EU’s role as a key architect of this regime of exception was based on the assumption that the political, financial and operational support provided to Greece is not merely intended to strengthen administrative capacities, but functions as a mechanism of governance through external containment, by means of which the EU seeks to prevent migratory flows from reaching its legal territory. This strategy allows the EU to formally reconcile its commitment to human rights with the practical implementation of deterrence policies, creating a zone of legal ambiguity and diffuse accountability in which illegal practices can persist without effective institutional challenge.

However, the study acknowledges certain inherent limitations: the impossibility of collecting data directly in the field, due to the region’s military and political sensitivity, and the potential bias of the available sources—whether governmental or from humanitarian organisations—constitute significant constraints; nevertheless, the methodological procedures adopted ensure rigour, consistency and interpretative soundness, allowing for an in-depth analysis of how Greek border policy seeks to balance—or frequently unbalance—security requirements, international obligations and geopolitical interests within the contemporary European context.

4. ASSESS THE MAIN BORDER CONTROL MEASURES IMPLEMENTED BY GREECE AT THE EVROS BORDER

In addition to the entry points located on the islands, there is also the Evros border in the north of Greece, where the river of the same name marks the land border between Greece and Turkey; this area has, in turn, been the scene of humanitarian disasters that have attracted international media attention.

Of all the measures implemented by the Greek Government in tackling the migration crisis, the one that represented the most immediate response was probably the tightening of border controls, both on the islands and on the mainland (Kathimerini, 2016, p. 243). Greece has invested heavily in strengthening surveillance along the Evros border, a key hotspot for the EU in recent times. One of the most striking measures is the construction and extension of a metal fence, which already stretches for many kilometres and continues to expand. In 2025, the Greek government announced plans to extend this structure even further, with the aim of "protecting national and European borders" (Ekathimerini, 2025, p. 172). At the same time, state-of-the-art surveillance technology has been implemented, including drones, thermal cameras, motion sensors and artificial intelligence systems, enabling constant monitoring.

The border has become a model of a 'smart border' in Europe; as a result, the presence of security and military forces has also increased significantly, often in cooperation with the European agency Frontex, which provides support in the form of personnel.

Greece has also stepped up controls at official border crossings and accelerated the return of migrants to Turkey. These exceptional measures took the form of operational reinforcements of police, coastguard and border guard personnel, with the aim of increasing surveillance and preventing illegal entries, resulting in controls that were more systematic and rigorous than before. Another factor contributing to increased border surveillance – particularly given that Greece is a country with an extensive coastline – was the increase in maritime patrols and Coast Guard operations in the Aegean Sea, aimed at intercepting vessels before they reached Greek territory (Tsourapas & Zartaloudis, 2022, p. 1292).

Although these measures enhance security, they have sparked controversy regarding their compliance with international law and humanitarian standards.

5. TO ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH BORDER CONTROL PRACTICES AFFECT RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Border control practices in the Evros River region have resulted in numerous human rights violations against migrants and asylum seekers. As a country of entry into the EU, Greece faces significant migratory pressure, but the state's responses have frequently undermined human dignity and the right to protection.

Reports by international organisations and NGOs (Amnesty International, 2022, p. 78) highlight degrading reception conditions, excessive use of force, pushbacks and arbitrary detentions – practices that violate the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights.

5.1. INTERNATIONAL LAW

The border control practices implemented by Greece in the Evros River region have raised serious concerns under international law, technological and physical surveillance measures such as the border wall, the use of drones, thermal sensors and automated detection systems, although justified by the Greek government on the grounds of national security, have contributed to an environment of militarisation that hinders the exercise of the right to seek asylum. This situation has frequently resulted in violations of fundamental international standards, notably the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in Article 33 of the 1951 Geneva Convention and Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which expressly recognises the right to asylum in accordance with the Geneva Convention and EU law. Another critical issue is the European Union's shared responsibility, particularly through Frontex. Investigations by the European

Parliament and the European Anti-Fraud Office have revealed that Frontex was aware of pushback practices carried out by Greek authorities and, in some cases, failed to report them or take action to prevent them. Such omission may constitute institutional complicity, in breach of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, which enshrines respect for human rights and human dignity as fundamental values of the Union (Amnesty International, 2020, p. 83). From a legal perspective, such conduct challenges the balance between the sovereign right of states to control their borders and the international obligation to protect people in vulnerable situations. Greece’s actions, although taking place against a backdrop of intense migratory pressure and security concerns, highlight the European tendency to prioritise territorial containment over legal protection, reflecting a restrictive interpretation of international instruments for the protection of refugees.

In a broader sense, the Evros case reveals the gradual erosion of the international refugee protection system and the transformation of European borders into spaces of ‘legal exception’ (Agamben, 2023, p. 18), where human rights standards are frequently subordinated to security imperatives. This phenomenon not only undermines the European Union’s credibility as a promoter of the values of the rule of law, but also weakens the international normative architecture established after the Second World War.

5.2. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND ASYLUM LAW

The border control measures implemented by Greece have raised serious concerns regarding human rights and international law. According to various reports by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, the Greek authorities have carried out numerous pushbacks, and this type of practice violates the right to dignity, protection and safety under the European Convention on Human Rights.

These practices, in addition to directly affecting individuals, also contravene international law, as the Geneva Convention enshrines the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits sending anyone to a country where they may face persecution or ill-treatment. By militarising and strictly controlling the border, Greece ultimately limits access to international protection and undermines respect for its legal obligations; thus, even with the aim of ensuring national security, these measures have contributed to human rights violations and breaches of international law, revealing a clear imbalance between border security and the protection of people (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2020).

6. THE GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS OF GREECE AND THE EU, AND HOW THEY INFLUENCE THE FORMULATION OF BORDER POLICY

From a geopolitical perspective, Greece occupies a strategic position in south-eastern Europe, serving as a gateway to the Schengen Area. The Schengen Area is one of the key achievements of European integration, symbolising the creation of an area of free movement of people within the European Union and certain associated countries. As a physical barrier between the European Union itself and the Middle East. This location gives the country a dual role: on the one hand, Greece is Europe's border and guardian; on the other, it is also a pressure zone, subject to intense migratory flows and diplomatic tensions with Turkey. In view of this, the Greek government tends to adopt border securitisation policies, presenting migration control as a matter of national security and European defence. This narrative legitimises both the reinforcement of the armed forces and police and the use of surveillance technologies and physical barriers along the River Evros (Commission, 2020). Relations with Turkey are another central element in the formulation of border policies. The historical disputes between the two countries involving the Aegean Sea and migration control intensify the geopolitical nature of the border. Turkey has been accused by Greece and the EU of exploiting migration flows as a means of political pressure, particularly following the collapse of the 2016 EU-Turkey Agreement, which provided for joint control of migration routes. Thus, the

Evros border has become a space of symbolic and political contention, where the control of migration flows is intertwined with power politics and regional rivalries.

On the European Union's side, geopolitical interests centre on preserving the bloc's security and internal cohesion. The EU seeks to prevent migration crises from causing political instability among member states and fuelling populist and anti-European movements. Consequently, the Union tends to externalise border control, supporting peripheral countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain to stem migration flows before they reach the interior of the continent. This strategy is manifested through substantial funding, technical support and operational cooperation with Frontex, the European agency responsible for the surveillance of external borders (Frontex, 2021).

Consequently, the formulation of Greek border policy in the Evros region reflects a strategic interdependence: Greece relies on the European Union's political and financial support to manage migration flows, whilst the EU relies on Greece to maintain the credibility of its external borders and the stability of the Schengen area. This relationship, however, also creates tensions. EU pressure for greater efficiency in migration control often encourages practices that conflict with international human rights obligations, such as pushbacks and arbitrary detentions. Thus, Greek border policies in Evros result from an unstable balance between security interests, sovereignty and international legitimacy. The border becomes a space where

European geopolitics materialises, revealing the contradictions between the humanitarian values proclaimed by the European Union and the security practices adopted to defend its borders. In this context, the Evros symbolises not only a territorial line, but also a moral and political boundary that defines how far Europe is willing to go to protect itself, even if this means compromising human rights and the very international law that underpins it (UNHCR, 2020).

7. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

7.1. ANALYTICAL IMPLEMENTATION MODEL: SECURITISATION IN THE EVROS REGION

The securitisation process in the Evros region is led by the securitising actor (the Greek State), which, through rhetoric of “hybrid war” and ‘existential threat’, convinces its audience (both domestic and European) of the need for extraordinary measures, such as pushbacks and the suspension of asylum, thereby transforming the border into a space of legal exception.

7.2. MEASURES ADOPTED BY GREECE

The measures adopted by Greece since 2015, and particularly intensified following the 2020 migration crisis, reveal a structural transformation of the Evros border, which has become a veritable testing ground for territorial control policies. In this space, the logic of security tends to systematically prevail over the protection of human rights, creating a scenario in which irregular migration is framed as an existential threat: “Security is articulated through the construction of migration as an existential threat” (Bialasiewicz, 2012, p. 843). This interpretation should not be understood merely as an operational response to migratory flows, but as a political and discursive process that justifies the adoption of exceptional practices and increasingly intrusive control mechanisms.

The intensification of physical infrastructure—notably the expansion of the metal fence and the growing use of drones, thermal sensors and artificial intelligence systems - illustrates the shift from a traditional model of border control to a regime of permanent, technology-assisted surveillance. This development is consistent with the perspective of authors such as Bialasiewicz (2012), who describe the contemporary European border as a dynamic mechanism for filtering and monitoring. In this sense, the construction of a ‘smart border’ in Evros represents not only a police reinforcement, but the consolidation of a securitised governance that transcends physical space, extending to databases, biometric systems and mechanisms of continuous aerial surveillance.

Documented practices of summary returns, excessive use of force and the denial of access to asylum reveal a serious departure from obligations under international law, particularly the principle of non-refoulement enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention. Frontex’s actions, which are frequently the subject of criticism and investigations for alleged complicity or negligence, highlight this tension between security and legality. Although the agency was established to ensure compliance with border regulations, it finds itself at the centre of allegations regarding tolerance of, or even indirect participation in, pushback practices. This contradiction highlights the gap between the normative values proclaimed by the EU and the practices that have, in fact, been implemented at its external borders. On a geopolitical level, Turkey's role is essential to understanding the securitisation observed in Evros. In 2020, by announcing the opening of the borders, Ankara used migration flows as a tool for exerting diplomatic pressure on Greece and on the EU itself. This move highlighted Europe's strategic vulnerability resulting from its dependence on third countries for migration containment. The Greek response, which included the mobilisation of the armed forces, the militarisation of the border and the temporary suspension of the right to asylum, demonstrates how geopolitical pressures can justify extraordinary measures that directly challenge the European legal framework and the principles of international protection.

Three deeply intertwined dimensions emerge from this process: security, human rights and geopolitics. The security-driven approach cannot be explained solely by the perception of internal risk, but also by a strategic calculation that prioritises stability and the containment of migration, often at the expense of respect for international law. The European Union's political and financial support for Greek actions reinforces a management model that prioritises safeguarding the Schengen area, despite challenges from international organisations regarding its legality. As a result, the Evros border has become a zone of legal exception, where illegal practices are tolerated or even normalised, provided they fit within the narrative of defence against an external threat.

In the domestic Greek context, this process reinforces the government's legitimacy, particularly at times of tension with Turkey. The use of rhetoric portraying migrants as instruments of 'hybrid warfare', which was widely disseminated in 2020, has enabled a humanitarian crisis to be framed as a matter of national security. This narrative serves to justify extraordinary measures and reinforce the perception of the Evros as a symbol of Greek sovereignty and the defence of Europe's borders.

Through this analysis, it is possible to demonstrate that the securitisation of the Evros is not merely a one-off reaction to specific events, but rather a strategic, institutionalised process supported by European structures, whose impact on human rights must be understood as a direct consequence of the political architecture put in place, rather than as mere operational deviations. Through this analysis and reports from international organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, ECCHR and the Aegean Boat Report, it has been possible to deduce data regarding the number of pushbacks.

Although there are no systematic official statistics on pushbacks, numerous reports from international organisations and NGOs agree that these practices intensified throughout 2020.

8. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results demonstrates that the Evros border is not merely a geographical boundary, but the outcome of a successful process of securitisation, where migration has been effectively shifted from political and humanitarian spheres to those of national security and existential survival. By linking the theoretical framework with the empirical data, three key axes emerge that underpin the scientific contribution of this study.

8.1. THE SPEECH ACT AND THE MATERIALISATION OF THE EXCEPTION

As posited by securitisation theory, the discursive framing of migration as a 'hybrid war' and of Greece as the 'shield of Europe' functioned as a legitimising speech act. This rhetoric, which constructs migration as an existential threat, aligns with the perspective of Bialasiewicz (2012), who describes the contemporary European border as a dynamic mechanism for filtering and monitoring. This discourse has materialised in the temporary suspension of the right to asylum and the implementation of a 'smart border', where technology (drones, AI, sensors) and the physical barrier act as material extensions of the security imperative, overriding ordinary standards of international protection.

8.2. THE EVROS AS A ‘FUNCTIONAL SPACE OF EXCEPTION’

Applying Agamben’s (2005) concept to the empirical findings leads to the conclusion that the Evros border has established itself as a space of institutionalised legal exception. The normalisation of pushbacks and the institutional acceptance of violent containment practices, documented by organisations such as Amnesty International (2021, 2022) and Human Rights Watch (2021), demonstrate that, in this zone, the rule of law is suspended in the name of ‘European stability’. This exception is not an accidental deviation, but a structural feature of contemporary border governance, where the lives of migrants are placed in a zone of legal indeterminacy. The omission of Frontex regarding these practices, as highlighted in European Parliament (2021) reports, further reinforces the systemic nature of this regime of exception.

8.3. OUTSOURCING AND DIFFUSE LIABILITY

The findings corroborate the literature on the externalisation of Europe’s borders, notably the studies by Kasparek (2016) on the Dublin System and the redistribution of responsibilities within the European migration regime. The interdependence between Greece and the EU reveals a ‘geometry of convenience’: Greece assumes the role of physical containment and bears the cost of legal ambiguity, while the EU provides financial and operational support via Frontex, maintaining a normative distance that allows it to formally preserve its commitment to human rights. This paradigm of 'rescue-without-protection', discussed by Moreno-Lax (2018), is exacerbated by Turkey's instrumentalisation of migration flows, which acts as the catalyst validating forceful measures as necessary defensive responses.

In short, the analysis reveals a structural imbalance where geopolitical interests and short-term security imperatives undermine long-term legal commitments. The Evros River thus becomes a symbol of a European project which, in seeking to protect its internal space of freedom, ends up creating peripheral spaces of exclusion and normative violence.

9. CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this study demonstrates that the Evros land border has established itself as one of the most sensitive and strategic areas in European migration control policy, playing a central role in the interplay between security, sovereignty and regional geopolitics. Greece, as a Member State of the European Union situated in a peripheral and exposed position, has framed the management of this border within a predominantly security-based logic, in which irregular migration is perceived as a risk factor for national stability and the integrity of the Schengen area.

The findings show that the border policy adopted in the Evros region prioritises deterrence and territorial containment, integrating physical, technological and military measures into a security-based model of border governance. Although this strategic approach contributes to strengthening control and surveillance capabilities, it reveals significant limitations when it comes to reconciling operational effectiveness with compliance with international legal obligations, particularly regarding access to the right to asylum and the protection of vulnerable persons.

The geopolitical dimension emerges as a key factor in the formulation of these policies. Relations with Turkey, marked by historical rivalries and instances of the exploitation of migration flows, reinforce the perception of a threat and, from a political and strategic standpoint, justify the adoption of exceptional measures. At the same time, the European Union's political, financial and operational support for Greece contributes to the consolidation of a model for managing external borders based on the externalisation and delegation of migration control to peripheral states, with a direct impact on the European regulatory framework.

In this way, the case of the Evros highlights a structural imbalance between security imperatives, geopolitical interests and legal commitments, transforming the border into a functional space of exception, where restrictive practices tend to become the norm in the name of stability and territorial defence. This dynamic reveals the internal contradictions of the European project, which seeks simultaneously to assert itself as an area of freedom, security and justice, and to ensure the effective protection of its external borders.

More broadly, this study contributes to an understanding of contemporary borders as multifunctional strategic spaces, where migration policy intersects directly with security and defence. The future challenge for Greece and the European Union lies in developing models of border governance capable of ensuring territorial protection and regional stability without compromising the legal and normative credibility that underpins European legitimacy within the international system.

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PRŒLIUM

PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION IN MILITARY HIGHER EDUCATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF CADETS AT THE MILITARY ACADEMY

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48010

ABSTRACT

This study examines the contribution of pedagogical innovation to the development of command and leadership competencies in military higher education, emphasising the role of active learning methodologies, student-centred approaches, and the pedagogical integration of digital technologies in officer training. Using an exploratory-confirmatory quantitative design and Structural Equation Modeling, data were collected from 398 cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy through the Innovative Pedagogical Practices Perception Scale. The findings revealed a robust three-factor structure comprising Active and Experiential Learning, Perceived Pedagogical Innovation, and Pedagogical Integration of Technology. The structural model showed that Active and Experiential Learning has a positive and significant effect on the development of command and leadership competencies and on perceptions of teaching effectiveness. In contrast, Perceived Pedagogical Innovation and Pedagogical Integration of Technology did not demonstrate significant direct effects. The results suggest that leadership competency development in military higher education is primarily enhanced through contextualised, practice-oriented learning experiences based on problem-solving and realistic operational scenarios.

Keywords: Pedagogical innovation; military leadership; experiential learning; military higher education.

RESUMO

O presente estudo analisa o contributo da inovação pedagógica para o desenvolvimento de competências de comando e liderança no ensino superior militar, destacando o papel das metodologias de aprendizagem ativa, das abordagens centradas no estudante e da integração pedagógica das tecnologias digitais na formação de oficiais. Recorrendo a um desenho quantitativo exploratório-confirmatório e à Modelação de Equações Estruturais, foram recolhidos dados junto de 398 cadetes da Academia Militar Portuguesa através da Escala de Perceção das Práticas Pedagógicas Inovadoras. Os resultados evidenciaram uma estrutura trifatorial robusta, composta pelas dimensões Aprendizagem Ativa e Experiencial, Inovação Pedagógica Percebida e Integração Pedagógica da Tecnologia. O modelo estrutural demonstrou que a Aprendizagem Ativa e Experiencial exerce um efeito positivo e significativo no desenvolvimento de competências de comando e liderança, bem como na perceção de eficácia docente. Em contrapartida, a Inovação Pedagógica Percebida e a Integração Pedagógica da Tecnologia não evidenciaram efeitos diretos significativos. Os resultados sugerem que o desenvolvimento de competências de liderança no ensino superior militar é promovido sobretudo através de experiências de aprendizagem contextualizadas e orientadas para a prática, assentes na resolução de problemas e na utilização de cenários operacionais realistas.

Palavras-chave: Inovação pedagógica; liderança militar; aprendizagem experiencial; ensino superior militar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary strategic, technological, and operational transformations have imposed new challenges on military education institutions, requiring more flexible training models oriented towards the development of complex competencies. The unpredictability of modern environments, combined with technological advancement, digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and multidomain operations, demands officers capable of critical thinking, decision-making under pressure, leading multidisciplinary teams, and adapting rapidly to uncertainty (Vandergriff, 2006; Santos et al., 2019).

Within this context, pedagogical innovation assumes a strategic role by promoting more participatory, reflective, and experiential approaches, in contrast to traditional teaching models centred on content transmission. Military education requires not only technical and doctrinal expertise but also cognitive, behavioural, and interpersonal competencies that enable effective responses to current operational demands (Johansen, 2021).

Pedagogical modernisation in military education is associated with the adoption of student-centred methodologies, active learning approaches, and the integration of emerging technologies. In this context, students assume an active role in the construction of knowledge, developing autonomy, critical thinking, self-regulated learning, and adaptive leadership skills (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Zimmerman, 2002). Simultaneously, the use of digital environments, operational simulation, AI, and immersive learning contexts brings educational processes closer to contemporary operational realities (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Holmes et al., 2019; Radianti et al., 2020).

Accordingly, this study analyses the role of pedagogical innovation in the development of command and leadership competencies, addressing the relevance of student-centred learning, the need for pedagogical innovation within the military context, and the contribution of emerging technologies to the modernisation of officer education and the development of competencies aligned with contemporary operational challenges.

2. STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING

Traditionally, the dominant educational model was based on a transmissive approach in which the instructor acted as the primary holder of knowledge and the student assumed an essentially passive role. This paradigm primarily emphasised memorisation, content reproduction, and summative assessment.

In contrast, constructivist approaches argue that learning results from an active process of knowledge construction in which the student participates in a reflective and autonomous manner (Vygotsky, 1978; Piaget, 1972). Consequently, student-centred learning has gained prominence in higher education, including military education, by emphasising active participation, autonomy, critical thinking, reflection, and collaborative learning, as opposed to the traditional teacher-centred model characterised by the unidirectional transmission of knowledge.

According to Biggs and Tang (2011), learning becomes more meaningful when students actively participate in knowledge construction, while instructors assume the role of facilitators and pedagogical mediators through constructive alignment. In this regard, Parenteau (2021) argues that the development of critical thinking and intellectual autonomy is essential in military education and should coexist with discipline while being fostered from the earliest stages of military training.

Zimmerman (2002) highlights that the most effective learners are those capable of monitoring, regulating, and adjusting their own cognitive and motivational processes. Self-regulated learning therefore plays a central role in the education of future military leaders, contributing to the development of individual responsibility, critical reflection, and the capacity for lifelong learning throughout their careers. The active participation of cadets in debates, problem-solving activities, practical exercises, and scenario analysis promotes essential competencies for command and leadership. Khachadoorian et al. (2020) emphasise that metacognition and critical reflection are fundamental components of military education, contributing to improved decision-making capabilities and strategic performance among officers. Furthermore, student-centred learning fosters more collaborative and interactive learning environments. The European Students' Union (Todorovski et al., 2015) argues that this paradigm promotes not only knowledge acquisition but also the development of transferable competencies such as communication, cooperation, and complex problem-solving.

In the Portuguese context, the Military University Institute (MUI) has been developing pedagogical modernisation strategies aligned with the principles of student-centred learning, seeking to strengthen active methodologies, collaborative environments, and technological integration in military higher education (Instituto Universitário Militar, 2025). Nevertheless, the adoption of innovative pedagogical methodologies may encounter institutional resistance due to the persistence of traditional teaching models and knowledge reproduction practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Many cadets continue to favour memorisation strategies oriented towards summative assessment, while some instructors maintain content-centred teaching practices, thereby hindering the consolidation of more participatory methodologies (Instituto Universitário Militar, 2026).

3. THE NEED FOR PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION

The increasing complexity of contemporary strategic and operational environments has highlighted the need to transform the pedagogical models employed by military education institutions (Parenteau, 2021). Within this context, pedagogical innovation plays a decisive role in preparing leaders capable of operating in uncertain, ambiguous, and technologically complex environments.

Historically, military education has been based on hierarchical models centred on knowledge transmission and the repetition of procedures. In this framework, active learning methodologies, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), are particularly relevant as they promote autonomous learning, critical thinking, and decision-making through the resolution of real and complex problems (Barrows, 1986; Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Makin, 2016). In military education, these approaches bring pedagogical contexts closer to operational realities, fostering the development of command and leadership competencies (Makin, 2016; Vandergriff, 2006). At the same time, changes in student profiles and the emergence of a digital society require more participatory and technology-enhanced educational models capable of increasing engagement and improving learning outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Freeman et al., 2014; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Radianti et al., 2020).

In Portugal, the MUI has undertaken efforts to modernise its pedagogical practices in line with these international trends. Among these initiatives is the Pedagogical Innovation Laboratory-MUI (PIL-MUI), a structure dedicated to pedagogical experimentation, immersive learning environments, multimedia production, and technological integration in military higher education (Instituto Universitário Militar, 2025).

4. THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Digital transformation has profoundly reshaped teaching and learning models in higher education and has become particularly relevant within the military context (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Santos et al., 2019). The concept of blended learning represents one of the most significant expressions of this transformation.

According to Garrison and Kanuka (2004), this approach combines face-to-face instruction and digital learning within an integrated framework, promoting greater flexibility, active participation, and collaborative learning. In military education, the use of digital technologies makes it possible to align training processes more closely with operational realities. Salas et al. (2009) argue that simulation environments facilitate the development of leadership, communication, coordination, and stress-management competencies by allowing students to experience different scenarios within a safe and controlled environment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) constitutes a central dimension of technological transformation in education, enabling the development of adaptive learning systems that provide personalised content, performance monitoring, and real-time feedback (Holmes et al., 2019). According to Park (2024), the integration of AI into blended learning models enhances student engagement and improves learning outcomes.

Nevertheless, technological integration in military education requires investment in both faculty development and existing infrastructure. Technology should therefore be regarded as complementary to, rather than a substitute for, pedagogical interaction and critical reflection (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Holmes et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2019; Johansen, 2021). In this context, pedagogical innovation laboratories and simulation centres are becoming increasingly important in preparing officers for complex, digital, and multidomain operational environments (Vandergriff, 2006; Santos et al., 2019).

5. INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Teaching models centred on standardised examinations tend to privilege memorisation at the expense of critical thinking and the autonomous construction of knowledge (Bao, 2025). In contrast, active learning methodologies promote greater cognitive engagement, information retention, and the development of analytical and reflective competencies (Prince, 2004).

Recent studies further demonstrate that student-centred approaches enhance critical thinking (Gogoberidze et al., 2024) and support knowledge retention through active participation, collaborative learning, and problem-solving activities (Chen et al., 2025).

5.1. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The integration of technology demonstrates that active learning models supported by digital technologies enhance knowledge retention and learning outcomes (Bingol & Ozyaprak, 2025). However, pedagogical innovation involves student-centred methodologies that promote active participation and the meaningful integration of technology (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Dias-Trindade et al., 2021). In this context, Zimmerman (2002) highlights the role of educational technologies in fostering deeper learning, which is particularly relevant in military education.

5.2. ACTIVE LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

The integration of digital technologies supports the development of more dynamic and collaborative learning environments, requiring continuous pedagogical updating by educators (Rocha et al., 2024). In specialised contexts such as military training, simulations, case studies, and experiential learning have proven particularly effective in bridging theory and practice (Salas et al., 2009).

Table 1 summarises the main active learning methodologies identified in the literature, highlighting their pedagogical characteristics, contributions to critical thinking and decision-making, as well as the principal authors associated with each approach.

Methodology	Objectives	Characteristics	Authors
Problem-Based Learning	Solving real-world and complex problems; developing critical thinking and decision-making skills.	Self-directed and collaborative learning; multidisciplinary integration; adaptive leadership development.	Barrows (1996); Hmelo-Silver (2004); Bishop and Verleger (2013); Salas et al. (2009); Vandergriff (2006)
Case-Based Learning	Practical application of knowledge; scenario analysis; knowledge retention.	Use of real or simulated cases; decision-making under pressure; teamwork.	Esbaei et al. (2024); Chen et al. (2025); Choudhury et al. (2025); Salas and Cannon-Bowers (2001)
Flipped Classroom	Greater learner autonomy; optimisation of face-to-face instructional time; practice-oriented learning.	Learning materials studied before class; emphasis on discussion and problem-solving during class sessions.	Crimmins and Midkiff (2017)
Gamification	Increased motivation and engagement; immediate feedback.	Use of game elements; challenges; cooperation and competition; interactive learning.	Deterding et al. (2011); Kapp (2012)

Table 1. Active learning methodologies in education.
Source. Authors' own elaboration based on the referenced literature.

6. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative exploratory-confirmatory research design, using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyse complex relationships among latent variables and to simultaneously assess both measurement and structural models (Hair et al., 2017).

Given the absence of a previously validated instrument for the specific context of Portuguese military higher education, a reflective measurement model was selected, as it is particularly suitable for the initial stages of instrument development and validation (Marôco, 2014). In this regard, a two-stage sequential analytical strategy was followed, as proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), integrating an initial exploratory phase followed by a subsequent confirmatory phase.

6.1. SAMPLE

The sample comprised 398 cadets from the Portuguese Military Academy, aged between 18 and 35 years (M = 21.96; SD = 2.48). Regarding biological sex, 344 participants (86.4%) were male and 54 (13.6%) were female. Concerning the branch of training, 249 cadets (62.6%) were enrolled in programmes leading to service in the Portuguese Army, whereas 149 (37.4%) were enrolled in programmes preparing officers for the National Republican Guard (GNR).

Table 2 presents the distribution of participants according to academic year and study cycle.

	Academic Year					
Study Cycle	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**5th**	**6th**
Military Sciences – Arms	19	57	51	54	5	0
Military Sciences – Administration (Army & GNR)	16	15	18	18	3	0
Military Sciences – Security	13	23	28	24	0	0
Engineering Programmes (Army and GNR)	4	14	10	4	11	11
Total	**52**	**109**	**107**	**100**	**19**	**11**

Table 2. Number of participants by study cycle and academic year.

6.2. INSTRUMENTS

Sociodemographic Questionnaire: A sociodemographic questionnaire was developed to collect personal and academic information relevant to the characterisation of the sample. The instrument included questions concerning participants' age, biological sex, branch of training, and academic year/study cycle.

Perceived Innovative Pedagogical Practices Scale (PIPPS): The PIPPS is a self-report questionnaire developed by the authors to assess cadets' perceptions of innovative pedagogical practices within the context of military higher education. The instrument encompassed several dimensions related to teaching effectiveness, active pedagogical practices, cadet-centred learning methodologies, simulations and operational scenarios, pedagogical use of technology, formative assessment and feedback, the development of command and leadership competencies, and perceived pedagogical innovation. The items were organised using five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), enabling the assessment of participants' level of agreement with the statements presented. The instrument also included open-ended questions designed to gather participants' suggestions and perceptions regarding teaching strategies, practical activities, and the use of technology in the learning process.

6.3. PROCEDURES

Following authorisation from the Cadet Corps chain of command, the questionnaire was administered online to cadets. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the objectives of the study, the confidentiality and anonymity of responses, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Only after reading and accepting the informed consent form did participants proceed to complete the questionnaire. Data processing and analysis were conducted using Jamovi (Version 2.7.30). Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed. To ensure independence between the exploratory and confirmatory phases of the analysis, the total sample ($N = 398$) was randomly divided into two equivalent subsamples ($n = 199$) following the split-sample approach recommended by Hair et al. (2019). The first subsample was used for the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), whereas the second was reserved for estimating the SEM. This approach separates the exploratory and confirmatory phases, reducing the risk of post hoc model adjustments and increasing the methodological robustness of the proposed model (Hair et al., 2019).

The internal consistency of the instrument dimensions was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with values equal to or greater than .70 considered indicative of adequate reliability (Hair et al., 2005). Furthermore, descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted according to participants' sex and branch of training. Additionally, the responses to the open-ended questions were analysed to identify participants' suggestions and perceptions regarding teaching strategies, practical activities, and the use of technology in the learning process.

7. RESULTS

7.1. EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS (EFA)

Prior to conducting the EFA, the adequacy of the correlation matrix was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The results indicated excellent sampling adequacy (KMO = .924) and a statistically significant Bartlett's test, $\chi^2(351) = 3906.334$, $p < .001$, confirming the existence of sufficient correlations among the items to justify the application of EFA. The EFA was conducted using the Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) extraction method with Direct Oblimin oblique rotation, given the theoretical assumption that the underlying factors would be correlated. Extracted communalities were satisfactory, ranging from .452 to .766, indicating that the retained factors adequately explained the variance of the analysed items.

The three-factor solution accounted for 58.29% of the total variance. The first factor explained 41.32%, the second factor 13.97%, and the third factor 3.01% of the variance. Factor 1 comprised items related to Active and Experiential Learning. Factor 2 included items associated with Perceived Pedagogical Innovation, displaying very high factor loadings and demonstrating strong conceptual consistency within this dimension. Factor 3 consisted primarily of items related to the Pedagogical Integration of Technology, presenting moderate to high negative factor loadings. This pattern is expected in oblique rotations and does not affect the substantive interpretation of the factor structure (Table 3).

The factor correlation matrix revealed moderate associations among the factors, particularly between the first and third factors ($r = -.593$), supporting the appropriateness of using an oblique rotation method. Overall, the results indicate a consistent and theoretically coherent factor structure, providing empirical support for the dimensions underlying innovative pedagogical practices within the context of military higher education.

Item	F1	F2	F3
21. Assessment values the innovative learning process and not only the final outcome.	**.914**		
20. I receive regular feedback that helps me improve my performance.	**.827**		
14. The scenarios used help me apply knowledge to real-life situations.	**.766**		
13. Classes incorporate simulations that closely resemble military/professional reality.	**.753**		
12. There are opportunities to learn through experimentation and error.	**.713**		
16. Technology is used to support learning rather than merely to present content.	**.691**		
9. Classes frequently employ active learning methodologies.	**.617**		
22. The feedback received contributes to the development of competencies and improvement of future performance.	**.583**		
8. Instructors adapt classes based on cadets' feedback.	**.661**		
15. Practical exercises and/or simulations contribute to decision-making and future performance.	**.641**		
11. Instructors prioritise problem-solving rather than prolonged lecturing.	**.575**		
10. I am encouraged to take an active role in constructing my own knowledge.	**.529**		
1. Instructors promote active participation during classes.	**.503**		
4. Group problem-solving is encouraged.	**.451**		
2. Case studies related to military/professional contexts are used.	**.427**		
7. Technology is used to support learning.	**,423**		
25. I would prefer methods centred on solving real-world problems.		**.909**	
27. Teaching should include a stronger practical component.		**.820**	
24. Learning should integrate more operational/professional scenarios.		**.815**	
23. I would like to have more activities based on realistic simulations.		**.758**	
26. The use of technology could be further explored.		**.738**	
5. Applied projects or practical assignments are used.			**-.641**
17. Digital tools help me better understand complex situations.			**-.585**
3. Simulations or practical exercises are conducted.			**-.578**
6. Instructors encourage critical reflection.			**-.548**
19. I feel more engaged when educational technologies are used.			**-.546**
18. Technology facilitates the simulation and understanding of operational/professional scenarios.			**-.525**

Table 3. Rotated Pattern Matrix of the EFA of Innovative Pedagogical Practices in Military Higher Education (n = 199).

The dimensional structure of the remaining scales was further examined through two additional EFA, both employing the PAF extraction method. For the Perceived Teaching Effectiveness scale, the results indicated excellent adequacy of the correlation matrix, with a KMO index of .873 and a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(15) = 683.061$, $p < .001$. Extracted communalities ranged from .518 to .690, indicating satisfactory representation of the items by the latent factor. The analysis supported a unidimensional structure, which explained 60.62% of the total variance. Factor loadings ranged from .720 to .831, demonstrating strong item saturation on the identified factor.

For the Command and Leadership Competency Development scale, the results likewise demonstrated adequate psychometric quality of the correlation matrix, with a KMO value of .877 and a statistically significant Bartlett's test, $\chi^2(15) = 630.319$, $p < .001$. Extracted communalities ranged from .499 to .675, indicating adequate representation of the items by the extracted factor. The resulting one-factor solution explained 58.19% of the total variance. Factor loadings varied between .706 and .821, providing evidence of the structural consistency of the scale.

Regarding the internal consistency of the dimensions identified through the EFAs, all scales demonstrated high levels of reliability. The Active and Experiential Learning factor presented a Cronbach's alpha of .945, Perceived Pedagogical Innovation yielded an alpha of .910, and Pedagogical Integration of Technology showed an alpha of .862. The Perceived Teaching Effectiveness scale also demonstrated high internal consistency (α = .901), as did the Command and Leadership Competency Development scale (α = .892).

7.3. DESCRIPTIVE AND INFERENTIAL ANALYSES

The descriptive analysis revealed only minor differences between participants according to sex, with broadly similar mean scores across the dimensions under study. Male participants reported slightly higher scores in Perceived Teaching Effectiveness and Active and Experiential Learning, whereas female participants obtained higher mean scores in Perceived Pedagogical Innovation, Pedagogical Integration of Technology, and Command and Leadership Competency Development (Table 4).

Variable	Male *M* (*SD*)	Female *M* (*SD*)
Perceived Teaching Effectiveness	19.86 (4.03)	19.33 (4.29)
Command and Leadership Competency Development	19.68 (4.35)	20.17 (5.11)
F1 – Active and Experiential Learning	54.12 (9.57)	53.96 (9.48)
F2 – Perceived Pedagogical Innovation	19.56 (3.28)	20.28 (2.86)
F3 – Pedagogical Integration of Technology	21.71 (3.31)	22.28 (2.73)

Table 4. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of the study variables by sex.
Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine sex differences across the study variables. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female participants regarding Perceived

Teaching Effectiveness, $t(396) = 0.885$, $p = .377$; Command and Leadership Competency Development, $t(396) = -0.745$, $p = .457$; Active and Experiential Learning, $t(396) = 0.112$, $p = .911$; Perceived Pedagogical Innovation, $t(396) = -1.530$, $p = .127$; and Pedagogical Integration of Technology, $t(396) = -1.206$, $p = .229$.

Female participants reported slightly higher mean scores in Command and Leadership Competency Development, Perceived Pedagogical Innovation, and Pedagogical Integration of Technology, whereas male participants obtained marginally higher scores in Perceived Teaching Effectiveness and Active and Experiential Learning. However, none of these differences reached statistical significance, suggesting broadly similar perceptions among male and female participants.

With regard to branch affiliation, participants enrolled in programmes leading to service in the National Republican Guard (GNR) reported higher mean scores across all variables when compared with participants enrolled in programmes leading to service in the Portuguese Army. The most pronounced differences were observed for Active and Experiential Learning and Perceived Teaching Effectiveness (Table 5).

Variable	Male ***M* (*SD*)**	Female ***M* (*SD*)**
Perceived Teaching Effectiveness	19.43 (4.21)	20.39 (3.76)
Command and Leadership Competency Development	19.54 (4.52)	20.09 (4.35)
F1 – Active and Experiential Learning	53.18 (10.15)	55.62 (8.25)
F2 – Perceived Pedagogical Innovation	19.41 (3.41)	20.07 (2.88)
F3 – Pedagogical Integration of Technology	21.52 (3.53)	22.22 (2.64)

Table 5. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) of the study variables by branch affiliation.
Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

An independent-samples *t*-test was also conducted to examine differences according to participants' branch of training. The results revealed statistically significant differences in Perceived Teaching Effectiveness, $t(396) = -2.289$, $p = .023$; Active and Experiential Learning (F1), $t(396) = -2.484$, $p = .013$; Perceived Pedagogical Innovation (F2), $t(396) = -1.984$, $p = .048$; and Pedagogical Integration of Technology (F3), $t(396) = -2.094$, $p = .037$. Across all these dimensions, participants enrolled in programmes leading to service in the GNR reported higher mean scores than those enrolled in programmes leading to service in the Portuguese Army.

For Perceived Teaching Effectiveness, GNR participants reported a mean score of 20.39 ($SD = 3.76$), compared with 19.43 ($SD = 4.21$) among Army participants. Similarly, for Active and Experiential Learning, GNR participants obtained higher scores ($M = 55.62$, $SD = 8.25$) than Army participants ($M = 53.18$, $SD = 10.15$). Comparable results were observed for Perceived Pedagogical

Innovation (GNR: *M* = 20.07, *SD* = 2.88; Army: *M* = 19.41, *SD* = 3.41) and Pedagogical Integration of Technology (GNR: *M* = 22.22, *SD* = 2.64; Army: *M* = 21.52, *SD* = 3.53).

In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found for Command and Leadership Competency Development, $t(396) = -1.180$, $p = .239$, although GNR participants reported a slightly higher mean score (*M* = 20.09, *SD* = 4.35) than Army participants (*M* = 19.54, *SD* = 4.52).

Overall, the findings suggest that GNR participants tend to hold more favourable perceptions of innovative pedagogical practices, particularly with regard to active learning, pedagogical innovation, and the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

7.4. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING

In a second stage, a SEM was estimated using the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) approach in order to test the relationships among the identified latent variables. Model assessment included indicators of internal consistency reliability and convergent validity, namely Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE), following the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2017, 2019).

Based on the literature review, an exploratory conceptual model integrating both latent and observed variables was developed to analyse the impact of innovative pedagogical methodologies on the development of command competencies. Drawing upon the dimensions identified through the EFA, the SEM specified in this study is presented in Figure 1.

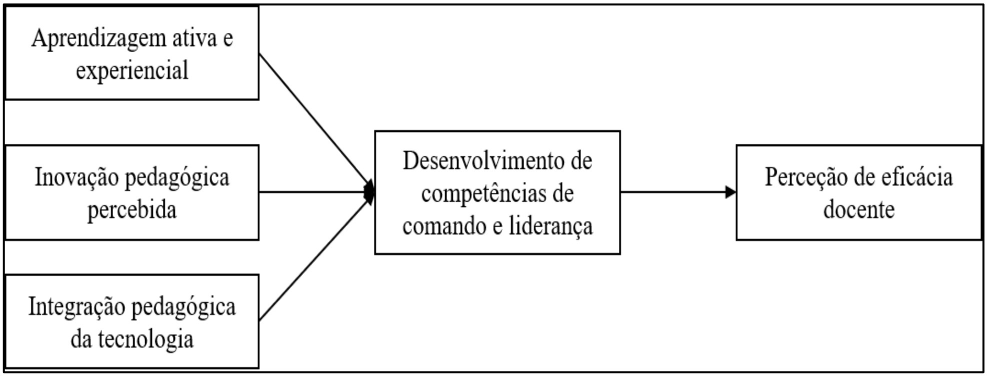

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model.

Based on the proposed model, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Active and Experiential Learning has a positive and significant impact on the Development of Command and Leadership Competencies among cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy.

H2: Perceived Pedagogical Innovation has a positive and significant impact on the Development of Command and Leadership Competencies among cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy.

H3: Pedagogical Integration of Technology has a positive and significant impact on the Development of Command and Leadership Competencies among cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy.

H4: Development of Command and Leadership Competencies has a positive and significant impact on Perceived Teaching Effectiveness among cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy.

Regarding hypothesis testing, the results partially support the proposed theoretical model. Active and Experiential Learning exerted a positive and statistically significant effect on Development of Command and Leadership Competencies ($\beta = 0.737$, $z = 6.972$, $p < .001$), thereby supporting H1. In turn, Development of Command and Leadership Competencies had a positive and significant effect on Perceived Teaching Effectiveness ($\beta = 0.716$, $z = 9.781$, $p < .001$), thus supporting H4.

Contrary to expectations, neither Perceived Pedagogical Innovation ($\beta = 0.066$, $p = .354$) nor Pedagogical Integration of Technology ($\beta = 0.064$, $p = .567$) demonstrated significant effects on Development of Command and Leadership Competencies (DCLC). Consequently, H2 and H3 were not supported. This finding may be partially explained by the multicollinearity detected between Active and Experiential Learning and Pedagogical Integration of Technology ($r = .738$), which may have suppressed the independent effect of Pedagogical Integration of Technology.

The assessment of reliability and convergent validity for the SEM revealed satisfactory to excellent indicators across all constructs. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .865 (Pedagogical Integration of Technology) to .945 (Active and Experiential Learning), while McDonald's omega (ω_1) yielded identical values, confirming the internal consistency of all dimensions above the recommended threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity was likewise supported, with AVE values ranging from .532 to .710, all exceeding the recommended criterion of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019), indicating that each construct adequately explained the variance of its indicators.

7.5. ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

The analysis of the open-ended responses revealed consistent patterns regarding participants' perceptions of pedagogical innovation, teaching methodologies, and the use of technology in military higher education. Overall, participants expressed strong support for more practical, interactive, and technology-enhanced learning approaches.

Technology use in the learning process emerged as the most prominent theme, being mentioned by approximately 65% of participants. Responses highlighted the importance of simulators, digital platforms, multimedia resources, artificial intelligence, and interactive digital environments as means of making learning more dynamic, realistic, and aligned with contemporary operational demands.

Practical activities also represented one of the most highly valued dimensions, being mentioned by approximately 51% of participants. Frequently suggested approaches included field exercises, operational simulations, laboratory activities, case studies, and training in contexts closely resembling professional practice, underscoring the importance attributed to experiential learning and the practical application of knowledge.

Active learning methodologies were referred to by approximately 46% of participants. Common suggestions included debates, problem-solving activities, group work, active classroom participation, and collaborative learning strategies. Participants demonstrated a clear preference for pedagogical approaches that are less lecture-based and more learner-centred.

Furthermore, simulations and operational scenarios were mentioned by approximately 32% of participants and were frequently associated with the development of decision-making, leadership, and adaptability in complex environments. Responses suggest that participants perceive substantial pedagogical value in methodologies based on realistic scenarios and immersive exercises.

Overall, the findings from the open-ended responses reinforce the quantitative results, revealing favourable perceptions regarding pedagogical modernisation, technology integration, and the use of active learning methodologies within the context of military education and training.

8. CONCLUSION

The literature review demonstrates that pedagogical innovation is a complex phenomenon requiring a coherent integration of teaching methods, technologies, and assessment systems. The transition towards a student-centred model, supported by realistic simulations and active learning methodologies, represents a promising pathway to ensure that military higher education continues to develop leaders capable of responding effectively to contemporary challenges characterised by uncertainty and volatility.

The results of the SEM indicate that, among the three pedagogical dimensions examined, only Active and Experiential Learning (AEL) exerts a direct, positive, and statistically significant effect on the Development of Command and Leadership Competencies (DCLC) among cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy ($\beta = 0.737$, $p < .001$). In turn, DCLC significantly influences Perceived Teaching Effectiveness (PTE) ($\beta = 0.716$, $p < .001$), explaining 65.3% and 51.3% of the variance in each construct, respectively. In contrast, Perceived Pedagogical Innovation (PPI) and Pedagogical Integration of Technology (PIT) did not demonstrate significant direct effects on competency development. This finding may be partially attributed to the high correlation observed between Active and Experiential Learning and Pedagogical Integration of Technology ($r = .738$), suggesting the presence of multicollinearity between these constructs.

Future research should consider alternative modelling approaches to mitigate this effect, particularly the possibility of combining Active and Experiential Learning and Pedagogical Integration of Technology into a single higher-order construct. Furthermore, replication of the study using larger and more diverse samples, including other military academies or higher education institutions with similar educational profiles, would contribute to assessing the stability and generalisability of the findings reported here.

The results obtained demonstrate both theoretical and empirical coherence, allowing relevant conclusions to be drawn for the pedagogical management of military higher education while also constituting an original and meaningful scientific contribution. The findings suggest that the development of command and leadership competencies is primarily fostered through pedagogical methodologies that place cadets at the centre of the learning process—encouraging them to experiment, solve problems, receive feedback, and apply knowledge in contexts that closely resemble military reality. When cadets perceive that these competencies are being effectively developed, they are also more likely to evaluate their instructors as effective educators.

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PROŒLIUM

O TERRORISMO DE ATORES SOLITÁRIOS NA UNIÃO EUROPEIA: TRANSFORMAÇÃO DA AMEAÇA E IMPLICAÇÕES SECURITÁRIAS

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48011

ABSTRACT

This article analyses the dynamics of terrorism perpetrated by lone actors in the European Union, assessing how this phenomenon reshapes the internal and institutional security challenges facing the European project. The research focuses on cases recorded in France and Germany between 2015 and 2025, exploring the operational and ideological characteristics of the attacks and their perpetrators. Using a mixed-methods approach, based on the creation of an ad hoc database, 29 attacks were analysed, resulting in 152 fatalities and 653 injuries. The data reveal a predominance of attacks linked to Islamic extremism (80% in France and 71.4% in Germany), frequently involving low-complexity means, such as bladed weapons and vehicles, primarily directed against soft targets. The analysis identifies the acceleration of radicalisation processes, often linked to exposure to digital content, as well as the limitations of traditional counter-terrorism models in the face of decentralised forms of violence. The theoretical framework combines the theory of increasing complexity, the theory of securitisation, and the theory of security complexes. The results demonstrate that lone-actor terrorism constitutes a structural transformation of the terrorist threat in the European Union, requiring coordinated institutional responses that balance security effectiveness with the safeguarding of fundamental rights, in a context marked by the rise of populist and nationalist dynamics.

Keywords: European Union; terrorism; lone actor; soft targets; France; Germany.

RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa as dinâmicas do terrorismo perpetrado por atores solitários na União Europeia, avaliando de que modo este fenómeno reconfigura os desafios de segurança interna e institucional do projeto europeu. A investigação incide sobre casos registados em França e na Alemanha entre 2015 e 2025, explorando as características operacionais e ideológicas dos ataques e dos seus perpetradores. Recorrendo a uma metodologia mista, baseada na construção de uma base de dados ad hoc, foram analisados 29 ataques, dos quais resultaram 152 vítimas mortais e 653 feridos. Os dados revelam uma predominância de ataques associados ao extremismo islâmico (80% em França e 71,4% na Alemanha), com recurso frequente a meios de baixa complexidade, como armas brancas, outros objetos cortantes e veículos, dirigidos sobretudo contra soft targets. A análise permite identificar a aceleração dos processos de radicalização, frequentemente associados à exposição a conteúdos digitais, bem como as limitações dos modelos tradicionais de contraterrorismo perante formas de violência descentralizadas. O enquadramento teórico articula a teoria da complexidade crescente, a teoria da securitização e a teoria dos complexos de segurança. Os resultados demonstram que o terrorismo de atores solitários constitui uma transformação estrutural da ameaça terrorista na União Europeia, exigindo respostas institucionais coordenadas que conciliem eficácia securitária com a salvaguarda dos direitos fundamentais, num contexto marcado pela amplificação de dinâmicas populistas e nacionalistas.

Palavras-chave: União Europeia; terrorismo; ator solitário; soft targets; França; Alemanha.

1. INTRODUÇÃO

O terrorismo contemporâneo na União Europeia (UE) tem vindo a assumir configurações cada vez mais descentralizadas, nas quais a ação individual ganha protagonismo em detrimento de estruturas organizadas. Entre estas manifestações, os ataques perpetrados por atores solitários destacam-se pelo seu impacto assimétrico, não apenas pelo número de vítimas provocadas, mas sobretudo pela sua capacidade de gerar efeitos psicológicos, políticos e mediáticos significativos. A relevância do tema decorre do carácter multidimensional destes ataques, cujos efeitos afetam a perceção de insegurança e a confiança dos cidadãos nas instituições (Institute for Economics & Peace [IEP], 2024; Pinto, 2024).

O artigo foi desenvolvido a partir de uma questão fundamental: em que medida os ataques a soft targets, perpetrados por atores solitários, reconfiguram os desafios de segurança no espaço europeu? Neste âmbito, argumenta-se que o terrorismo de atores solitários não constitui apenas uma adaptação tática às pressões securitárias, mas uma transformação estrutural da ameaça terrorista na UE, expondo limitações sistémicas dos modelos tradicionais de contraterrorismo e exigindo uma reconfiguração das estratégias de prevenção e resposta.

Os objetivos específicos desdobram-se em: (i) analisar as principais características operacionais e ideológicas dos ataques perpetrados por atores solitários; (ii) identificar as vulnerabilidades da UE face a esta tipologia de ameaça.

Tratando-se de um fenómeno de natureza transnacional, os seus impactos ultrapassam fronteiras e colocam desafios às capacidades dos Estados e das instituições europeias. A atuação de atores solitários contra soft targets gera efeitos desproporcionais no sentimento de segurança, potenciando dinâmicas de fragmentação política e o reforço de discursos securitários.

A análise incide sobre o espaço da UE, com enfoque nos casos de França e Alemanha entre 2015 e 2025, examinando as suas características operacionais, motivações ideológicas e implicações securitárias, incorporando uma análise empírica sistemática e um enquadramento teórico ampliado.

2. REVISÃO DA LITERATURA E ENQUADRAMENTO TEÓRICO

A literatura sobre terrorismo tem vindo a crescer significativamente, embora durante décadas tenha privilegiado abordagens holísticas, sem enfoque específico nos atores solitários. A produção científica dedicada a esta tipologia da ameaça terrorista intensificou-se apenas na segunda década do século XXI, destacando-se estudos multidisciplinares como o *Countering Lone-Actor Terrorism* (CLAT).

Um dos principais desafios identificados na literatura prende-se com a ausência de uma definição consensual de terrorismo praticado por atores solitários. Spaaij (2010) define estes indivíduos como atores que operam de forma isolada, sem integração em redes organizadas e cujo *modus operandi* é concebido e executado autonomamente, sem comando externo ou estrutura hierárquica. Ellis et al. (2016) admitem igualmente a inclusão de pequenas células não associadas materialmente a organizações terroristas. Como salientam Spaaij e Hamm (2014), esta divergência conceptual dificulta a consolidação de um quadro analítico coerente.

Apesar da diversidade conceptual, a literatura converge na impossibilidade de estabelecer um perfil único para estes indivíduos, cujas motivações tendem a resultar da combinação de fatores ideológicos, pessoais e contextuais (Pantucci et al., 2015). Paralelamente, a radicalização online assume crescente relevância enquanto facilitador da mobilização individual, permitindo processos de radicalização sem integração formal em organizações terroristas (Pantucci et al., 2015; Weimann, 2012). Parte da literatura sugere que muitos perpetradores manifestam previamente sinais de radicalização, revelando vulnerabilidades nos mecanismos de deteção e prevenção atualmente existentes (Ellis et al., 2016).

A persistência e adaptabilidade deste fenómeno sugerem que continuará a ocupar um lugar central na agenda dos decisores de segurança. Contudo, subsistem lacunas relevantes na investigação, particularmente no que respeita à transição entre extremismo coletivo e individual, à eficácia das estratégias de prevenção e às dinâmicas de radicalização associadas ao terrorismo praticado por atores solitários (Pantucci et al., 2015).

O presente artigo mobiliza três quadros teóricos complementares para analisar o terrorismo de atores solitários na UE: a teoria da complexidade crescente, a teoria da securitização e a teoria do complexo de segurança. A teoria da complexidade crescente permite interpretar processos de radicalização autónoma enquanto sistemas adaptativos caracterizados por interações não lineares, afastando-se de modelos unidirecionais, causais e deterministas, enfatizando a imprevisibilidade idiossincrática que caracteriza este fenómeno. Paralelamente, a teoria da securitização permite compreender de que forma determinadas ameaças são construídas discursivamente como existenciais, legitimando a adoção de medidas excecionais no domínio da segurança. Como sustentam Buzan et al. (1998, p. 21), "The invocation of security has been the key to legitimizing the use of force, but more generally it has opened the way for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers, to handle existential threats." Neste enquadramento, a Escola de Copenhaga sustenta que a dimensão externa da segurança interna emerge desses processos de securitização, incidindo sobre fenómenos como o terrorismo, as migrações e a instabilidade política em regiões vizinhas (Elias, 2013).

Por último, a teoria do complexo de segurança permite compreender a interdependência securitária entre os Estados-Membros da UE, decorrente da natureza transnacional da ameaça terrorista e da ausência de fronteiras internas no espaço Schengen. Como referem Buzan et al. (1998, p. 12), "A security complex is defined as a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another.” A integração destas perspetivas permite analisar de forma mais densa a forma como a UE identifica, interpreta e responde à ameaça terrorista, bem como compreender o impacto transnacional que eventos violentos ocorridos num Estado-Membro podem projetar sobre todo o espaço europeu.

3. OPERACIONALIZAÇÃO DE CONCEITOS

O conceito de ator solitário permanece objeto de debate na literatura, refletindo a dificuldade em delimitar uma tipologia de terrorismo marcada pela autonomia operacional e pela diversidade de perfis. De acordo com o IEP (2025b), este fenómeno refere-se, em termos gerais, a ataques violentos perpetrados por indivíduos que atuam por iniciativa própria, sem integração em estruturas hierarquizadas ou apoio logístico direto de organizações terroristas. Embora possam partilhar referências ideológicas ou manter contactos online com grupos extremistas, os ataques são planeados e executados autonomamente (Pantucci et al., 2015; Weimann, 2012). Apesar da heterogeneidade social, ideológica e motivacional destes indivíduos (Almeida, 2020; Spaaij, 2010), a presente investigação adota a definição operacional proposta por Spaaij (2010), centrando a análise em indivíduos que atuam sem comando externo direto ou estrutura hierárquica.

Paralelamente, os ataques a soft targets assumem uma dimensão central no terrorismo contemporâneo, refletindo estratégias orientadas para a maximização do impacto com recursos operacionais limitados. O conceito refere-se a locais com reduzido nível de proteção física ou securitária, frequentemente associados a elevados fluxos de civis, como infraestruturas de transporte, espaços comerciais ou zonas de lazer (Duarte, 2022). Para além da vulnerabilidade operacional, estes ataques produzem efeitos psicológicos amplificados ao atingirem espaços associados à normalidade quotidiana, contribuindo para a perceção generalizada de insegurança (Elias, 2022).

4. ENQUADRAMENTO METODOLÓGICO

A presente investigação assenta numa abordagem metodológica mista, articulando análise qualitativa e quantitativa para examinar as dimensões estruturais e operacionais do terrorismo de atores solitários na UE. O desenho de pesquisa desenvolve-se em dois níveis: numa primeira fase, procede-se à análise global do fenómeno no espaço europeu; numa segunda fase, realiza-se um estudo de caso centrado em França e na Alemanha, selecionados pela relevância securitária, incidência de ataques e número de vítimas registados.

No plano qualitativo, recorre-se à análise documental e ao estudo de caso, permitindo uma abordagem contextualizada e comparativa do fenómeno (Yin, 2018). A componente quantitativa assenta na análise de dados do IEP e da Europol, complementada pela construção de uma base de dados ad hoc relativa a 29 ataques ocorridos em França e na Alemanha entre 2015 e 2025, dos quais resultaram 152 vítimas mortais e 653 feridos.

A seleção dos casos considerou incidentes classificados como terrorismo, perpetrados por atores solitários e sustentados em fontes verificáveis, excluindo eventos associados a estruturas organizadas ou fora do período temporal definido. A codificação incluiu variáveis relativas à localização, vítimas, tipologia de alvo, perfil do atacante, motivação ideológica e *modus operandi*, seguindo um protocolo estruturado inspirado no *Global Terrorism Database* (Miller & Wingenroth, 2023). A análise segue uma lógica predominantemente dedutiva, articulando pressupostos teóricos com dados empíricos.

5. TERRORISMO CONTEMPORÂNEO E A EVOLUÇÃO DA AMEAÇA

5.1. OS LIMITES DA SEGURANÇA EUROPEIA

O terrorismo contemporâneo constitui um desafio estrutural à segurança interna da UE, não apenas pela diversidade ideológica que o caracteriza, mas sobretudo pela transformação das suas formas de atuação, cada vez mais descentralizadas, adaptativas e difíceis de antecipar. Esta evolução compromete a eficácia dos modelos tradicionais de contraterrorismo, concebidos para lidar com organizações hierarquizadas e redes estruturadas, revelando limitações significativas perante formas de violência individualizadas.

Outro desafio central reside na própria definição do fenómeno. A ausência de consenso reflete a sua natureza ambígua, podendo assumir contornos políticos, étnicos ou religiosos. Como refere Ganor (2015), as definições de terrorismo tendem a refletir os interesses e valores de quem as formula, ilustrando a relatividade frequentemente expressa na ideia de que "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter". Neste contexto, adota-se a definição consagrada na Diretiva (UE) 2017/541, que enquadra como atos terroristas condutas como ofensas contra a vida, sequestro ou utilização de meios letais, quando praticadas com o objetivo de intimidar uma população ou desestabilizar estruturas fundamentais (Parlamento Europeu & Conselho da União Europeia, 2017, art. 3.º).

No plano teórico, Rapoport (2004) apresenta um conjunto evolutivo de tipologias de terrorismo moderno, dominantes ao longo do tempo, através de quatro vagas temporais, desde 1880. Apesar de amplamente acolhido, este modelo tem sido alvo de críticas quanto à sua consistência (Almeida, 2023), sendo, contudo, útil para compreender a transformação das motivações e padrões de atuação ao longo do tempo. A possível transição para uma nova vaga, marcada por formas mais individualizadas de violência, tem sido associada ao chamado "terror do indivíduo"

(Gallagher, 2016), caracterizado por maior autonomia e menor enquadramento ideológico estruturado.

De acordo com a Europol (2024), o terrorismo na UE manifesta-se atualmente sob diversas formas, incluindo o jihadismo, o extremismo de direita e outras expressões de violência política. Historicamente, a evolução deste fenómeno conduziu ao reforço progressivo da cooperação europeia, desde iniciativas intergovernamentais como o grupo *TREVI* até à criação de estruturas como a Europol, no quadro do aprofundamento da integração europeia (Casale, 2008).

Após os atentados de 11 de setembro de 2001, a UE desenvolveu instrumentos mais robustos de contraterrorismo, incluindo planos de ação, reforço da cooperação policial e judicial e mecanismos como o mandado de detenção europeu.

Todavia, foi sobretudo após os atentados de 2015 em França que, conscientes da ameaça representada pelos jihadistas europeus, as autoridades da UE, em articulação com os Estados-Membros, reforçaram as medidas de combate ao terrorismo, intensificando a monitorização das viagens para e a partir de zonas de conflitualidade jihadista (Tomé, 2015).

Contudo, estes avanços não foram suficientes para permitir uma integração supranacional nas áreas da política externa, segurança e defesa, nem da segurança interna (Castro, 2017). Keohane (2005) identifica um paradoxo central nesta matéria: no entanto os Estados reconhecerem que a cooperação europeia é essencial no combate ao terrorismo, continuam relutantes em ceder poderes à UE, principalmente em domínios sensíveis como a segurança interna, o controlo de fronteiras e a recolha de informações. Esta fragmentação compromete a eficácia das políticas europeias de contraterrorismo, dificultando a implementação de uma verdadeira estratégia comum. A evolução de organizações como o Estado Islâmico (EI) reforça a necessidade de ajustar continuamente as estratégias europeias, face a uma ameaça simultaneamente interna e externa (Tomé, 2015).

Neste âmbito, o terrorismo contemporâneo não deve ser entendido apenas como uma ameaça operacional, mas como um fenómeno que expõe limitações estruturais do modelo europeu de segurança. A tensão entre integração e soberania, bem como entre segurança e direitos fundamentais, limita a capacidade de resposta da UE perante formas de violência descentralizadas e imprevisíveis.

5.2. SEGURANÇA INTERNA E POLÍTICA EXTERNA

A Escola de Copenhaga sustenta que a dimensão externa da segurança interna emerge dos processos de securitização que enquadram determinadas dinâmicas como ameaças transnacionais, legitimando respostas concertadas no plano externo (Elias, 2013). Neste contexto, a globalização, a aplicação dos Acordos de Schengen e a crescente interdependência securitária obrigaram os Estados a encarar as dimensões interna e externa da segurança como um sistema articulado de cooperação e resposta multinível (Elias, 2012).

A vertente externa da Justiça e Assuntos Internos assumiu, assim, um papel central na afirmação da UE enquanto ator securitário, reforçando mecanismos de cooperação entre Estados-Membros e parceiros externos (Trauner & Carrapiço, 2012). Todavia, Elias (2013) alerta para o risco de respostas excessivamente centradas no controlo migratório e securitário, em detrimento da compreensão das causas estruturais associadas ao terrorismo, aos extremismos e aos processos de radicalização.

5.3. A TRANSFORMAÇÃO DA AMEAÇA TERRORISTA NA UE

Segundo o IEP (2025b), a natureza do terrorismo no Ocidente sofreu uma transformação significativa nas últimas décadas, marcada pelo predomínio crescente de ataques perpetrados por indivíduos sem ligação formal a organizações terroristas, frequentemente motivados por referências ideológicas difusas ou autonomamente apropriadas. Esta tendência evidencia uma deslocação da ameaça terrorista de estruturas organizadas para formas de violência individual descentralizada.

O IEP, responsável pela publicação do *Global Terrorism Index*, publicou, em 2025, o primeiro relatório exclusivamente dedicado ao terrorismo de atores solitários, concluindo que este tipo de ataque representou 93% dos atentados terroristas com vítimas mortais registados no Ocidente nos cinco anos anteriores (IEP, 2025b). Embora esta tipologia de atuação não seja inédita, encontrando precedentes na vaga anarquista entre o final do século XIX e o início do século XX, o fenómeno adquiriu novas características, particularmente ao nível da aceleração dos processos de radicalização.

De acordo com o IEP (2025b), o tempo médio entre a exposição inicial a conteúdos extremistas e a concretização de ataques diminuiu significativamente desde o início do século XXI, sendo associado à disseminação de conteúdos digitais e à rápida internalização de narrativas ideológicas. Esta dinâmica reflete-se igualmente no contexto europeu, onde a Europol (2024) identifica uma predominância de ataques jihadistas executados por atores solitários, recorrendo a métodos de baixa complexidade e visando sobretudo espaços públicos urbanos.

Pantucci (2011) destaca que muitos destes indivíduos atuam de forma autónoma, inspirados por ideologias partilhadas e sem ligação direta a organizações terroristas, o que dificulta a prevenção e deteção. A simplicidade dos ataques e a descentralização da radicalização constituem desafios relevantes para o contraterrorismo europeu.

6. PADRÕES DO TERRORISMO DE ATORES SOLITÁRIOS

6.1. A ADAPTAÇÃO ESTRATÉGICA DO FENÓMENO

A evolução da ameaça terrorista na UE evidencia uma alteração significativa nos padrões de atuação, marcada pelo aumento de ataques conduzidos por atores solitários. Este fenómeno reflete, em parte, a eficácia das medidas de contraterrorismo dirigidas a organizações estruturadas, mas também uma adaptação estratégica, que privilegia formas de ação menos complexas, mais difíceis de antecipar e com elevada probabilidade de execução (Ellis et al., 2016). No contexto europeu, a literatura destaca a persistência da ameaça representada por atores solitários, particularmente no quadro da mobilização inspirada pelo EI (Hoffman, 2016). Paralelamente, Ellis et al. (2016) identificam dinâmicas de radicalização recíproca, nas quais o terrorismo de inspiração jihadista pode contribuir para a intensificação do extremismo de direita. A subvalorização histórica desta ameaça, em comparação com o jihadismo, poderá igualmente ter criado lacunas nos mecanismos de vigilância e prevenção (Smith et al., 2016).

A crise migratória e a intensificação de discursos securitários contribuíram também para a amplificação de movimentos populistas e de extrema-direita em vários Estados europeus, criando ambientes propícios à radicalização e legitimação simbólica da violência política. Neste contexto, o *Global Terrorism Index 2026* posiciona a Alemanha (29.º) e a França (35.º) entre os países ocidentais mais afetados pelo terrorismo (IEP, 2026). Este enquadramento reforça a relevância analítica dos casos da Alemanha e França, não apenas pela sua posição no contexto europeu, mas também pela incidência de ataques registados nos seus territórios, evidenciando a persistência da ameaça terrorista no espaço da UE. Neste cenário, o prolongamento das tensões no Médio Oriente continua a constituir um fator de risco adicional, podendo contribuir para o aumento da atividade terrorista na Europa, nomeadamente através de ações inspiradas por dinâmicas externas ou associadas a processos de mobilização ideológica relacionados com conflitos internacionais.

Em conjunto, estes elementos demonstram que o terrorismo de atores solitários não constitui uma manifestação residual, mas antes uma forma estruturante de violência, alinhada com as transformações contemporâneas do terrorismo. A sua natureza descentralizada, combinada com a simplicidade dos meios e a autonomia dos processos de radicalização, coloca desafios estruturais aos modelos clássicos de contraterrorismo, exigindo uma reconfiguração das estratégias de prevenção e resposta no contexto europeu. Neste quadro, a análise empírica permite avaliar de que forma estas dinâmicas se materializam em padrões concretos de atuação, motivações e impacto dos ataques registados em França e na Alemanha.

6.2. PADRÕES COMPARATIVOS EM FRANÇA E NA ALEMANHA

França e Alemanha constituem dois casos centrais no contexto da UE, combinando elevada incidência de ataques terroristas, relevância securitária e posições desfavoráveis nos índices globais de terrorismo (IEP, 2025a).

A análise incide sobre 29 ataques perpetrados por atores solitários entre 1 de janeiro de 2015 e 31 de maio de 2025, seguindo a definição operacional proposta por Spaaij (2010).

Os 29 ataques identificados durante o período em análise correspondem a 15 ataques em França, dos quais resultaram 106 vítimas mortais e 503 feridos (representados geograficamente na Ilustração 1), e a 14 ataques na Alemanha, dos quais resultaram 46 vítimas mortais e 150 feridos (representados geograficamente na Ilustração 2).

Ilustração 1. Representação geográfica dos ataques terroristas de atores solitários em França

Fonte. Elaboração própria, com base em dados recolhidos em fontes abertas.

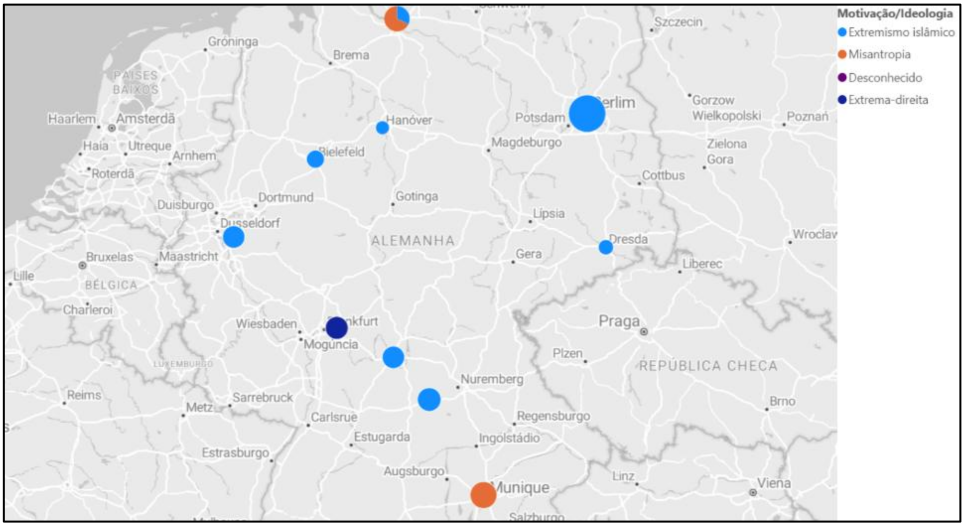

Ilustração 2. Representação geográfica dos ataques terroristas de atores solitários na Alemanha

Fonte. Elaboração própria, com base em dados recolhidos em fontes abertas.

Ao analisar as motivações ideológicas dos atacantes, constata-se que, no caso francês, 80% dos ataques estão conotados com o extremismo islâmico, resultando em 98,9% das baixas registadas. Adicionalmente, verifica-se que 33% dos ataques foram praticados por cidadãos europeus, a mesma percentagem dos ataques praticados por cidadãos não europeus. No caso alemão, o extremismo islâmico representa a motivação ideológica dominante, correspondendo a 71,4% dos ataques, que resultaram em 63,8% das baixas provocadas. Apenas 21,4% dos atacantes são cidadãos europeus e 57,1% não europeus. A predominância do extremismo islâmico, em ambos os casos, não obstante diferenças contextuais, sugerem a persistência desta como principal vetor de mobilização violenta na Europa Ocidental, reforçando a ideia de convergência estrutural da ameaça.

O *modus operandi* utilizado pelos atacantes constitui um dos aspetos determinantes no impacto das suas ações, pois influencia o número de baixas provocadas e permite inferir o grau de sofisticação e planeamento do ataque, configurando um padrão consistente com a lógica não linear da teoria da complexidade crescente.

No caso em análise, em França, 53,3% dos ataques foram praticados com recurso a armas brancas ou outros objetos cortantes. Contudo, ao considerar o número de vítimas, verifica-se que 89% resultaram de ataques com recurso a veículos, revelando que a escolha do meio não é aleatória, mas instrumental, refletindo uma lógica de maximização de impacto com recursos mínimos. Este padrão sugere que os atores solitários internalizam constrangimentos operacionais e ajustam os seus métodos de forma estratégica, evidenciando que a simplicidade dos meios não corresponde à ausência de racionalidade, mas antes a uma adaptação eficiente ao ambiente securitário.

Na Alemanha, em 57,1% dos casos, foram utilizadas armas brancas ou outros objetos cortantes para perpetrar os ataques; contudo, os atropelamentos foram responsáveis pelo maior número de vítimas (34%). A discrepância entre a frequência de utilização e a letalidade sugere uma racionalidade operacional orientada para a maximização do impacto, na qual a simplicidade dos meios não compromete a eficácia letal dos ataques, refletindo padrões adaptativos consistentes com a teoria da complexidade crescente, na medida em que os atores ajustam o seu comportamento às restrições impostas pelos sistemas de segurança.

Em termos de tipologia dos alvos atingidos, todos os ataques foram direcionados contra soft targets, apresentando um quadro maioritariamente homogéneo. No entanto, destacam-se sete ataques contra polícias e militares em França, comparativamente com apenas um caso detetado na Alemanha.

Este facto não exclui que, no decorrer da ação para intercetar os atacantes, existam baixas militares ou policiais; contudo, o foco da análise incide sobre os alvos para os quais os atacantes se direcionaram inicialmente, e não sobre aqueles contra quem reagiram, sendo certo que este tipo de ações culmina, na maioria das vezes, em interações entre os atacantes e as autoridades.

Analisando cronologicamente os ataques registados, verifica-se que, em França, o ano de 2018 foi o que apresentou maior incidência de ataques consumados (3). No entanto, no ano anterior registaram-se dois ataques tentados e um consumado, conforme representado no Gráfico 1. Contudo, o Gráfico 2 permite constatar que o ano de 2016 apresenta um registo substancialmente elevado de vítimas (88 falecidos e 450 feridos), fruto, principalmente, do ataque ocorrido em Nice, em julho, onde o atacante, de motivação ideológica conotada com o extremismo islâmico, conduziu um veículo contra uma multidão, provocando 86 mortos e 450 feridos.

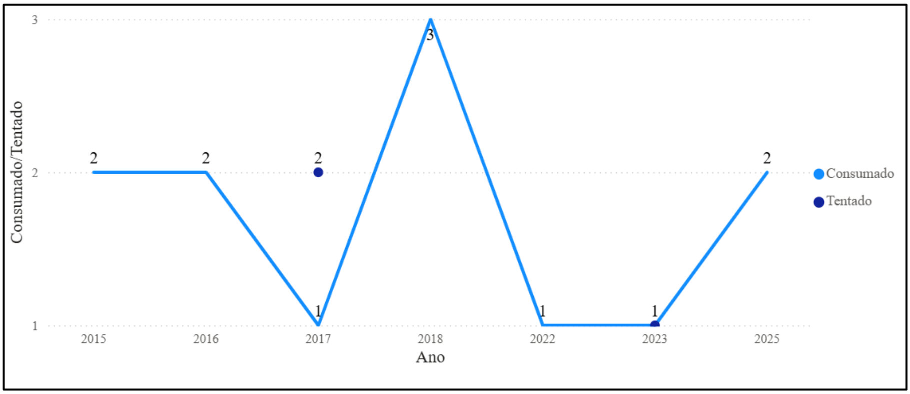

Gráfico 1. Evolução cronológica do número de ataques de atores solitários em França.

Fonte. Elaboração própria.

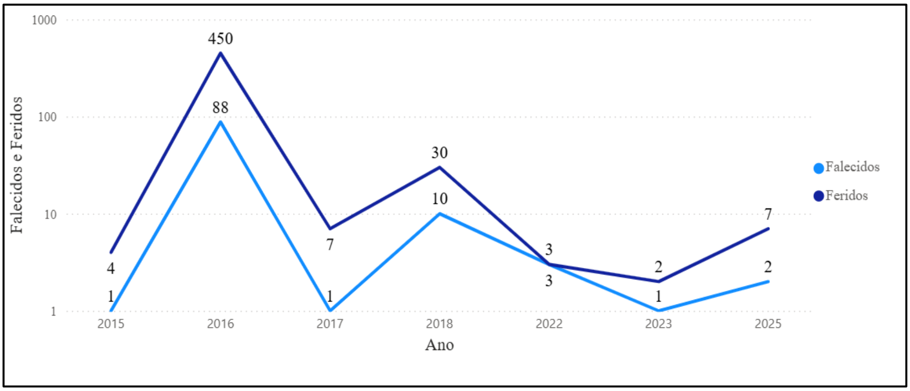

Gráfico 2. Evolução cronológica do número de vítimas de ataques em França.

Fonte. Elaboração própria.

No mesmo período de referência, a Alemanha registou, em 2016, o maior número de ataques consumados (5), conforme ilustrado no Gráfico 3. Paralelamente, esse ano apresentou também o número mais elevado de vítimas (22 falecidos e 93 feridos), como evidenciado no Gráfico 4. À semelhança do ocorrido em Nice, o ataque em Berlim, em dezembro de 2016, de motivação ideológica conotada com o extremismo islâmico e com recurso a atropelamento, provocou um número elevado de vítimas mortais (12) e feridos (56).

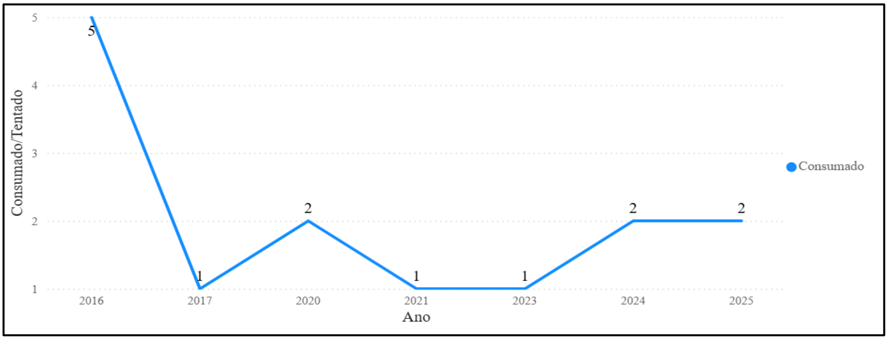

Gráfico 3. Evolução cronológica do número de ataques de atores solitários na Alemanha.
Fonte: Elaboração própria.

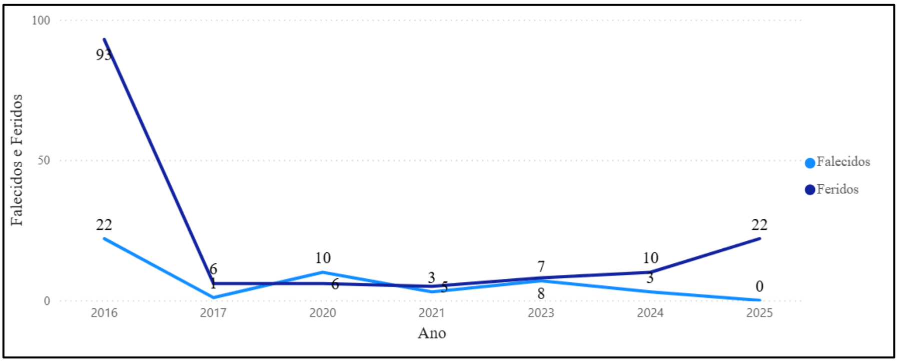

Gráfico 4. Evolução cronológica do número de vítimas de ataques na Alemanha.
Fonte: Elaboração própria.

A análise demonstra que, no período em estudo e em ambos os países, os ataques mais letais foram perpetrados através de atropelamentos, predominantemente associados ao extremismo islâmico. A discrepância entre a frequência de utilização dos meios, maioritariamente armas brancas, e a letalidade dos atropelamentos evidencia uma lógica operacional orientada para a maximização do impacto, sugerindo que, apesar da simplicidade dos recursos utilizados, os atores solitários adotam estratégias instrumentais adaptadas às condições operacionais.

A predominância do extremismo islâmico, em ambos os casos, confirma a continuidade desta matriz ideológica como principal vetor de mobilização violenta na Europa Ocidental, independentemente das diferenças contextuais entre França e Alemanha. Ainda assim, esta tendência deve ser enquadrada na crescente diversificação ideológica do fenómeno, na medida em que o extremismo de direita também assume uma expressão relevante, contribuindo para a natureza híbrida e multifacetada da ameaça e dificultando a sua categorização e resposta no contexto europeu.

Estes padrões não apenas caracterizam o comportamento dos atores, mas também revelam vulnerabilidades estruturais do espaço europeu de livre circulação, na medida em que a simplicidade dos meios e a rapidez de execução dificultam a antecipação e comprometem a eficácia de respostas coordenadas por parte das autoridades.

Para além dos padrões empíricos identificados, importa analisar as respostas institucionais adotadas por França e Alemanha no domínio do contraterrorismo.

6.3. MEDIDAS NACIONAIS DE CONTRATERRORISMO

De acordo com a Europol (2024), a França foi, em 2023, o Estado-Membro da UE com o maior número de atentados terroristas registados e o segundo com maior número de detenções relacionadas com terrorismo. Em resposta à persistência da ameaça, o modelo contraterrorista francês reforçou progressivamente a coordenação operacional e os mecanismos de segurança interna, particularmente após os atentados de 2015 em Paris. Neste contexto, foram implementadas medidas excecionais de segurança, reforçados os dispositivos militares no espaço público e aprofundada a articulação entre serviços de informações e forças de segurança, culminando, em 2017, na criação do *Centre National de Contre-Terrorisme* (CNTC), destinado a melhorar a coordenação estratégica e a partilha de informações (Conseil des Ministres, 2017).

Na Alemanha, a resposta contraterrorista caracterizou-se por uma abordagem mais preventiva, assente na cooperação interinstitucional e reforço do quadro jurídico-penal. Após os atentados de Madrid, em 2004, foram criadas estruturas conjuntas de combate ao terrorismo e monitorização de ameaças digitais, tendência reforçada após 2015 através da criminalização das viagens para zonas de combate jihadista, do financiamento e do apoio material a grupos terroristas. Paralelamente, a Alemanha destacou-se pela implementação de programas multidisciplinares de prevenção da radicalização e combate à propaganda extremista online (Counter Extremism Project, s.d.).

Em síntese, a França caracteriza-se por uma abordagem mais securitária e operacional, enquanto a Alemanha privilegia estratégias preventivas e jurídico-penais. Apesar destas diferenças, ambos os países mantêm uma cooperação ativa no quadro da UE, participando em mecanismos europeus de partilha de informação, vigilância e coordenação contraterrorista, em articulação com estruturas como a Europol, o Eurojust e a Frontex (Kaunert & Léonard, 2019).

6.4. DESAFIOS AO PROJETO EUROPEU

Os ataques terroristas no espaço europeu têm colocado em causa não apenas a segurança interna dos Estados-Membros, mas também a própria lógica de integração e livre circulação da UE. Em particular, os atores solitários têm explorado vulnerabilidades estruturais, provocando impactos sociais e políticos significativos e pressionando as instituições europeias a reforçar as suas respostas.

Paralelamente, tem-se assistido ao crescimento de movimentos populistas e nacionalistas, que instrumentalizam o sentimento de insegurança para promover agendas eurocéticas e restritivas, contribuindo para a fragmentação política e social no seio da UE (Mudde, 2019).

Este contexto aponta para tensões estruturais entre abordagens securitárias mais restritivas e a defesa dos direitos fundamentais, refletindo divergências quanto ao equilíbrio entre segurança e liberdade (Castro, 2017). A ausência de respostas plenamente eficazes tem reforçado a desconfiança nas instituições europeias, alimentando dinâmicas de nacionalismo e questionamento do modelo supranacional.

Por conseguinte, o terrorismo de atores solitários emerge como um desafio transversal ao projeto europeu, exigindo respostas coordenadas que ultrapassem as limitações da ação isolada dos Estados-Membros.

7. CONCLUSÃO

O terrorismo de atores solitários não constitui apenas uma adaptação tática, mas uma transformação estrutural da ameaça terrorista na UE, expondo limitações sistémicas do modelo europeu de segurança. A análise empírica dos casos francês e alemão evidencia não apenas a prevalência deste fenómeno, mas também a existência de padrões operacionais consistentes, nomeadamente a predominância de meios de baixa complexidade e a elevada letalidade associada ao uso de veículos em ataques contra soft targets.

Os resultados indicam que, apesar da aparente simplicidade dos meios utilizados, estes ataques obedecem a uma lógica instrumental orientada para a maximização do impacto humano, psicológico e mediático, explorando vulnerabilidades estruturais inerentes ao espaço europeu de livre circulação. Neste contexto, confirma-se que os modelos tradicionais de contraterrorismo, centrados na monitorização de estruturas organizadas, revelam limitações significativas face à natureza descentralizada, autónoma e imprevisível dos atores solitários.

A predominância do extremismo islâmico como matriz ideológica, associada à aceleração dos processos de radicalização, frequentemente mediada por ambientes digitais, reforça a necessidade de compreender o fenómeno para além das abordagens clássicas, incorporando dinâmicas não lineares e processos individuais de mobilização violenta. Simultaneamente, a análise confirma a existência de uma interdependência securitária no espaço europeu, na medida em que as vulnerabilidades de um Estado-Membro se projetam sobre os restantes, exigindo respostas coordenadas e multinível.

Para além da dimensão securitária, os efeitos destes ataques revelam-se profundamente políticos, contribuindo para a amplificação de dinâmicas de medo, polarização e fragmentação no seio da UE, com impacto direto na ascensão de movimentos populistas e na contestação do projeto europeu.

Apesar das limitações associadas ao recurso a fontes secundárias e à construção de uma base de dados própria, o estudo contribui para a compreensão empírica do fenómeno dos atores solitários na Europa, identificando padrões operacionais e tendências relevantes para o debate académico e para a formulação de políticas públicas.

O terrorismo de atores solitários não deve ser entendido como uma forma residual de violência, mas como uma manifestação estruturante do terrorismo contemporâneo na UE. A sua natureza adaptativa, descentralizada e operacionalmente eficiente expõe limitações profundas dos modelos tradicionais de contraterrorismo, exigindo não apenas ajustamentos incrementais, mas uma revisão estratégica das abordagens de segurança, capaz de responder a dinâmicas rápidas, individualizadas e de baixa complexidade, sem comprometer os princípios fundamentais do Estado de direito.

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TECNOLOGIAS DIGITAIS E O TURISMO MILITAR: PERCEÇÕES PROFISSIONAIS SOBRE DESAFIOS E OPORTUNIDADES

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48012

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse how professionals from the cultural and tourism sectors perceive the role of digital technologies in developing Military Tourism in Portugal. Based on semi-structured interviews with experts experienced in military museums, heritage management and tourism, the study applies qualitative content analysis, supported by MAXQDA, to identify convergences and tensions in the discourse. Findings show that the integration of virtual reality, augmented reality, 3D digitisation and gamification is perceived as a key driver for heritage preservation, educational enhancement and immersive visitor experiences. At the same time, interviewees emphasise structural constraints such as financial costs, organisational resistance and the lack of specialised training. These insights were synthesised in a SWOT matrix, highlighting internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats affecting the digital transformation of military museums. This study contributes to the international debate on digital heritage management in military tourism contexts by providing empirical evidence from an under-researched national setting.

Keywords: Military Tourism; Digital Technologies; Virtual Reality; Heritage; Education; Military Museums

RESUMO

O presente estudo procura analisar de que forma os profissionais do setor cultural e turístico percecionam o papel das tecnologias digitais no desenvolvimento do Turismo Militar em Portugal. A investigação baseia-se em entrevistas semiestruturadas a especialistas com experiência em museus militares, gestão patrimonial e turismo, analisadas por meio de análise de conteúdo, com apoio do software MAXQDA, permitindo identificar padrões de discurso e dimensões críticas. Os resultados evidenciam que a integração de tecnologias como a realidade virtual, a realidade aumentada, a digitalização 3D e a gamificação é entendida como determinante para a preservação patrimonial, para o reforço da dimensão educativa das visitas e para a criação de experiências mais imersivas. Contudo, os entrevistados salientam igualmente constrangimentos de natureza financeira, organizacional e formativa, que condicionam a adoção sustentada destas soluções. Estas perceções foram sistematizadas numa matriz SWOT, identificando forças, fraquezas, oportunidades e ameaças associadas à transformação digital dos museus militares. O estudo contribui para o debate sobre gestão do património digital em contextos de turismo militar, oferecendo evidência empírica de um contexto nacional pouco explorado.

Palavras-chave: Turismo Militar; Tecnologias Digitais; Realidade Virtual; Património; Educação; Museus Militares.

1. INTRODUÇÃO

O Turismo Militar constitui um segmento particular do turismo cultural, cuja relevância tem vindo a ser gradualmente reconhecida, mas que permanece relativamente inexplorado no contexto académico nacional. A sua ligação intrínseca ao património histórico-militar permite não apenas preservar a memória coletiva, mas também projetar uma imagem identitária das Forças Armadas junto da sociedade (Spiers et al., 2022). Neste sentido, a análise das perceções de profissionais com experiência direta na gestão e dinamização de espaços de cariz militar revela-se fundamental para compreender as potencialidades e limitações deste setor.

Nas últimas décadas, as tecnologias digitais assumiram um papel central na transformação das práticas culturais e turísticas. Ferramentas como a realidade virtual (RV), a realidade aumentada (RA), a digitalização 3D e a gamificação têm sido aplicadas com sucesso em múltiplos contextos patrimoniais, proporcionando experiências mais imersivas, interativas e educativas (Diakoumakos et al., 2023; Roussou, 2002; Wachowiak & Karas, 2009). Contudo, a sua aplicação no domínio específico do Turismo Militar permanece pouco estudada, sendo escassa a investigação que explore as perspetivas dos profissionais diretamente envolvidos.

Assim, este artigo tem como objetivo analisar as perceções de especialistas e responsáveis de instituições ligadas ao património histórico-militar relativamente ao impacto e aos desafios da implementação de tecnologias digitais no Turismo Militar. Para o efeito, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas cuja análise qualitativa permitiu identificar padrões de discurso, dimensões críticas e linhas de consenso. Os resultados são apresentados de forma a evidenciar contributos relevantes para a preservação patrimonial, a valorização da experiência dos visitantes e a projeção da imagem do Exército Português, procurando colmatar uma lacuna na literatura científica e oferecer orientações práticas para a gestão estratégica dos museus militares.

2. REVISÃO DA LITERATURA

2.1. TURISMO MILITAR ENQUANTO SEGMENTO DO TURISMO CULTURAL

O Turismo Militar tem vindo a afirmar-se como um segmento específico do turismo cultural, associado à valorização de locais históricos, campos de batalha, museus e património ligado à memória militar. Este tipo de turismo assume uma dupla função: por um lado, contribui para a preservação e divulgação da memória histórica; por outro, desempenha um papel relevante na construção de identidades coletivas e na diplomacia cultural (Butler & Suntikul, 2013; Winter, 2011). A sua crescente relevância está associada à procura por experiências autênticas e educativas, centradas na interpretação do passado e na valorização do património tangível e intangível.

Apesar deste crescimento, o Turismo Militar permanece pouco explorado na literatura científica, sobretudo em contextos nacionais e específicos, como o português. A maioria dos estudos centra-se em destinos já consolidados, como os campos de batalha da Primeira e Segunda Guerra Mundial, negligenciando outras formas de património militar e os processos contemporâneos de valorização museológica (Dunkley et al., 2011). Esta lacuna evidencia a necessidade de aprofundar o conhecimento sobre a forma como diferentes contextos institucionais e culturais influenciam o desenvolvimento deste segmento turístico.

2.2. TECNOLOGIAS DIGITAIS NO PATRIMÓNIO E NOS MUSEUS

Nas últimas décadas, as tecnologias digitais têm desempenhado um papel transformador na gestão e na valorização do património cultural. Ferramentas como a realidade virtual (RV), realidade aumentada (RA), digitalização tridimensional e aplicações interativas têm sido amplamente utilizadas para enriquecer a experiência do visitante, permitindo novas formas de interação com os conteúdos expositivos (Diakoumakos et al., 2023; tom Dieck & Jung, 2017). Estas tecnologias possibilitam a reconstrução de ambientes históricos, a simulação de eventos passados e a criação de narrativas imersivas, contribuindo para uma maior acessibilidade e compreensão do património.

A literatura evidencia que a integração destas soluções digitais pode potenciar o envolvimento cognitivo e emocional dos visitantes, aumentando a sua satisfação e promovendo aprendizagens mais significativas (Roussou, 2002; Bekele et al., 2018). No entanto, a maioria dos estudos tem incidido sobre museus arqueológicos, galerias de arte ou património urbano, sendo ainda limitada a investigação aplicada ao contexto específico dos museus militares. Esta limitação sugere a existência de um campo emergente que requer maior aprofundamento teórico e empírico.

2.3. MEDIAÇÃO CULTURAL, EXPERIÊNCIA DO VISITANTE E EDUCAÇÃO

A mediação cultural constitui um elemento central na relação entre património e público, sendo cada vez mais influenciada pela incorporação de tecnologias digitais. Nos museus contemporâneos, a experiência do visitante deixou de ser passiva, passando a assumir um caráter interativo e participativo, no qual o indivíduo desempenha um papel ativo na construção do significado (Falk & Dierking, 2016). Neste contexto, as tecnologias digitais surgem como ferramentas facilitadoras de experiências personalizadas, inclusivas e adaptadas a diferentes perfis de visitantes.

Estudos recentes demonstram que a utilização de realidade virtual, gamificação e conteúdos interativos contribui para aumentar o envolvimento emocional dos visitantes, promovendo empatia e ligação com os conteúdos históricos (Spiers et al., 2022). Para além disso, estas soluções reforçam a dimensão educativa dos museus, permitindo a transmissão de conhecimento de forma mais dinâmica e acessível (Wachowiak & Karas, 2009). Contudo, subsistem desafios relacionados com o equilíbrio entre inovação tecnológica e preservação da autenticidade do património, uma questão particularmente sensível em contextos históricos e militares.

2.4. GAPS CIENTÍFICOS E CONTRIBUTO DO ESTUDO

Apesar dos avanços registados na literatura sobre digitalização do património e experiência do visitante, verifica-se uma lacuna significativa no que respeita à análise das perceções dos profissionais responsáveis pela gestão e dinamização dos museus. A investigação tem privilegiado abordagens centradas no visitante, negligenciando frequentemente as dimensões organizacionais, estratégicas e institucionais associadas à adoção de tecnologias digitais (Kraus et al., 2022).

Por outro lado, são escassos os estudos que exploram de forma integrada os desafios financeiros, as competências técnicas e as resistências organizacionais que condicionam a transformação digital em contextos museológicos específicos, como o Turismo Militar. Esta lacuna é particularmente relevante, uma vez que a implementação de tecnologias digitais não depende apenas do seu potencial técnico, mas também da capacidade das organizações para as integrar de forma estratégica e sustentável.

Neste sentido, o presente estudo procura contribuir para o avanço do conhecimento ao analisar as perceções de profissionais do setor cultural e turístico sobre o papel das tecnologias digitais no desenvolvimento do Turismo Militar em Portugal. Ao centrar-se na perspetiva dos atores institucionais, este trabalho oferece uma abordagem complementar à literatura existente, permitindo compreender não apenas os benefícios das tecnologias digitais, mas também os constrangimentos e desafios associados à sua implementação.

3. METODOLOGIA

A presente investigação adotou uma abordagem qualitativa, que se considera adequada para explorar perceções, interpretações e significados atribuídos pelos participantes a fenómenos complexos, como é o caso da integração de tecnologias digitais no Turismo Militar (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Neste contexto, optou-se pela realização de entrevistas semiestruturadas, uma vez que este método permite conciliar a existência de um guião orientador com a flexibilidade necessária para captar dimensões emergentes e aprofundar as perspetivas dos entrevistados (Kallio et al., 2016).

O estudo foi orientado por um conjunto de questões de investigação que possibilitaram estruturar a recolha e análise dos dados: (i) compreender de que forma os profissionais percecionam o papel das tecnologias digitais no desenvolvimento do Turismo Militar; (ii) identificar os principais benefícios associados à sua utilização, nomeadamente ao nível da preservação patrimonial, da experiência do visitante e da dimensão educativa; (iii) analisar os constrangimentos que limitam a adoção destas soluções, incluindo fatores financeiros, organizacionais e de competências; e (iv) explorar de que modo estas perceções podem ser sistematizadas num enquadramento estratégico que apoie a tomada de decisão nas instituições militares e museológicas.

A seleção dos participantes seguiu uma estratégia de amostragem intencional (*purposive sampling*), amplamente utilizada em investigação qualitativa quando se pretende obter informação rica e relevante a partir de indivíduos com conhecimento especializado sobre o fenómeno em estudo (Palinkas et al., 2015). Foram definidos critérios específicos de inclusão, nomeadamente: (i) experiência profissional direta no setor do património histórico-militar, turismo ou museologia; (ii) envolvimento em atividades de gestão, valorização ou investigação associadas a museus militares; e (iii) conhecimento ou contacto com processos de digitalização patrimonial e tecnologias aplicadas ao contexto museológico. A amostra final integrou sete participantes, incluindo responsáveis de museus militares, técnicos superiores e académicos, assegurando diversidade de perspetivas e experiências.

O guião de entrevista foi desenvolvido com base na literatura existente sobre turismo cultural, mediação patrimonial e digitalização de museus, garantindo alinhamento entre os objetivos da investigação e as dimensões analíticas exploradas (Falk & Dierking, 2016; tom Dieck & Jung, 2017). O guião foi estruturado em torno de três eixos: (i) valorização e preservação do património histórico-militar; (ii) papel educativo e experiência do visitante em contextos de Turismo Militar; e (iii) contributo das tecnologias digitais, como a realidade virtual, realidade aumentada e digitalização 3D, na mediação cultural. Esta estrutura permitiu assegurar consistência na recolha dos dados, mantendo simultaneamente abertura para a emergência de novas categorias analíticas.

As entrevistas foram realizadas em formato presencial e online, de acordo com a disponibilidade dos participantes, tendo sido previamente obtido o consentimento informado, garantindo os princípios éticos de confidencialidade e anonimato. Todas as entrevistas foram gravadas e posteriormente transcritas na íntegra, assegurando a fiabilidade e integridade dos dados recolhidos. O tratamento dos dados foi efetuado através de análise de conteúdo, uma técnica amplamente utilizada em estudos qualitativos para identificar padrões, categorias e significados presentes no discurso dos participantes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). O processo analítico envolveu uma fase inicial de leitura exploratória, seguida da codificação temática e da organização dos dados em categorias alinhadas com as questões de investigação.

De modo a reforçar a robustez analítica e a utilidade prática dos resultados, recorreu-se à utilização de uma matriz SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*), que permitiu sistematizar as perceções dos entrevistados numa perspetiva estratégica. A escolha desta ferramenta justifica-se pela sua ampla aplicação em estudos de gestão e planeamento estratégico, incluindo no setor cultural e turístico, onde é utilizada para identificar fatores internos e externos que influenciam processos de inovação e tomada de decisão (Gürel & Tat, 2017). Neste contexto, a matriz SWOT possibilitou integrar de forma estruturada os contributos qualitativos, traduzindo-os num quadro analítico que evidencia simultaneamente potencialidades e constrangimentos associados à transformação digital dos museus militares.

Assim, a combinação de entrevistas semiestruturadas, análise de conteúdo e sistematização através da matriz SWOT permitiu desenvolver uma abordagem metodológica coerente e alinhada com os objetivos do estudo, contribuindo para uma compreensão aprofundada das perceções dos profissionais e das dinâmicas que influenciam a adoção de tecnologias digitais no Turismo Militar em Portugal.

4. RESULTADOS E DISCUSSÃO

Os resultados evidenciam que os profissionais do setor reconhecem no Turismo Militar um instrumento relevante de preservação patrimonial e de projeção institucional. Esta perceção encontra suporte na literatura, que destaca o papel do património cultural na construção de memória coletiva e identidade social (Winter, 2011). A valorização da dimensão educativa dos museus militares, frequentemente referida pelos entrevistados, confirma a sua função enquanto espaços de aprendizagem ativa, em linha com os modelos contemporâneos de experiência museológica (Falk & Dierking, 2016).

A integração de tecnologias digitais surge como um dos principais vetores de transformação destes espaços. Ferramentas como a realidade virtual, a realidade aumentada e a digitalização 3D são percecionadas como capazes de enriquecer a experiência do visitante, promovendo níveis mais elevados de envolvimento emocional e cognitivo. Estes resultados corroboram estudos que evidenciam o impacto positivo destas tecnologias na criação de experiências imersivas e na facilitação da aprendizagem (Bekele et al., 2018; Diakoumakos et al., 2023).

No entanto, para além da convergência com a literatura, os resultados permitem aprofundar uma dimensão frequentemente negligenciada: a tensão entre inovação tecnológica e preservação patrimonial. Embora os entrevistados reconheçam o valor das tecnologias digitais, emergem preocupações relativas ao risco de “hiperdigitalização”, que pode conduzir à secundarização do património material. Esta tensão revela um dilema na gestão contemporânea de museus: a necessidade de equilibrar autenticidade e inovação, garantindo que a tecnologia atua como complemento e não como substituto da experiência patrimonial.

Adicionalmente, os resultados evidenciam que a adoção de tecnologias digitais não é um processo linear nem exclusivamente técnico, sendo fortemente condicionado por fatores organizacionais. Os elevados custos financeiros, a escassez de recursos humanos qualificados e a resistência à mudança surgem como barreiras estruturais significativas. Estas conclusões estão alinhadas com a literatura sobre transformação digital em organizações culturais, que sublinha a importância de competências, liderança e cultura organizacional na implementação de inovação (Kraus et al., 2022).

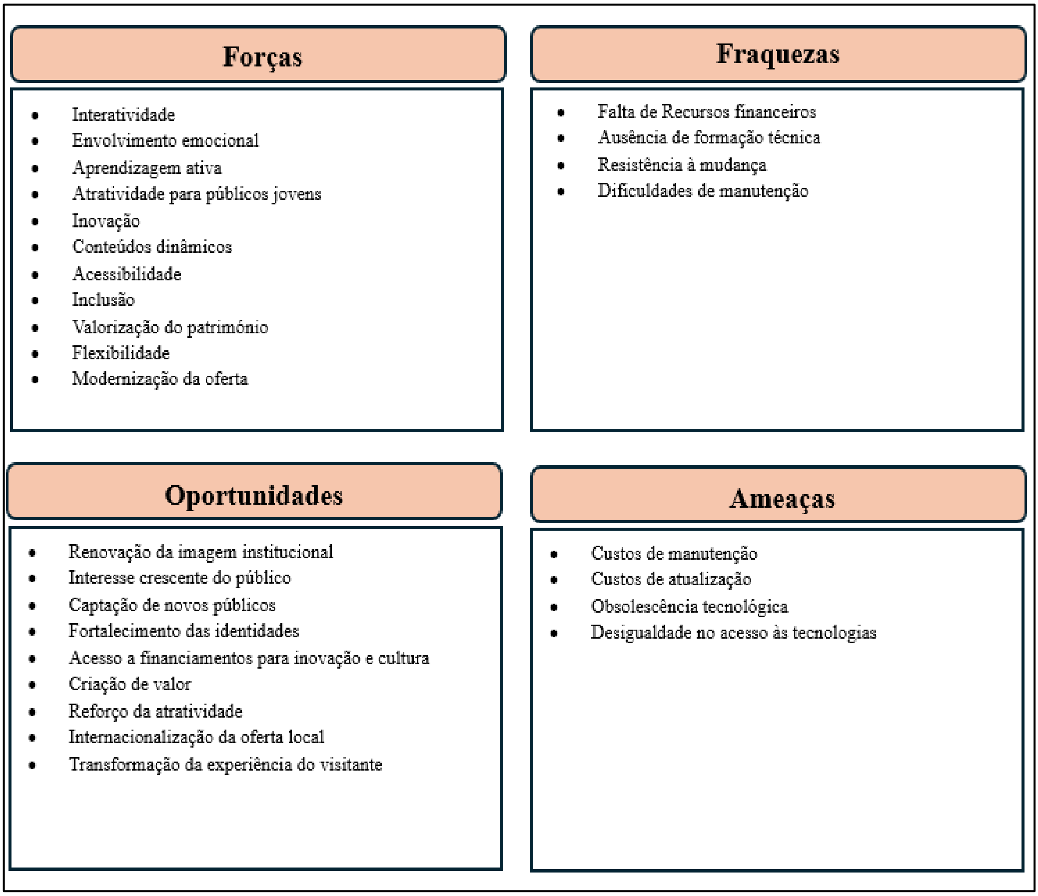

Ilustração 1. Análise SWOT das entrevistas.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

A sistematização destas perceções através da matriz SWOT permite uma leitura integrada das dinâmicas identificadas. As forças e oportunidades evidenciam o potencial do Turismo Militar enquanto segmento diferenciador, capaz de atrair novos públicos e reforçar a comunicação institucional. Por outro lado, as fraquezas e ameaças destacam a necessidade de políticas sustentadas, investimento estratégico e capacitação de recursos humanos.

Importa salientar que este estudo contribui para a literatura ao introduzir a perspetiva dos profissionais como elemento central de análise. Ao contrário de abordagens centradas exclusivamente no visitante, esta investigação evidencia que a transformação digital dos museus militares depende de processos internos complexos, envolvendo decisões estratégicas, alocação de recursos e mudança organizacional. Neste sentido, os resultados sugerem que a digitalização do património deve ser encarada como um processo sistémico, que integra dimensões tecnológicas, humanas e institucionais.

Ainda assim, a análise permite propor uma interpretação mais abrangente do papel das tecnologias digitais no Turismo Militar. Para além de instrumentos de mediação cultural, estas tecnologias assumem-se como catalisadores de transformação organizacional, capazes de redefinir práticas museológicas, modelos de comunicação e estratégias de valorização patrimonial. Contudo, a sua eficácia depende da capacidade das instituições para integrar estas soluções de forma crítica, estratégica e sustentável.

Em termos académicos, este estudo poderá contribuir para amenizar uma lacuna na investigação sobre o Turismo Militar em Portugal, ao integrar a perspetiva dos profissionais diretamente envolvidos na gestão e dinamização destes espaços. Do ponto de vista prático, oferece pistas relevantes para decisores e gestores de museus militares, salientando que a modernização tecnológica deve ser encarada como uma estratégia de longo prazo, articulada com os objetivos de preservação, educação e projeção identitária.

Com base na análise empírica e na articulação com a literatura, foi possível estruturar um modelo conceptual que estabelece relações causais entre tecnologias digitais, mecanismos de mediação cultural, experiência do visitante e impactos estratégicos, evidenciando como a integração de soluções digitais influencia, de forma indireta e mediada, a valorização do património e o desenvolvimento sustentável do Turismo Militar (ilustração 2).

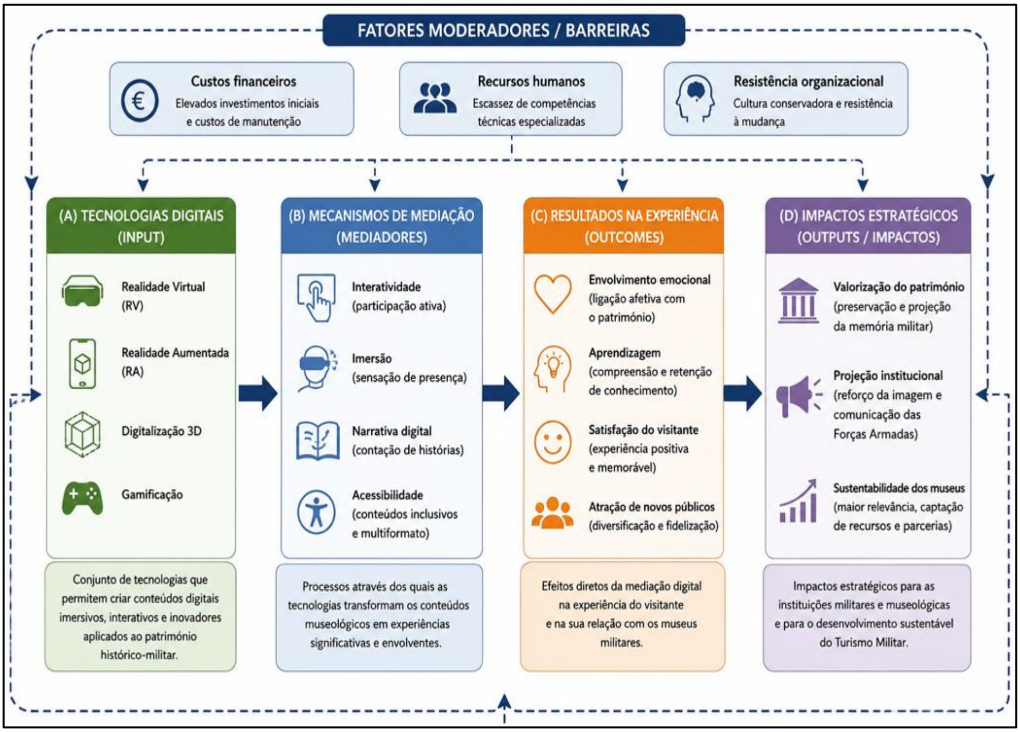

Ilustração 2. Modelo Conceptual: Tecnologias digitais.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Em primeiro lugar, as tecnologias digitais, incluindo a realidade virtual, a realidade aumentada, a digitalização tridimensional e a gamificação, são consideradas como inputs fundamentais que suportam novas formas de mediação cultural. Estas tecnologias não atuam de forma isolada, mas através de mecanismos como a interatividade, a imersão e a construção de narrativas digitais, que permitem transformar a forma como os conteúdos patrimoniais são apresentados e interpretados (Bekele et al., 2018; tom Dieck & Jung, 2017).

Em segundo lugar, estes mecanismos influenciam diretamente a experiência do visitante, promovendo maior envolvimento emocional, reforço da aprendizagem e níveis mais elevados de satisfação. Esta relação encontra suporte nos modelos contemporâneos de experiência museológica, que enfatizam a participação ativa do visitante no processo de construção de significado (Falk & Dierking, 2016).

Em terceiro lugar, a melhoria da experiência do visitante traduz-se em impactos estratégicos para os museus militares, nomeadamente ao nível da valorização do património, da atração de novos públicos e da projeção institucional. Neste sentido, as tecnologias digitais assumem-se não apenas como ferramentas operacionais, mas como instrumentos estratégicos de desenvolvimento do Turismo Militar.

Contudo, o modelo evidencia igualmente a existência de fatores moderadores que condicionam a eficácia destas relações. Elementos como os custos financeiros, a disponibilidade de recursos humanos qualificados e a resistência organizacional à mudança atuam como barreiras à implementação sustentada das tecnologias digitais, limitando o seu impacto potencial. Esta dimensão reforça a necessidade de encarar a transformação digital como um processo sistémico, que exige não apenas investimento tecnológico, mas também mudança organizacional e capacitação institucional (Kraus et al., 2022).

Assim, o modelo proposto oferece uma visão integrada das dinâmicas que estruturam a relação entre tecnologias digitais e Turismo Militar, contribuindo para uma melhor compreensão dos fatores que influenciam a sua adoção e eficácia.

5. IMPLICAÇÕES E TRABALHOS FUTUROS

As implicações práticas deste estudo são particularmente relevantes para os decisores e gestores dos museus militares, bem como para as entidades responsáveis pela política cultural e patrimonial em Portugal. Os resultados sugerem que a integração de tecnologias digitais não deve ser vista apenas como um adereço expositivo, mas como um investimento estratégico capaz de reforçar a preservação do património, aumentar a atratividade junto de novos públicos e projetar de forma diferenciada a imagem do Exército Português. Para tal, é necessário adotar uma visão de longo prazo, que envolva não só a aquisição de equipamentos, mas também a formação contínua de profissionais, a construção de parcerias com universidades e empresas tecnológicas e o estabelecimento de políticas de financiamento sustentado. Estas implicações práticas revelam que os museus militares podem tornar-se verdadeiros laboratórios de inovação cultural, desempenhando um papel ativo na diplomacia pública, na promoção da identidade nacional e na aproximação entre as Forças Armadas e a sociedade civil.

Embora este estudo tenha trazido contributos relevantes ao analisar as perceções de profissionais ligados diretamente ao Turismo Militar e ao património histórico-militar, através de entrevistas e da sua sistematização numa matriz SWOT, abrem-se vários caminhos de investigação futura. Uma primeira possibilidade consiste em ampliar o número de entrevistados, incluindo responsáveis de diferentes museus militares nacionais, de modo a captar uma maior diversidade de perspetivas institucionais. Esta ampliação permitiria reforçar a robustez das conclusões e validar de forma mais consistente os padrões de discurso aqui identificados.

Outro percurso de investigação futura passa pela comparação internacional. Países com tradição consolidada no Turismo Militar, como França, Reino Unido ou Espanha, já exploram soluções digitais em museus e locais patrimoniais. Um estudo comparativo permitiria identificar boas práticas, compreender os fatores críticos de sucesso e avaliar em que medida essas experiências poderiam ser adaptadas à realidade portuguesa. Esta linha de investigação poderia, assim, contribuir para a construção de uma estratégia mais integrada e competitiva a nível europeu.

Por fim, será fundamental integrar a perspetiva dos visitantes, uma vez que este estudo se centrou exclusivamente na visão dos profissionais. A recolha de dados junto do público, através de inquéritos, entrevistas ou observação direta, permitiria compreender como os visitantes avaliam a introdução de tecnologias como a Realidade Virtual, a Realidade Aumentada ou a digitalização 3D na sua experiência museológica. Esta abordagem permitiria cruzar a visão institucional com a perceção dos utilizadores finais, oferecendo um quadro mais completo para apoiar as decisões de gestão e inovação nos museus militares.

6. CONCLUSÕES

O estudo contribui para alargar a compreensão sobre a gestão do património digital em contextos de turismo militar, ao revelar como os profissionais do setor percecionam o papel das tecnologias emergentes na mediação e valorização do património histórico-militar. As entrevistas evidenciaram que os museus e espaços de caráter histórico-militar continuam a ser reconhecidos como plataformas de preservação patrimonial e de transmissão de conhecimento, mas enfrentam desafios significativos para responder às expectativas de públicos cada vez mais digitais, nomeadamente no que respeita a recursos financeiros, competências tecnológicas e atualização dos modelos de mediação.

Os resultados apontam para três contributos principais. Em primeiro lugar, a valorização da função educativa do Turismo Militar, destacada de forma unânime pelos entrevistados, confirma a centralidade destes espaços enquanto contextos de aprendizagem ativa. Em segundo lugar, a perceção de que a integração de tecnologias digitais, como a realidade virtual, a realidade aumentada, a digitalização 3D e a gamificação, enriquece a experiência do visitante e fortalece a ligação emocional com o património. Por último, a identificação de entraves como os custos financeiros, a escassez de recursos humanos especializados e a resistência organizacional à inovação, que condicionam a implementação sustentada destas soluções.

A matriz SWOT construída a partir das entrevistas sintetiza estas perceções, revelando que o Turismo Militar em Portugal possui forças e oportunidades que podem ser mobilizadas para a sua afirmação enquanto segmento cultural diferenciado, mas enfrenta igualmente fragilidades estruturais e ameaças externas que exigem respostas estratégicas. Neste sentido, a importância do Turismo Militar transcende a dimensão patrimonial, configurando-se também como um instrumento de diplomacia pública, de comunicação institucional e de aproximação entre as Forças Armadas e a sociedade civil.

Do ponto de vista prático, os resultados sublinham a necessidade de encarar a modernização tecnológica como parte integrante de uma estratégia de longo prazo. Não se trata apenas de investir em equipamentos inovadores, mas sobretudo de promover uma política consistente de capacitação de profissionais, de avaliação contínua das experiências dos visitantes e de estabelecimento de parcerias com universidades, centros de investigação e empresas tecnológicas. Esta visão integrada poderá não só reduzir as barreiras financeiras e organizacionais identificadas, como também fomentar um ecossistema colaborativo que garanta a sustentabilidade e a atratividade dos museus militares no futuro.

Ao nível teórico, o estudo contribui ao propor um modelo conceptual integrador que articula tecnologias digitais, mediação cultural e impacto estratégico no contexto do Turismo Militar. Ao dar voz a profissionais diretamente envolvidos na gestão e dinamização destes espaços, oferece uma perspetiva empírica que enriquece o debate teórico e pode servir de base para futuras investigações. Estudos comparativos entre diferentes países, análises longitudinais sobre a evolução da digitalização ou a integração da perspetiva dos visitantes constituem caminhos promissores para aprofundar este tema.

Para além disso, a investigação sugere que os museus militares podem funcionar como laboratórios de inovação cultural, capazes de inspirar outros segmentos patrimoniais a repensar as suas estratégias de mediação. O recurso a narrativas imersivas e interativas revela-se especialmente relevante para captar a atenção das novas gerações, reforçando a ligação entre memória histórica, identidade nacional e participação cívica.

Ainda assim, importa reconhecer as limitações do estudo. A dimensão reduzida da amostra e o seu foco exclusivo no contexto português implicam que os resultados devem ser interpretados como exploratórios. A rápida evolução tecnológica poderá igualmente alterar a forma como estas perceções se manifestam no futuro, exigindo novas abordagens e atualizações constantes.

Em síntese, o estudo confirma que o Turismo Militar em Portugal reúne condições para se afirmar como um segmento distintivo do turismo cultural, assente na autenticidade do património, na sua relevância identitária e no potencial educativo. A integração sustentada de tecnologias digitais poderá consolidar esta posição, desde que acompanhada por políticas de investimento, formação e inovação estratégica. O desafio reside em equilibrar a preservação material com a digitalização, garantindo que os museus militares não apenas preservam o passado, mas também dialogam com o presente e projetam o futuro.

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PROELIUM

COMMUNICATION ANXIETY IN THE "ENGLISH APPLIED TO MILITARY OPERATIONS" CLASSROOM

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48013

ABSTRACT

Effective communication in English is essential in contemporary military and security contexts, particularly in multinational operational environments where clarity, accuracy, and confidence are critical. However, technical proficiency in Military English or English for Specific Purposes does not necessarily translate into communicative confidence. This study investigates the manifestations and implications of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety within the curricular units of "English Applied to Military Operations" taught at the Portuguese Military Academy and proposes strategies to mitigate communicative anxiety in military higher education. Combining quantitative survey data with theoretically informed qualitative interpretation, the study draws on responses from 136 cadets from the Army, Military Engineering, and the GNR, collected through a Portuguese translation of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical procedures to identify general tendencies in communicative anxiety and anxiety-provoking classroom situations. The findings suggest that anxiety was primarily associated with spontaneous oral interaction, fear of negative peer evaluation, and concerns about appearing less competent before classmates and instructors. The study further indicates that emotionally supportive teaching practices, including structured speaking activities and supportive feedback strategies, may help reduce communicative anxiety while maintaining the discipline and performance standards characteristic of military education. Overall, the article contributes to the understudied field of foreign language learning in military higher education and argues that communicative anxiety should be understood not merely as a pedagogical issue, but also as an operational readiness concern.

Keywords: Foreign language classroom anxiety; military English; English for specific purposes; military higher education; communicative anxiety.

RESUMO

A comunicação eficaz em inglês é essencial em contextos militares e de segurança contemporâneos, sobretudo em ambientes operacionais multinacionais, onde a clareza, precisão e confiança comunicativa são fundamentais. Contudo, a proficiência técnica em Inglês Militar ou Inglês para Fins Específicos não se traduz necessariamente em confiança na comunicação oral. Este estudo investiga as manifestações da Ansiedade em Sala de Aula na Aprendizagem de Línguas Estrangeiras (*Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*) nas unidades curriculares de ‘Inglês Aplicado a Operações Militares’ lecionadas na Academia Militar Portuguesa, propondo estratégias para mitigar a ansiedade comunicativa no ensino superior militar. O estudo combina dados quantitativos provenientes de questionários com uma interpretação qualitativa teoricamente fundamentada. A amostra integrou 136 cadetes do Exército, da Engenharia Militar e da GNR, cujas respostas foram recolhidas através de uma tradução portuguesa da *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*. Os dados foram analisados através de procedimentos estatísticos descritivos. Os resultados sugerem que a ansiedade está sobretudo associada à interação oral espontânea, ao receio de avaliação negativa pelos pares e à preocupação em aparentar ser menos competente perante colegas e docentes. O estudo indica ainda que práticas pedagógicas emocionalmente apoiantes poderão contribuir para reduzir a ansiedade comunicativa, mantendo os padrões de disciplina e desempenho característicos do ensino militar. O artigo contribui para um domínio ainda pouco explorado: a aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras no ensino superior militar.

Palavras-chave: ansiedade em sala de aula na aprendizagem de língua estrangeira; inglês militar; inglês para fins específicos; ensino superior militar; ansiedade comunicativa.

1. INTRODUCTION: FRAMING FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY

There are few fields where communication flaws can be as fatal as in the military and public security sectors (Park, 2009). The Portuguese Military Academy (MA) trains future officers who will most likely encounter situations where they will need to express themselves confidently and clearly in English, a global lingua franca. At the MA, student-cadets in the Army and National Republican Guard (GNR) receive training in Military English (ME) / English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the Curricular Units of "English Applied to Military Operations' (for Army cadets), 'and English Applied to Security Operations" (for GNR cadets). These units cover tactical vocabulary and specific grammar intended to provide cadets with the tools for fluent communication in their chosen field (Sovhar & Levko, 2023).

To acknowledge the relevance of our study, it is first important to understand the possible consequences of a limited communication for an ME/ESP student.

English proficiency in military higher education is not simply an academic skill, it is *mission-enabling*. It can directly affect operational effectiveness, the safety of military/security personnel and the public, and it can ultimately disrupt international cooperation (Dragomir et al., 2019). Military and security officers are leaders and decision-makers whose command roles demand persuasive, calm and clear communication (Shao et al, 2013). In time-critical situations miscommunication can cost lives, thus, a confident and fluent speaker can reduce friction and delays in important communications like briefings, incident reports, field coordination, etc. Given that the Portuguese Armed Forces frequently collaborate with NATO and EU allies, the English proficiency of those involved directly contributes to the success of joint exercises and peacekeeping missions, often requiring standardized proficiency levels such as NATO's STANAG 6001 (Ivanova et al., 2022).

1.1. ADDRESSING THE GAP BETWEEN TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY AND COMMUNICATIVE CONFIDENCE

Having established the vital importance of clear and accurate communication in the military field, we now address the identifiable gap between technical proficiency in ME/ESP and communicative confidence, i.e. being able to use that knowledge in real-time under any circumstances, making quick adjustments when needed, and reacting appropriately to the unexpected. This gap is critical because this field requires high performance under pressure, and hesitations or unclear speech can be highly prejudicial in multi-lingual/multi-national contexts (Park, 2009).

Fluency in any language is not restricted to a solid knowledge of grammar, it is also influenced by the speaker's intelligibility, pacing, emotional control, and communication strategies such as asking for clarifications, rephrasing, etc. (Shao et al., 2013; Pishghadam, 2009). Therefore, confidence aligned with proficiency in foreign language communication reduces both mistakes and over-reliance on interpreters/translators (either human or machine), who might not always be available or reliable (Sovhar & Levko, 2023).

Considering the Portuguese context, this gap may be associated with educational practices that traditionally prioritize input over output. From the beginning of their English language education, students are guided by teachers/syllabus to spend more time reading and learning vocabulary/grammar, than speaking or engaging in interactive class activities (Walker & Panayides, 2014). English tests usually assess accuracy rather than interactions (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009), and young learners may fear making mistakes when they speak out in class due to a lack of speaking activities, which often leads to reduced spontaneity and communication anxiety in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986; Botes et al., 2022).

The American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology (2015) classifies *anxiety* as "an emotion characterized by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune. The body often mobilizes itself to meet the perceived threat: Muscles become tense, breathing is faster, and the heart beats more rapidly" (American Psychological Association, 2015). Academic literature on foreign language classroom anxiety was spearheaded by Elaine Horwitz, Michael Horwitz and Joann Cope, with the publication of their 1986 seminal article "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety". Here, Horwitz et al. set out to classify it as a conceptually distinct variable, describing its specific effects on the learning process. Having established a theoretical framework for classroom anxiety, the authors then developed a reliable measurement tool to help educators identify and support students who might struggle with anxiety: *The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS).

This scale identifies debilitating anxiety with high reliability and validity, having been incorporated ever since in studies on classroom anxiety. Some noteworthy examples include research with Japanese students (Aida, 1994), Chinese EFL learners (Shao et al., 2013), and Indonesian university students (Said & Weda, 2018). Many scholars have adapted FLCAS to closely relate it to their particular realities and contexts, like the 8-item Short-Form FLCAS (Botes et al., 2022), the

Rasch-based Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Inventory (Walker & Panayides, 2014), and the 20-item version utilized specifically in a military higher education setting (Ivanova et al., 2022).

The FLCAS has sparked plenty of follow-up research on how anxiety plays a part in hindering the progress of foreign language students in a wide multitude of contexts demonstrating its negative impact on academic achievement (Teimouri et al., 2019), its correlation with a reduced willingness to communicate (Liu & Jackson, 2008), and its detrimental effects on learner well-being and self-esteem (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). However, it still remains an understudied field in military educational institutions, which we consider a significant oversight. The goal of Operational English (ME/ESP) is to achieve intelligibility under pressure, and anxiety disrupts the very mechanisms that enable spontaneity, risk-taking in speech and communication recovery, which should make this topic prone to academic research.

This article argues that communicative anxiety in military English classrooms constitutes not merely a pedagogical issue, but an operational readiness concern. Therefore, in the interest of better prepared armed forces, researching ways to improve military/security personnel's communication skills in a foreign language is crucial. Some noteworthy examples that paved the way to this article are the study on motivation and anxiety at the Military Academy in North Macedonia (Ivanova et al., 2022), the study on speaking anxiety among Korean military air traffic controllers (Park, 2009), and the exploration of professional communicative competence in maritime cadets (Fathiah et al., 2020).

2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. DEFINING FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY (FLCA)

As established, FLCA is conceptualized as a "distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128) specifically tied to the classroom language learning process. Unlike general trait anxiety, FLCA is situation-specific, arising from the unique psychological threat of having to communicate in a medium where the speaker's skills are limited. Grounded in the work of Horwitz et al. (1986), FLCA is traditionally broken down into the following three performance-related anxieties:

Communication apprehension refers to the discomfort or fear associated with communicating with others, which is amplified in a foreign language setting where the speaker knows they will likely have difficulty being understood. In a survey we have conducted, this is reflected in items such as "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation" (Item 9) and "I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class" (Item 31).

Fear of negative evaluation occurs in any social-evaluative situation where the speaker anticipates being judged negatively by peers or superiors. This is mirrored in the cadets' responses to Item 31, "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English".

Finally, **test anxiety** speaks on a fear of failure in formal examinations, where students often perceive every correction or mistake as a personal failure rather than a step in the learning process.

2.2. THE ME/ ESP TEACHING CONTEXT

Teaching Military English/ESP within a military higher education institution introduces variables that differ significantly from general English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. The military context adds layers of task pressure and hierarchy that grossly exacerbate communicative anxiety. Unlike civilian students, cadets operate within a strict rank structure where professional identity is tied to perceived competence and leadership.

Research at the North Macedonia Military Academy "General Mihailo Apostolski" suggests that anxiety in this context is deeply rooted in the learners' sense of "self" and the fear of appearing "less competent" in front of peers and superiors (Ivanova et al., 2022).

The literature validates Horwitz et al.'s findings that "[a]ny performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). These effects may be further intensified within military culture, where cadets are expected to project assertiveness, emotional control, confidence, and professional composure at all times. Anxiety disrupts the mechanisms of spontaneity and risk-taking, which are qualities essential for field coordination and incident reporting. This emphasizes why spoken communication anxiety is a critical concern at the Portuguese MA: the transition from classroom accuracy to operational confidence is where the most significant gaps occur.

Military officers are decision-makers, expected to be persuasive, assertive and eloquent when giving operational commands (Ivanova et al., 2022). For a cadet, still building their path towards a military career, the deep discomfort in communicating in a foreign language can directly disrupt their self-image as a future competent leader (Horwitz et al., 1986; Ivanova et al., 2022). The ME/ESP class triggers a noticeable rift inside a cadet; on the one hand there is a capable and authoritative future officer, on the other there is an anxious and tentative speaker who is likely to "freeze" when called upon to engage in a role-play exercise (Horwitz et al., 1986; Ivanova et al., 2022). This fissure can induce profound self-esteem issues that cadets carry with them throughout their whole lives (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). Students can experience "mental blocks" that cause them to temporarily forget a word in the pressure of real-time interactions. If an officer experiences this during an international mission, it would be considered a breach of professional competence (Dragomir et al., 2019; Park, 2009).

The unique hierarchical constitution of military institutions thus acts as a powerful catalyst for FLCA, as cadets are innately aware of social status differences between speakers (Ivanova et al., 2022). This further inflames the fear of perceived incompetence, as cadets feel pressured to avoid an appearance of weakness before peers and superiors (Horwitz et al. 1986; Ivanova et al., 2022,). For cadets, being mocked by their peers could trigger a unique ego-threat (Horwitz et al., 1986; Botes et al., 2022).

As military higher education comprises continuous monitoring of performance, every linguistic mistake can be perceived as a “professional failure”, rather than a learning step (Horwitz et al., 1986, pp. 128, 131). We thus argue that the link between classroom learning of FL and operational confidence is shaped by anxiety, requiring that certain measures are taken to minimize it and hopefully fully eradicate it (Dragomir et al., 2019; Ivanova et al., 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study draws on a digital survey answered by a sample of 136 student-cadets from the Portuguese Military Academy. The group is composed of cadets from the Army, Military Engineering, and the GNR. For this analysis, we have considered all student-cadets as one single group, as we perceive their struggles with learning a foreign language to be transversal to their chosen course. This decision is grounded in the principle that validity and appropriateness are not “location independent” and must be established for the specific population under study. Translating the instrument into the participants’ native language (L1) ensures conceptual clarity and minimizes the risk of unreliable results caused by linguistic ambiguity.

This approach follows established academic precedents where the FLCAS has been translated into languages such as Chinese and Greek to maintain high levels of internal reliability and cultural responsiveness - Shao et al. (2013) and Li and Xu (2019) utilized a Chinese version to study university and high school students, and Walker and Panayides (2014) translated the scale to ensure it was appropriate for their specific population.

The primary tool used was a direct translation of the FLCAS, which consists of 33 items measured on a 5-point Agreement Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". To ensure its accuracy, the survey was translated into Portuguese to match the cadets’ L1, following the systematic procedures used in similar international validations (translated to Portuguese by Professor Ana Romão). By translating the scale, we performed a necessary cultural adaptation that allowed the metrics to capture the specific manifestations of anxiety unique to the Portuguese military environment.

This study combines quantitative survey data with theoretically informed qualitative interpretation grounded in the literature on FLCA. The analysis undertaken has the following structure:

Descriptive Statistical Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed primarily through descriptive statistical procedures, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, to identify general tendencies in cadets' FLCA levels. The analysis focused particularly on anxiety-provoking classroom situations, communicative confidence, and perceptions associated with spontaneous oral interactions, such as the fear of being ridiculed, and the cadets' overall communicative confidence.

Qualitative Interpretation of Findings: While the survey data provided a quantitative profile of cadets' anxiety levels, interpretation of the findings was informed by the theoretical literature on FLCA and the specific institutional characteristics of military education. Particular attention was given to the relationship between communicative anxiety, professional identity, and fear of negative evaluation within hierarchical learning environments.

4. RESULTS

4.1. PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This study was conducted with the volunteer participation of 136 cadets enrolled at the Military Academy who completed the translated FLCAS. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to identify the overall levels of communicative anxiety and the most salient anxiety-provoking situations experienced by cadets in the ME/ESP classroom.

FLCAS Dimension / Item Category	Main Finding	Percentage / Tendency	Interpretation
Overall classroom anxiety	Low-to-moderate anxiety levels among cadets	Mean anxiety score: M = 2.36, SD = 0.66	Anxiety was present but generally manageable
Calmness during English tests	Majority reported feeling calm during tests	68.4% agreed/strongly agreed	Test situations were not perceived as highly threatening
Confidence speaking in class	Many cadets felt confident during oral participation	61.8% agreed/strongly agreed	Learners demonstrated relatively high communicative self-confidence
Positive attitude toward English lessons	Cadets expressed willingness to attend more classes	60.3% agreed/strongly agreed	English learning was generally viewed positively
Relaxation before English lessons	Majority reported feeling relaxed before class	58.1% agreed/strongly agreed	Anticipatory anxiety appeared limited
Nervousness when called upon unexpectedly	Elevated anxiety during spontaneous oral interaction	Moderate-to-high tendency	Unpredictability increased communicative stress
Fear of making mistakes	Some cadets worried about linguistic errors	Moderate tendency	Error sensitivity remained an important anxiety factor
Fear of negative peer evaluation	Relatively low concern about classmates' reactions	Low tendency	Classroom climate appeared supportive
Anxiety related to teacher correction	Limited anxiety concerning instructor feedback	Low tendency	Teacher behavior was not perceived as threatening
Comparison with peers	Some cadets perceived classmates as more proficient	Moderate tendency	Social comparison influenced communicative confidence

Table 1. Main Findings on FLCA Among Military Academy Cadets (n=136).

4.2. OVERALL LEVELS OF FLCA

The overall results show that cadets claim to experience generally low-to-moderate levels of communicative anxiety in English language classes. The mean anxiety score across all items was 2.36 (SD = 0.66) on a five-point scale, suggesting that although anxiety is recognized, it is not perceived as a dominating factor in the learning experience of most participants.

The findings further state that cadets consider they have relatively high levels of confidence and comfort in several communicative situations. In particular, many respondents indicated that they remain calm during English tests and generally approach classes with a positive attitude. For example, 68.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are usually calm during English tests. Similarly, 61.8% reported feeling confident when speaking in class, while 60.3% stated that they would not mind having more English lessons. Furthermore, 58.1% indicated that they feel relaxed and confident on their way to classes.

A considerable proportion of cadets reported experiencing nervousness when required to respond without preparation during classroom interaction. Many also expressed discomfort when they were uncertain whether they would be called upon by the professor, indicating that unpredictability in classroom communication may intensify anxiety levels. Feelings of comparison with peers also emerged as an important factor. Some cadets reported perceiving other students as more proficient in English, which may contribute to reduced communicative confidence and increased self-consciousness during oral tasks. These results demonstrate that communicative confidence was strongly associated with familiarity and preparation. Cadets reported significantly lower anxiety in situations involving prepared speech or predictable communicative tasks, whereas spontaneous interaction generated noticeably higher levels of tension. This tendency reflects one of the central characteristics of foreign language anxiety identified in previous research: oral performance under conditions of uncertainty often produces higher psychological pressure than receptive or written activities.

Concern about teacher correction and fear of failing the English course did not emerge as dominant sources of anxiety for most respondents. The least anxiety-provoking items included fear of teacher correction, concern about the pace of lessons, and confusion resulting from studying for English tests. These findings may stem from the fact that the English Curricular units are not considered as important as other (more operational) units by the cadets. At the same time, fear of negative peer evaluation appeared less pronounced than expected. Only a relatively small proportion of participants agreed that they were afraid classmates would laugh at them when speaking English.

An additional observation emerging from the study concerns the apparent discrepancy between the questionnaire results and the classroom behaviors observed by the English instructors responsible for this research. Although the survey data generally indicated moderate and manageable levels of communicative anxiety, classroom observation frequently revealed visibly higher levels of nervousness, hesitation, and emotional tension during oral interaction activities. Cadets often appear reluctant to volunteer answers, display signs of stress during spontaneous speaking tasks, and demonstrate behavioral indicators commonly associated with communication apprehension. This discrepancy may be partially explained by the specific sociocultural and institutional characteristics of military education. Within military environments, competence, emotional control, resilience, and self-discipline are highly valued attributes. As a result, cadets may feel a strong implicit pressure to minimize or conceal signs of vulnerability, including anxiety related to foreign language performance. Self-reported questionnaire responses may therefore underestimate the actual intensity of communicative anxiety experienced during classroom interaction in a military context. We believe that many cadets may have responded in ways that reflected the professional identity expected within military culture rather than their immediate emotional experiences during language learning situations.

The findings therefore suggest that a deeper and more complex study is in order to fully understand the impact of communicative anxiety in military contexts. Consequently, future research on foreign language anxiety in military educational settings may benefit from combining quantitative survey methods with classroom observation, qualitative interviews, and behavioral analysis to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of communicative anxiety among military learners.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated communicative anxiety among cadets enrolled at the Portuguese Military Academy and demonstrated that FLCA remains a significant affective factor within military higher education. Although questionnaire responses generally indicated moderate and manageable anxiety levels, classroom observation revealed noticeably higher levels of hesitation, nervousness, and communicative apprehension during spontaneous oral interaction tasks. This discrepancy between self-reported perceptions and observable classroom behavior constitutes one of the study's most relevant findings.

The results suggest that communicative anxiety in military educational contexts may be partially concealed by institutional expectations associated with discipline, emotional control, resilience, and professional competence. Cadets may therefore minimize visible signs of vulnerability while still experiencing substantial communicative stress internally. These findings reinforce the importance of complementing self-report instruments with classroom observation and qualitative interpretation when investigating affective dimensions of language learning in military settings.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings indicate that emotionally supportive teaching practices may help reduce debilitating classroom anxiety while maintaining the discipline and performance standards characteristic of military education. Strategies such as small-group speaking activities, preparation time before oral participation, realistic communicative simulations, and supportive feedback practices may contribute to the gradual development of communicative confidence in psychologically safer learning environments.

The results further emphasize the importance of recognizing anxiety-related behaviors accurately. Learners who appear withdrawn, hesitant, or reluctant to participate may not necessarily lack motivation or preparation; rather, they may be experiencing significant communicative apprehension that remains hidden beneath outward displays of discipline and composure. Educators therefore play a crucial role not only in developing linguistic competence but also in creating classroom environments that support emotional security, communicative risk-taking, and learner resilience.

Overall, this study argues that communicative anxiety in military English classrooms should not be interpreted as an individual weakness, but as a context-sensitive phenomenon shaped by institutional culture, classroom dynamics, and emotional regulation. Addressing communicative anxiety through supportive and evidence-based pedagogical practices may ultimately contribute not only to more effective foreign language learning, but also to the preparation of more confident and operationally effective officers in multinational environments.

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O ORÇAMENTO PARTICIPATIVO NO MUNICÍPIO DE PENELA: PARTICIPAÇÃO CIDADÃ, EXECUÇÃO DOS PROJETOS E CONTINUIDADE INSTITUCIONAL

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48014

ABSTRACT

This article examines the Participatory Budgeting process in the Municipality of Penela, focusing on citizen participation, project implementation, and the mechanism's continuity over time. The study is based on a qualitative case study supported by document analysis, municipal data, and semi-structured interviews with members of the municipal administration. The analysis records that the local process has combined gradual growth in participation with procedures aimed at budgetary control, technical screening, and monitoring of project execution. The case also shows efforts to adapt the mechanism to local conditions, namely by introducing youth participation and using both digital and face-to-face channels. Rather than treating Penela as a representative case of Portuguese municipalities in general, the article presents it as a local experience that allows observation of how a participatory instrument is operationalised in a small municipality. The study concludes that the continuity of the process has been associated with administrative follow-up, procedural adaptation, and the maintenance of regular opportunities for citizen involvement.

Keywords: Participatory budgeting; local governance; citizen participation; municipal administration; Penela

RESUMO

O presente artigo analisa o Orçamento Participativo no Município de Penela, com foco no envolvimento cidadão, na execução dos projetos e na continuidade do mecanismo ao longo do tempo. O estudo baseia-se num estudo de caso de natureza qualitativa, apoiado na análise documental, em dados municipais e em entrevistas semiestruturadas com membros da administração municipal. A análise regista que o processo local tem articulado um crescimento gradual da participação com procedimentos orientados para o controlo orçamental, a apreciação técnica das propostas e o acompanhamento da execução dos projetos. O caso evidencia ainda esforços de adaptação do mecanismo às condições locais, designadamente através da introdução de uma vertente jovem e da utilização combinada de canais digitais e presenciais. Em vez de apresentar Penela como caso representativo do conjunto de municípios portugueses, o artigo trata-o como uma experiência local que permite observar a operacionalização de um instrumento participativo num município de pequena dimensão. Conclui-se que a continuidade do processo tem estado associada ao acompanhamento administrativo, à adaptação procedimental e à manutenção de oportunidades regulares de envolvimento dos cidadãos.

Palavras-chave: Orçamento Participativo; governação local; participação cidadã; administração municipal; Penela

1. INTRODUÇÃO

O Orçamento Participativo (OP) é um dispositivo institucional de participação que introduz formas de intervenção direta dos cidadãos na definição de prioridades de despesa pública (Cabannes, 2004; Sintomer et al., 2012). No contexto português, a sua difusão ocorreu sobretudo ao nível municipal, em formatos diferenciados quanto às regras de envolvimento, aos mecanismos de votação e à capacidade de execução das propostas aprovadas (Allegretti & Antunes, 2014; Falanga, 2018, 2024). Apesar desse alargamento, a expansão do OP não suprimiu as diferenças entre contextos territoriais, capacidades administrativas e padrões de mobilização dos cidadãos, o que torna pertinente a análise situada de experiências locais.

A literatura tem registado que o funcionamento destes processos não depende apenas da abertura formal de canais de intervenção. A continuidade do mecanismo, a adesão ao processo e a concretização das propostas aprovadas permanecem associadas a fatores como a organização administrativa, os recursos disponíveis, o desenho procedimental e as condições territoriais de aplicação (Pateman, 2012; Sintomer et al., 2012; Wampler et al., 2021). Neste quadro, a análise de casos concretos permite observar, de forma articulada, os mecanismos de envolvimento cívico, a execução e a sustentação institucional do processo, sem pressupor uniformidade entre os municípios (Falanga, 2024).

A observação de municípios de pequena dimensão apresenta interesse específico. Nestes contextos, a reduzida densidade populacional, o envelhecimento demográfico, a menor escala dos recursos administrativos e a proximidade social e territorial podem condicionar tanto a mobilização dos cidadãos como a implementação das propostas aprovadas. Ao mesmo tempo, estas realidades permitem examinar com maior detalhe os ajustamentos institucionais desenvolvidos pela administração local para organizar, adaptar e manter o processo participativo ao longo do tempo.

É neste plano que se insere o caso de Penela. Trata-se de um concelho do distrito de Coimbra, com cerca de 5.611 habitantes em 2023, cujo contexto demográfico e territorial enquadra a análise da operacionalização do OP no plano municipal (Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência, 2023). A experiência local iniciou-se em 2014 e foi sendo ajustada em diferentes dimensões do processo, incluindo o regulamento, as formas de apresentação de propostas, as modalidades de votação e a segmentação de públicos, designadamente com a criação do Orçamento Participativo Jovem (Câmara Municipal de Penela, 2023).

A documentação municipal e os testemunhos recolhidos mostram ainda a articulação entre canais presenciais e digitais, bem como a existência de mecanismos técnicos de apreciação, acompanhamento e controlo da execução (Câmara Municipal de Penela, 2023). Estes elementos permitem examinar não apenas a evolução da adesão ao processo, mas também os procedimentos de implementação das propostas e a forma como a estrutura administrativa sustenta a sua continuidade.

Neste contexto, o presente artigo analisa o OP no Município de Penela a partir de três dimensões centrais: a participação dos cidadãos, a execução das propostas aprovadas e a continuidade institucional do processo. Para esse efeito, adota-se uma estratégia qualitativa de estudo de caso, apoiada na análise documental, em dados municipais e em entrevistas semiestruturadas com membros da sua administração.

O artigo encontra-se estruturado da seguinte forma. A Secção 2 apresenta o enquadramento teórico do OP e da sua inserção na governação local. A Secção 3 descreve a estratégia metodológica e enquadra o caso em análise. A Secção 4 desenvolve a componente empírica. A Secção 5 apresenta a discussão dos resultados à luz do enquadramento conceptual adotado. A Secção 6 reúne as conclusões do estudo.

2. ORÇAMENTO PARTICIPATIVO E GOVERNAÇÃO LOCAL

A formulação contemporânea do OP é geralmente associada à experiência de Porto Alegre, Brasil, a partir de 1989, num contexto marcado pela reorganização institucional do período e pela redefinição das relações entre a administração pública e a cidadania (Avritzer, 2002; Cabannes, 2004; Falanga, 2018). A partir desse momento, o OP passou a integrar o conjunto de mecanismos participativos orientados à definição e à utilização de recursos públicos, com intervenção direta dos cidadãos.

A expansão internacional do OP ocorreu de forma faseada. Numa primeira etapa, o mecanismo difundiu-se no Brasil; em seguida, alargou-se a outros países da América Latina; posteriormente, passou a integrar agendas internacionais de governação participativa apoiadas por organizações transnacionais e multilaterais (Falanga, 2018). Ao longo desse percurso, o processo foi sendo institucionalizado em contextos políticos e administrativos distintos, assumindo configurações diferenciadas quanto às formas de intervenção dos cidadãos, aos procedimentos deliberativos, aos mecanismos de votação e ao grau de vinculação das decisões produzidas (Dias, 2014; Sintomer et al., 2012).

No plano analítico, o OP pode ser entendido como um mecanismo institucionalizado de intervenção dos cidadãos na definição de prioridades de investimento público. A sua especificidade reside na articulação entre a abertura procedimental à sua atuação e o enquadramento administrativo da decisão, o que o distingue de formas menos estruturadas de consulta pública. Por essa razão, a literatura tem tratado o OP não apenas como instrumento de ação cívica, mas também como um dispositivo dependente de condições organizacionais, de recursos administrativos e da capacidade de execução dos projetos aprovados (Cabannes, 2004; Pateman, 2012; Wampler et al., 2021).

Outra distinção relevante refere-se às modalidades consultiva e deliberativa do OP. No modelo consultivo, podem ser apresentadas propostas, mas a decisão final permanece concentrada na entidade pública. No modelo deliberativo, o processo inclui mecanismos de votação e de escolha direta dos projetos a financiar, reforçando a dimensão vinculativa do mecanismo e o grau de corresponsabilização dos participantes (Lüchmann et al., 2021). Esta distinção é relevante porque mostra que a existência formal de um OP não permite, por si só, inferir níveis equivalentes de envolvimento, influência ou controlo social sobre a afetação dos recursos públicos.

Para além da dimensão procedimental, parte da literatura atribui ao OP uma função de aprendizagem cívica, na medida em que cria oportunidades regulares de envolvimento em processos de deliberação, de escolha e de acompanhamento de prioridades públicas (Lüchmann et al., 2021). Ainda assim, esses efeitos não devem ser presumidos automaticamente. O funcionamento efetivo do mecanismo continua dependente da estabilidade procedimental, da capacidade administrativa, da mobilização social e da forma como o processo é integrado na prática institucional dos governos locais (Pateman, 2012; Sintomer et al., 2012; Wampler et al., 2021).

No contexto europeu e, em particular, no caso português, o OP não reproduziu integralmente a lógica redistributiva associada à experiência pioneira de Porto Alegre. A sua institucionalização passou a articular-se diretamente com objetivos de transparência administrativa, aproximação entre a administração e os cidadãos e reforço da confiança nas instituições públicas (Bogo, 2020; Falanga, 2018). Nesse quadro, o mecanismo foi sendo incorporado sobretudo no plano municipal, onde encontrou condições diretas de operacionalização, adaptação procedimental e proximidade com os cidadãos.

Em Portugal, as primeiras experiências desenvolveram-se no início dos anos 2000, num percurso de disseminação progressiva em diferentes autarquias. A experiência de Lisboa adquiriu visibilidade neste processo, não apenas pela projeção pública alcançada, mas também pelo efeito de referência exercido sobre outras iniciativas locais (Allegretti & Antunes, 2014; Falanga, 2018). Posteriormente, o país passou também a registar iniciativas em escala supramunicipal, incluindo o Orçamento Participativo Portugal, bem como experiências dirigidas a públicos específicos e a contextos setoriais, o que evidencia uma ampliação do mecanismo para além do nível estritamente municipal (Falanga, 2018; Lüchmann et al., 2021).

A literatura sobre o caso português regista, contudo, uma expansão territorialmente desigual e institucionalmente heterogénea. As diferenças observam-se na dimensão das verbas, nos critérios de elegibilidade, nas modalidades de apresentação e votação das propostas e nos mecanismos de acompanhamento da execução. Têm sido igualmente assinalados problemas associados à reduzida expressão orçamental de muitas iniciativas, à descontinuidade de algumas experiências municipais, à desigualdade nos padrões de envolvimento cívico e às incertezas quanto à concretização dos projetos após a fase de votação (Bogo, 2020; Falanga, 2024; Sintomer et al., 2012).

Neste quadro, a observação situada de experiências concretas permite examinar como o OP é estruturado, ajustado e sustentado em realidades administrativas e territoriais específicas, articulando a intervenção dos cidadãos, a validação técnica, a execução e a continuidade institucional. Tal perspetiva torna-se útil em municípios de pequena dimensão, onde a escala populacional, a densidade territorial, os padrões de sociabilidade local e os constrangimentos organizacionais podem influenciar simultaneamente a mobilização cívica, a seleção das propostas e a concretização dos projetos aprovados. É neste plano que se insere o caso de Penela.

3. METODOLOGIA E ENQUADRAMENTO DO CASO

O presente estudo adota uma estratégia qualitativa de investigação, estruturada em formato de estudo de caso e orientada por uma lógica indutiva. Esta opção metodológica permite analisar um fenómeno institucional num contexto territorial específico, com vista à identificação de elementos interpretativos relevantes para a compreensão do funcionamento do OP.

Essa abordagem mostra-se adequada ao objeto em análise, uma vez que o OP, enquanto dispositivo de governação local, depende da articulação entre regras formais, organização administrativa, padrões de mobilização dos cidadãos e condições concretas de implementação.

A investigação foi desenvolvida com base em três tipos principais de fontes. Em primeiro lugar, recorreu-se à análise documental, incidindo sobre regulamentos, documentação municipal e outros materiais institucionais relativos ao processo participativo. Em segundo lugar, utilizaram-se dados estatísticos do concelho, com o objetivo de enquadrar o caso do ponto de vista demográfico e territorial. Em terceiro lugar, realizaram-se entrevistas semiestruturadas com elementos da Câmara Municipal de Penela diretamente ligados ao funcionamento do OP, o que permitiu recolher informação sobre a organização do processo, os procedimentos de execução e os mecanismos de acompanhamento adotados pela autarquia. Esta combinação de fontes possibilitou articular o enquadramento institucional, a informação contextual e os testemunhos de intervenientes com conhecimento direto do caso.

A escolha do estudo de caso decorre da natureza do problema de investigação. O artigo não se limita à descrição formal do OP, procurando antes analisar o modo como este é organizado, ajustado e mantido num município concreto. Esta opção permite observar a relação entre a intervenção dos cidadãos, a capacidade administrativa de execução e a continuidade institucional do processo, sem pressupor uniformidade entre os municípios.

Do ponto de vista empírico, Penela insere-se num contexto municipal de pequena dimensão, no qual a proximidade entre a administração e a população pode facilitar a circulação de informação, a adaptação procedimental e a visibilidade dos resultados, embora subsistam condicionantes associados à escala demográfica, à estrutura territorial e aos recursos disponíveis. Trata-se de um município localizado no distrito de Coimbra, com uma área de cerca de 135 km² e 5.611 habitantes em

2023 (Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência, 2023). Desde a reorganização administrativa de 2012/2013, o concelho encontra-se dividido em quatro freguesias: Cumeeira, Espinhal, Podentes e São Miguel, Santa Eufémia e Rabaçal.

A sua inclusão na análise relaciona-se igualmente ao percurso local do mecanismo. O OP foi implementado em Penela em 2014 e foi sendo ajustado ao longo do tempo, com alterações nas regras do processo, nas modalidades de intervenção dos cidadãos e na segmentação de públicos. Entre essas alterações inclui-se a criação do Orçamento Participativo Jovem (OPJ), com verba específica destinada a propostas apresentadas por jovens entre os 14 e os 30 anos (Câmara Municipal de Penela, 2023). Este percurso permite observar a adaptação do processo às características do concelho e às necessidades identificadas durante a sua aplicação.

No plano procedimental, o processo inicia-se com a aprovação, em reunião do executivo municipal, do valor máximo da dotação anual. Seguem-se as fases de apresentação de propostas, análise técnica, período de reclamações, decisão sobre reclamações, votação, divulgação e apresentação dos projetos vencedores. Concluído esse circuito, e desde que o valor total aprovado não ultrapasse a verba definida, os projetos selecionados são inscritos no orçamento municipal e nas Grandes Opções do Plano, instrumento de planeamento anual que define as prioridades estratégicas e de investimento do município, para execução no ano seguinte. Deste modo, o OP articula a deliberação pública com procedimentos de validação técnica, de enquadramento orçamental e de execução administrativa (Câmara Municipal de Penela, 2023).

A partir destes elementos, o caso de Penela é analisado segundo três dimensões complementares: a participação comunitária, os procedimentos de execução das propostas aprovadas e os elementos associados à continuidade institucional da iniciativa.

4. ANÁLISE EMPÍRICA DO CASO DE PENELA

4.1. ENVOLVIMENTO CÍVICO E MOBILIZAÇÃO LOCAL

A evolução do OP no Município de Penela evidencia um aumento da participação ao longo das diferentes edições. Esse percurso tem estado associado a um processo contínuo de adaptação por parte da autarquia, designadamente no reforço da transparência, na diversificação dos canais de participação e na criação de mecanismos dirigidos a segmentos específicos da população. A edição de 2024 registou 14 propostas submetidas, 8 propostas admitidas à fase de votação e 2200 votantes, o que corresponde a uma das edições com maior participação desde a implementação da iniciativa. Estes dados permitem observar um alargamento da adesão ao processo num concelho de pequena dimensão, marcado por condicionantes demográficas e territoriais próprias.

A mobilização local assenta não apenas na adesão espontânea dos cidadãos, mas também em redes associativas e em formas de intermediação comunitária. A presença de dirigentes ligados a movimentos associativos do concelho remete para o papel dessas estruturas na dinamização do processo. Em paralelo, a autarquia procurou reduzir assimetrias de acesso através de estratégias diferenciadas, incluindo sessões de divulgação em escolas, no caso dos jovens, e formas de contacto presencial dirigidas a segmentos da população mais afastados dos meios digitais. Esta combinação sugere que a adesão observada resulta de mecanismos concretos de ativação cívica e não apenas da existência formal do instrumento.

A diversificação dos canais de mobilização constitui outro elemento relevante. O recurso ao portal institucional, às redes sociais e a um espaço digital próprio do OP foi complementado por assembleias participativas e por sessões presenciais de esclarecimento. Acresce a introdução da votação por SMS, que simplificou o escrutínio e alargou as possibilidades de participação. Em conjunto, estes elementos apontam para um processo de ajustamento procedimental orientado a reforçar o acesso ao mecanismo participativo e a reduzir as respetivas barreiras.

4.2. EXECUÇÃO DAS PROPOSTAS E CAPACIDADE ADMINISTRATIVA

A análise do caso mostra que a viabilidade do OP não depende apenas da fase de votação, mas também da capacidade da autarquia de converter as propostas vencedoras em realizações concretas. Em Penela, a execução financeira dos projetos aprovados apresentou estabilidade, não se registando desvios entre o valor inicialmente previsto e o montante efetivamente executado. Essa estabilidade decorreu do enquadramento orçamental adotado, segundo o qual os valores são contratualizados com base na verba disponível no orçamento municipal, impedindo que os projetos ultrapassem o teto financeiro definido na proposta submetida a votação. Este mecanismo contribui para a previsibilidade orçamental e para a correspondência entre a decisão participativa e a execução financeira.

A estabilidade financeira não elimina, contudo, as dificuldades no plano da implementação material. O principal constrangimento identificado refere-se ao tempo necessário à concretização dos projetos, uma vez que os procedimentos administrativos, a contratação pública e as exigências técnicas podem prolongar a conclusão para além do horizonte inicialmente previsto.

A experiência local permite, assim, distinguir entre a estabilidade na execução orçamental e os ritmos diferenciados na execução física das iniciativas aprovadas. Esta distinção é relevante porque mostra que a credibilidade do processo não depende apenas da dotação disponível, mas também da capacidade administrativa de transformar a decisão participativa em resultados concretos, dentro de prazos compatíveis com as expectativas geradas.

O acompanhamento da execução constitui outro elemento central. A autarquia recorre a contratos-programa e a mecanismos regulares de fiscalização assegurados por uma equipa municipal, com o objetivo de controlar as dimensões físicas e financeiras das propostas em curso. Nos casos em que os projetos são executados diretamente pelo município, os proponentes participam na validação do projeto e do respetivo caderno de encargos, o que introduz uma dimensão de seguimento partilhado. Esta articulação entre supervisão administrativa e acompanhamento por parte dos participantes aproxima-se da fase de implementação da lógica participativa presente no momento de seleção das propostas.

4.3. TRANSPARÊNCIA, ESCRUTÍNIO E CORRESPONSABILIZAÇÃO

O funcionamento do OP em Penela articula-se com mecanismos de transparência e escrutínio público que ultrapassam o momento da votação. A documentação analisada evidencia, neste plano, a importância dos relatórios da Comissão de Análise Técnica, nos quais são explicitadas as razões de aprovação ou rejeição das propostas com fundamentação técnica.

A estes elementos juntam-se a contratualização pública e a disponibilização de informação financeira pelo município, incluindo instrumentos de transparência administrativa e canais de denúncia. Estes mecanismos tornam visíveis os critérios de admissibilidade, as decisões tomadas ao longo do processo e os instrumentos de controlo da execução.

A corresponsabilização cívica também não se limita ao ato de votar. A evolução do número de votantes, de cerca de 550 em 2019 e 2020 para mais de 2200 em 2024, foi acompanhada pela diversidade das propostas apresentadas, incluindo projetos de requalificação urbana, iniciativas culturais imateriais e medidas enquadradas no OPJ. A coexistência de modalidades de voto digital e presencial reforçou a inclusão de diferentes segmentos da população no processo decisório, ao mesmo tempo que a manutenção de assembleias participativas e de espaços de debate presenciais ampliou as oportunidades de envolvimento no acompanhamento do processo.

Ao longo do tempo, a experiência local incorporou ajustamentos sucessivos, traduzidos em alterações como contratos-programa, sistema de votação híbrido, admissão de projetos imateriais e segmentação entre propostas locais e transversais. Estas mudanças demonstram que a transparência e o escrutínio não resultam apenas da publicitação de informação, mas também da reconfiguração do próprio processo em resposta a problemas identificados ao longo das diferentes edições. Neste sentido, a experiência de Penela permite observar uma relação entre a aprendizagem institucional, a visibilidade procedimental e o reforço da corresponsabilização entre a administração e os cidadãos.

4.4. CONTINUIDADE INSTITUCIONAL E ADAPTAÇÃO LOCAL

A continuidade do OP em Penela associa-se à sua progressiva institucionalização no âmbito da estratégia municipal. Essa institucionalização traduz-se na existência de regulamentos, na aplicação de normas e na integração administrativa e orçamental da iniciativa no âmbito do concelho. Em edições recentes, o processo foi acompanhado por dotações fixas na ordem dos 70.000 euros, o que indica recorrência orçamental e enquadramento administrativo regular. Estes elementos mostram que a manutenção do mecanismo depende da sua inscrição em rotinas formais de decisão, programação e execução no âmbito da administração local.

O caso evidencia igualmente uma relação entre continuidade e adaptação. A autarquia tem procurado mobilizar públicos mais jovens através do OPJ, não apenas como mecanismo de inclusão, mas também como forma de promover socialização cívica e reforçar a permanência futura da iniciativa. Os exemplos de projetos juvenis aprovados e implementados, como parques de skate e equipamentos de exercício físico ao ar livre, mostram a articulação entre a participação dos jovens, a visibilidade dos resultados e a continuidade do instrumento ao longo do tempo. Neste ponto, a continuidade institucional não decorre apenas da existência formal de regulamentos ou de verbas anuais, mas também da capacidade de gerar reconhecimento local do processo e de manter a sua relevância perante diferentes segmentos da população.

No seu conjunto, a experiência de Penela mostra que a manutenção do OP assenta numa articulação entre o acompanhamento administrativo, o ajustamento procedimental e mecanismos de inclusão orientados para diferentes públicos. A continuidade observada ao longo do percurso local depende, assim, menos de um automatismo institucional do que da capacidade da administração municipal de integrar o processo nas suas rotinas, responder a constrangimentos concretos e preservar condições de participação percebidas como significativas pelos cidadãos.

5. DISCUSSÃO

A análise do caso de Penela permite observar o OP para além da sua formulação normativa enquanto mecanismo de democracia participativa. No plano empírico, o que emerge não é apenas a existência formal de um dispositivo de participação, mas também a articulação entre a mobilização dos cidadãos, o enquadramento administrativo e a capacidade de acompanhar a execução.

Esta articulação adquire particular significado em municípios de pequena dimensão, marcados por baixa densidade populacional, envelhecimento demográfico e reduzida escala administrativa, fatores que podem influenciar tanto a mobilização cívica quanto a concretização das propostas aprovadas.

Nestes contextos, a proximidade entre a administração e a população pode facilitar a circulação de informação, a adaptação procedimental e a visibilidade dos resultados, embora subsistam condicionantes associados à escala demográfica, à estrutura territorial e aos recursos disponíveis.

Os resultados obtidos mostram que a continuidade do processo não decorre apenas da abertura formal de mecanismos de intervenção por parte dos cidadãos. A sua permanência ao longo do tempo associa-se a uma combinação de fatores institucionais, entre os quais se destacam a existência de regras formais, a integração do mecanismo no orçamento municipal e nas Grandes Opções do Plano, a definição de dotações anuais e a manutenção de procedimentos regulares de acompanhamento. Estes elementos confirmam que a estabilidade do OP depende de condições organizacionais que vão além da dimensão simbólica do seu desenho formal e remetem à sua incorporação nas rotinas da administração pública. Esta leitura é consistente com a literatura que sublinha a dependência do OP relativamente à capacidade administrativa, à estabilidade procedimental e ao enquadramento institucional em que é aplicado (Cabannes, 2004; Pateman, 2012; Wampler et al., 2021).

A evolução da adesão ao processo constitui, neste quadro, um elemento central de interpretação. O aumento do número de propostas e de votantes ao longo das várias edições aponta para um processo de maior visibilidade e de enraizamento local. Ainda assim, esse crescimento não deve ser lido apenas em termos quantitativos. A análise desenvolvida mostra que a mobilização foi apoiada por mecanismos concretos, incluindo sessões presenciais, divulgação nas escolas, recurso a canais digitais, utilização das redes sociais e a introdução de votação por SMS. Em consequência, a adesão observada associa-se a uma estratégia de ampliação dos meios de acesso ao processo e de redução de obstáculos ao seu uso. O OPJ reforça esta leitura, ao introduzir públicos mais jovens nas práticas formais de deliberação e decisão e ao contribuir simultaneamente para a renovação do público envolvido e para a continuidade futura da iniciativa.

A execução das propostas aprovadas introduz uma dimensão adicional na leitura do caso. A experiência de Penela mostra que a consistência do funcionamento do OP não depende apenas da abertura do processo participativo, mas também da capacidade de converter propostas vencedoras em resultados concretos. A ausência de desvios financeiros entre o montante previsto e o valor executado indica um enquadramento orçamental estável e mecanismos de controlo que limitam a discrepância entre a decisão e a execução. Todavia, essa estabilidade não elimina constrangimentos no plano material, sobretudo no que respeita ao tempo necessário à concretização dos projetos. A articulação entre a intervenção dos cidadãos e a execução não surge, assim, como automática ou linear, permanecendo dependente de ritmos administrativos, de exigências técnicas e de procedimentos formais próprios da gestão municipal. Esta distinção entre estabilidade financeira e temporalidade da implementação permite qualificar a análise do OP para além do momento da votação.

A transparência e o escrutínio constituem igualmente dimensões centrais. A contratualização pública, a disponibilização de informação financeira e os mecanismos de apreciação e acompanhamento da execução mostram que o processo foi sendo estruturado de modo a tornar visíveis os critérios de admissibilidade, as razões de aprovação ou rejeição e os instrumentos de controlo dos projetos selecionados.

Neste caso, a transparência não se reduz à divulgação de informação, mas articula-se com procedimentos de validação, monitorização e acompanhamento que tornam o processo mais inteligível para os participantes. Ao mesmo tempo, a existência de assembleias participativas, de espaços de debate presencial e de acompanhamento por parte dos proponentes sugere que a corresponsabilização cívica se prolonga para além do ato de votar, incidindo também no acompanhamento das propostas aprovadas.

Outro aspeto relevante prende-se com a relação entre a adaptação local e a continuidade institucional. O caso de Penela mostra que a manutenção do OP não depende exclusivamente da existência formal de regulamentos ou de dotações anuais. Os ajustamentos introduzidos ao longo do tempo, entre os quais o OPJ, a admissão de projetos imateriais, a segmentação entre propostas locais e transversais e a combinação entre modalidades presenciais e digitais, indicam um processo de aprendizagem institucional assente na resposta a constrangimentos concretos do território. Neste sentido, a continuidade observada parece decorrer da capacidade da administração local de reconfigurar o mecanismo sem o descaracterizar, preservando simultaneamente a sua inteligibilidade procedimental e a sua relevância para diferentes segmentos da população.

Em termos analíticos, a experiência examinada sugere que a sustentabilidade do OP em municípios de pequena dimensão depende da articulação entre três dimensões centrais: participação, execução e continuidade institucional. Quando observadas isoladamente, estas dimensões oferecem apenas uma leitura parcial do processo. O caso de Penela mostra, pelo contrário, que a compreensão do funcionamento do OP requer a análise conjunta da mobilização dos cidadãos, dos mecanismos administrativos de validação e de acompanhamento e das condições que permitem a permanência do dispositivo ao longo do tempo.

6. CONCLUSÃO

O presente artigo analisou o OP no Município de Penela, com foco em três dimensões centrais: o envolvimento cívico, a execução das propostas aprovadas e a continuidade institucional da iniciativa. A análise mostrou que o funcionamento local deste processo não pode ser compreendido apenas como a abertura formal de canais de participação. O caso evidencia a articulação entre a mobilização cidadã, o enquadramento procedimental e a capacidade administrativa de acompanhamento, elementos que sustentam a permanência da iniciativa ao longo do tempo.

No plano empírico, os resultados registam um aumento da adesão ao processo ao longo das várias edições, acompanhado da diversificação dos canais de mobilização e da introdução de mecanismos dirigidos a segmentos específicos da população, como o OPJ. Em paralelo, a execução financeira dos projetos aprovados apresenta estabilidade, embora persistam constrangimentos associados ao prazo de implementação e às exigências técnicas e administrativas para a sua concretização. A continuidade observada surge, neste contexto, associada à integração do processo no orçamento municipal e aos procedimentos regulares de acompanhamento e controlo.

Em termos analíticos, o estudo sugere que a eficácia do OP em municípios de pequena dimensão não depende exclusivamente da escala populacional nem do volume financeiro mobilizado. A experiência de Penela mostra, antes de mais, a relevância da articulação entre a intervenção dos cidadãos, a execução e a adaptação institucional às características do território. Nesta perspetiva, o concelho não deve ser entendido como caso representativo do conjunto dos municípios portugueses, mas como evidência situada de como este tipo de processo pode ser organizado, ajustado e mantido num contexto local específico.

O estudo apresenta, contudo, limitações. A análise incide sobre um único caso e apoia-se em documentação institucional, dados locais e um número limitado de entrevistas, o que restringe o alcance comparativo dos resultados. Embora não autorize generalização automática para outros contextos municipais, o estudo permite compreender de que modo os mecanismos participativos são organizados, ajustados e sustentados no interior da governação municipal.

Investigações futuras poderão aprofundar esta linha de trabalho por meio da comparação entre municípios de pequena dimensão, da inclusão de novos atores institucionais e cívicos e da análise dos efeitos territoriais e sociais dos projetos aprovados. Ainda assim, a experiência de Penela mostra que a observação detalhada de contextos locais continua a oferecer elementos úteis para compreender como a participação dos cidadãos é enquadrada e sustentada no âmbito da governação municipal.

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PROELIUM

A FORMAÇÃO MILITAR BÁSICA COMO RITUAL DE PASSAGEM PARA INTEGRAÇÃO NA VIDA MILITAR. UM OLHAR SOBRE A ACADEMIA MILITAR DO EXÉRCITO ANGOLANO

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https://doi.org/10.60746/8_19_48015

ABSTRACT

Individuals who choose a military career are motivated by various factors of both intrinsic and extrinsic nature. In order to become familiar with military values, principles, and norms, they undergo basic training. This study aimed to analyse the influence of Basic Military Training (BMT), provided by the Army Military Academy, on the process of integration into military life. A deductive approach was followed, supported by a mixed methodology, involving the application of a questionnaire survey to 153 recruits from the 10th BMT Course and interviews with two senior officers. The results indicate that the BMT developed by the Army Military Academy constitutes a sui generis rite of passage, characterised by a specific, continuous process strongly marked by an axiological dimension oriented towards integration into military life. This training process aims not only at the acquisition of technical and operational skills, but also at the internalisation of values, norms, and principles inherent to the military institution. Through this training, individuals acquire the necessary conditions to perform the functions of a Soldier and, after taking the Oath to the National Flag, they are formally integrated into the Angolan Armed Forces the Oath to the National Flag, are formally incorporated into the Angolan Armed Forces.

Keywords: Basic Military Training, Ritual, Recruits, Integration, Soldier.

RESUMO

Os indivíduos que enveredam pela carreira militar são movidos por diversos factores, de natureza intrínseca e extrínseca. Com o objectivo de se familiarizarem com os valores, princípios e normas castrenses, são submetidos a uma formação básica. O estudo teve como propósito, analisar a influência da Formação Militar Básica (FMB), ministrada pela Academia Militar do Exército, no processo de integração na vida militar. Seguimos uma abordagem dedutiva, sustentada numa metodologia mista, com a aplicação de um inquérito por questionário a 153 Recrutas do 10.º Curso de FMB e a realização de entrevistas a dois Oficiais superiores. Como resultados, a FMB desenvolvida pela AMEx constitui um ritual de passagem sui generis, caracterizado por uma execução específica, contínua e fortemente marcada por uma dimensão axiológica orientada para a integração na vida militar. Este processo formativo visa não apenas a aquisição de competências técnicas e operacionais, mas também a interiorização de valores, normas e princípios próprios da instituição militar. Através desta formação, os indivíduos adquirem as condições necessárias para o exercício das funções de Soldado e, após a realização do Juramento à Bandeira Nacional, são formalmente integrados nas Forças Armadas Angolanas.

Palavras-chave: Formação Militar Básica, Ritual, Recrutas, Integração, Soldado.

1. INTRODUÇÃO

A Academia Militar do Exército (AMEx) oferece cursos superiores desde 2013, movida pela tripla necessidade de: *(i)* racionalizar os recursos financeiros; *(ii)* reduzir a dependência de Academias estrangeiras; e *(iii)* qualificar de forma massiva os efectivos do Exército.

Anualmente, a instituição recebe centenas de candidaturas de cidadãos interessados em frequentar uma Licenciatura Militar. Diante das motivações e idiossincrasias individuais, constitui desafio a implementação de mecanismos que tenham simultaneamente um efeito disruptivo e congregador sobre os admitidos. Assim, estes são submetidos a uma exigente instrução designada de Formação Militar Básica (FMB), Objecto de estudo da presente investigação. Funcionando como um ritual de passagem, a FMB visa transformar o cidadão civil num militar, isto é, num Soldado.

Uma investigação é, de acordo com Quivy e Campenhoudt (2005, p. 6), "(...) algo que se procura, implicando hesitações, desvios e incertezas. O investigador deve obrigar-se a escolher um fio condutor tão claro quanto possível, para que o seu trabalho se estruture com coerência". Portanto, o Objectivo Geral do presente artigo consistirá em analisar a influência da FMB no processo de integração dos recrutas na vida militar. Em paralelo, formulámos a Pergunta de Partida (PP) seguinte: Que influência teve a FMB no processo de integração dos Recrutas na vida militar? Ao longo da investigação, serão mobilizados contributos de antropólogos que se dedicaram ao estudo dos rituais de passagem, com destaque para as abordagens pioneiras de Gennep (1978), Turner (1974, 1980), Peirano (2003) e Silva e Ludorf (2012). Além disso, será descrito o processo de realização do 10.º Curso de FMB, desenvolvido na AMEx no ano de 2024.

2. ENQUADRAMENTO TEÓRICO E CONCEPTUAL

2.1. ESTADO DA ARTE

As comunidades humanas produzem práticas culturais diversas, simples e complexas, materiais e imateriais, frequentemente acompanhadas por símbolos e rituais que visam fortalecer os vínculos grupais e preservar a identidade colectiva, diante de costumes exógenos que possam ameaçar a sua sobrevivência. Nesse sentido, "(…) o ritual é um sistema cultural de comunicação simbólica (…)" (Stanley Tambiah, 1985 *apud* Peirano, 2003, p. 9), estando os rituais, "[…] compostos de uma série de gestos simbólicos (ritos) portadores de intencionalidades" (Diná & Costa, 2012, p. 89).

Os rituais mais conhecidos estão associados ao nascimento, à puberdade, ao casamento e à morte. A propósito, Turner (1974, p. 116) destaca que "(…) o próprio Van Gennep definiu os *rites de passage* como ritos que acompanham toda mudança de lugar, estado, posição social ou idade". Segundo Peirano (2003, p. 10), o ritual constitui "(…) um fenómeno especial da sociedade, que nos aponta e revela expressões e valores de um colectivo; contudo, o ritual expande, ilumina e ressalta o que já é comum a determinado grupo". Os rituais de passagem requerem sacrifício e resiliência; declinar estes processos pode resultar na exclusão do indivíduo, que passa a ser visto como imaturo, indigno ou estranho ao grupo.

Para Turner (1980), as fases dos rituais incluem separação, liminaridade e reagregação ou reincorporação. Autores como Silva e Ludorf (2012, p. 1110) estudiosos da obra de Gennep, enfatizam que "(…) em termos gerais, de acordo com Gennep, os ritos de passagem podem ser decompostos em ritos de separação (preliminares) do mundo anterior, de margem (liminares) e de agregação (pós-liminares) ao novo mundo". Ao se debruçar sobre as modalidades dos rituais de passagem, Mariza Peirano (2003, p. 8) considera que os rituais "(...) podem ser profanos, religiosos, festivos, formais, informais, simples ou elaborados (...)". Alinhado a esse diapasão, Rodolpho (2004, p. 140), manifesta que "(...) os rituais podem ser seculares ou religiosos, (...) e os rituais seculares demonstram as relações sociais (civis, militares, éticas, festivas)".

Pensamos que os rituais de passagem incidem sobre o que o indivíduo é, aspira ser e, simultaneamente, sobre o que a comunidade espera de si. Neste encadeamento, são intrínsecos o afastamento do indivíduo do seu ambiente social, a clausura face a uma mobilidade limitada e, posteriormente, o seu retorno à comunidade. Destaca-se o facto de o indivíduo se juntar a um colectivo que frequentou a mesma oficina ritualística e comunga os mesmos valores, porquanto os rituais "revelam os valores no seu nível mais profundo [...] os homens expressam no ritual aquilo que os toca mais intensamente e, sendo a forma de expressão convencional e obrigatória, os valores do grupo é que são revelados (Turner, 1974, pp. 18-19).

Em várias socioculturas, rapazes e raparigas são submetidos a rituais de passagem para: *a)* assumir uma nova identidade; *b)* comprovar a sua maturidade ou aptidão; e *c)* assumir outras responsabilidades. No entender de Rivière (1996), "[...] não há sociedades, qualquer que seja sua escala, que não sintam a necessidade de, periodicamente, reafirmar em comum seus valores comuns" (p. 15). Apesar da variação contextual, a FMB concebida pela AMEx persegue o mesmo propósito: conferir know how e habilidades ao Recruta para que esteja apto a actuar como soldado.

2.2. CURSO DE FORMAÇÃO MILITAR BÁSICA: AMEx/2024

A FMB decorreu na Unidade de Apoio à Instrução (UAI), estabelecimento que funciona também como laboratório das sessões teorico-práticas dos Cursos de Licenciatura em Ciências Militares (CLCM) e para a realização de exercícios tácticos. A abertura do 10.º Curso de FMB ocorreu aos 10 de Maio de 2024 e as aulas tiveram início três dias depois. O Programa do Curso contemplou 15 semanas lectivas, 44 horas por semana e um total de 660 horas.

Peirano (2003, p. 11) considera que "o ritual é um sistema cultural de comunicação simbólica. Ele é constituído de seqüências ordenadas e padronizadas de palavras e atos, em geral expressos por múltiplos meios". Na UAI, a estranheza inicial dos recrutas residiu na assimilação do desconhecido, prontamente ultrapassada na medida em que se foram familiarizando com o espaço, com os companheiros e com a nova realidade. Assim, concorreu mormente para a coesão imediata do grupo um conjunto de actos como o uso de um corte de cabelo padrão, o regime de internato, fardamento idêntico, horário comum para as refeições e dormitórios conjuntos.

Assente no objectivo de "desenvolver aos recém-incorporados, as suas capacidades físicas e psicológicas proporcionando conhecimentos, hábitos e habilidades militares necessários e suficientes para a passagem a outros níveis de qualificação de soldado" (AMEx, 2023, p. 3), o 10.º Curso de FMB esteve subdividido em três fases (individual, de secção e de pelotão). No objectivo supracitado, o termo passagem transmite de modo inequívoco o propósito de a AMEx garantir que o recruta passe de um status para outro, ou seja, de civil para Soldado.

Ao longo da FMB foram ministradas várias matérias a exemplo de "Técnica e táctica de combate, Armamento de Infantaria, Tiro de Infantaria, (...) Navegação terrestre, Preparação física militar, Normas reguladoras de ordem unida, (...), Normas reguladoras de vida interna do cadete, Educação Moral e Cívica, (...), Saúde, Higiene e 1.ºs Socorros, (...)" (AMEx, 2003, p. 5).

O 10.º Curso de FMB foi encerrado no dia 30 de Agosto de 2024 com a Cerimónia de Juramento à Bandeira Nacional.

2.3. MODELO DE ANÁLISE

Na Tabela 1 apresentamos de modo descritivo os objetivos que nortearam o artigo, as Perguntas de investigação, assim como os Contextos em análise e as Técnicas eleitas para a recolha de dados.

OG	Analisar a influência da FMB no processo de integração dos Recrutas na vida militar			
PP	Que influência teve a FMB no processo de integração dos Recrutas na vida militar?			
	OE	PD	Contexto Em Análise	Técnica De Recolha De Dados
OE1	Identificar as razões que levaram os Recrutas a seguir a vida militar	Quais foram as razões que levaram os Recrutas a seguir a vida militar?	Motivações (intrínsecas e extrínsecas)	Pesquisa Bibliográfica; Análise Documental; Questionários e Entrevistas
OE2	Mencionar os valores que os Recrutas consideram cruciais para a sua integração na vida militar	Que Valores os Recrutas consideram cruciais para a sua integração na vida militar?	Integração	Pesquisa Bibliográfica; Análise Documental; Questionários e Entrevistas
OE3	Apurar se, em algum momento, os Recrutas pensaram em desistir da FMB	Os Recrutas pensaram, em algum momento, em desistir da FMB?	Resiliência	Questionários
OE4	Constatar o desempenho dos Instrutores durante a FMB	Que desempenho tiveram os Instrutores durante a FMB?	Desempenho dos Instrutores	Questionários e Entrevistas
OE5	Perceber o impacto da Prova de Fogo sobre os Recrutas	Quão impactante foi a Prova de Fogo?	Integração	Pesquisa Bibliográfica; Análise Documental; Questionários e Entrevistas

Tabela 1. Modelo de análise.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

3. METODOLOGIA, MATERIAIS E MÉTODOS

3.1. AMOSTRA

A amostra do presente estudo foi constituída por 153 cadetes do 10.º Curso de FMB da AMEx, selecionados por conveniência. No que respeita à caracterização sociodemográfica, verificou-se que 83% (n = 127) dos participantes eram do sexo masculino e 17% (n = 26) do sexo feminino. Quanto à idade, 30% (n = 46) encontravam-se na faixa etária entre os 18 e os 20 anos, 69% (n = 106) entre os 21 e os 23 anos, e apenas 1% (n = 1) apresentava idade superior a 23 anos. Relativamente à província de origem, observou-se uma predominância de participantes provenientes de Benguela, representando 38% (n = 58) da amostra, seguida de Luanda com 27% (n = 41). O Huambo representou 8% (n = 12), a Huíla e o Namibe 6% (n = 9) cada, enquanto o Cuanza Sul e o Moxico corresponderam a 4% (n = 6) cada. As restantes províncias apresentaram percentagens residuais: Cuanza Norte, Uíge, Cunene e Bié com 1% (n = 2) cada, e Malanje, Cabinda e Lunda Norte com 1% (n = 1) cada.

Complementarmente, a componente qualitativa integrou dois Oficiais superiores, identificados ao longo do estudo como Entrevistado 1 (Entrev_1) e Entrevistado 2 (Entrev_2), seleccionados de forma intencional em função das responsabilidades exercidas na preparação, organização e condução da FMB. A escolha destes participantes justificou-se pelo seu envolvimento directo no processo formativo, desde a recepção dos pré-recrutas até à cerimónia de encerramento e Juramento à Bandeira Nacional, permitindo recolher informação especializada e aprofundar a análise do fenómeno em estudo.

3.2. INSTRUMENTOS

Para a recolha de dados empíricos foram utilizados dois instrumentos principais: o inquérito por questionário e o inquérito por entrevista, ambos elaborados em função do objectivo geral da investigação, que consistiu em analisar a influência da FMB no processo de integração dos recrutas na vida militar.

Previamente à aplicação dos instrumentos, foi apresentado aos participantes um consentimento informado, no qual se esclareceu a natureza voluntária da participação, a gratuitidade do processo, a garantia de anonimato e confidencialidade das respostas, bem como a utilização exclusiva dos dados para fins científicos no âmbito da presente investigação.

O inquérito por questionário foi aplicado aos recrutas do 10.º Curso de Formação Militar Básica da AMEx, incidindo sobre duas dimensões principais. A primeira parte contemplou os dados sociodemográficos, nomeadamente género, idade e província de origem. A segunda parte incidiu sobre a percepção da FMB enquanto ritual de passagem para a integração na vida militar, incluindo questões relacionadas com as motivações para o ingresso na carreira militar, os valores considerados essenciais para a integração castrense, a intenção de desistência durante o processo formativo, a avaliação do desempenho dos instrutores, a importância da Prova de Fogo na construção da identidade militar e o sentimento de integração após a conclusão da formação.

Complementarmente, foram realizadas entrevistas semi-estruturadas a dois Oficiais superiores, identificados como Entrev_1 e Entrev_2, seleccionados em função das responsabilidades exercidas no acompanhamento e condução da FMB. O guião de entrevista foi igualmente organizado em duas partes: a primeira dedicada aos dados sociodemográficos e ao tempo de serviço na função, e a segunda centrada na análise da FMB como ritual de passagem e mecanismo de integração institucional.

As entrevistas procuraram aprofundar aspectos qualitativos relacionados com os valores mais relevantes para a integração dos recrutas, a percepção da eficácia da FMB, as principais dificuldades enfrentadas pelos cadetes após a formação, os constrangimentos institucionais associados à organização e condução da instrução, bem como propostas de melhoria para futuras edições da FMB.

A conjugação destes instrumentos permitiu a triangulação de dados quantitativos e qualitativos, proporcionando uma análise mais abrangente e consistente sobre o papel da FMB na integração dos recrutas na vida militar.

3.3. PROCEDIMENTOS

A investigação obedece a um processo rigoroso e sistemático, orientado para a resolução de um problema real (Rosado, 2017). Neste estudo, seguiram-se as fases de imersão, sistematização e emersão, considerando sempre a dimensão temporal do processo investigativo. A fase de imersão ocorreu em agosto de 2024; a fase de sistematização decorreu entre agosto de 2024 e janeiro de 2025; e a fase de emersão teve lugar entre janeiro e fevereiro de 2025, conforme apresentado na Ilustração 1.

FASE DE IMERSÃO	FASE DE SISTEMATIZAÇÃO	FASE DE EMERSÃO
- Escolha do Tema: 12ago2024. - Formulação do OG, PP, OE e PD: 14ago2024. - Revisão de Literatura: 25ago2024.	- Escolha dos instrumentos para a recolha de dados: 30ago2024. - Aplicação do Questionário: 15out2024. -Realização das Entrevistas: 17 e 20jan2025	- Apresentação dos resultados: 21jan2025 a 24jan2025. - Discussão dos resultados: 26jan2025 a 31jan2025. - Resposta à PP e às PD: 05fev2025 a 07fev2025. - Verificação dos Objectivos e das limitações do estudo: 16fev2025.

Ilustração 1. Cronograma do Processo de Investigação.
Fonte. Adaptado de Rosado (2017).

Mediante autorização do Comandante, 153 Cadetes assinaram o respectivo consentimento informado sob a garantia da confidencialidade e anonimato dos seus dados. A partir do questionário, dividido em duas partes, recolhemos os dados socio-demográficos e outros da amostra, cuja pertinência nos permitiu dar resposta aos objetivos da investigação. O regime de internato vigente na AMEx permitiu-nos fazer a distribuição e recolha do questionário num único momento, na manhã do dia 15 de Outubro de 2024.

Sendo também a entrevista uma forma de “obtenção de informações […] sobre determinado assunto ou problema” (Freitas & Prodanov, p. 106), elegemos a entrevista para a recolha de dados adicionais. Destarte, entrevistamos dois oficiais superiores, que ao longo do artigo estarão identificados como *Entrev_1* (Entrevistado 1) e *Entrev_2* (Entrevistado 2). A escolha de ambos deveu-se ao facto de se tratar de entidades que participaram na preparação e condução da FMB. As Entrevistas semi-estruturadas foram conduzidas nos dias 17 e 20 de Janeiro de 2025. Portanto, associada a um raciocínio dedutivo, a metodologia do estudo compreendeu uma estratégia de investigação mista, porquanto combinou abordagens qualitativa e quantitativa.

4. RESULTADOS

Na 2.ª parte do questionário, intitulada “A Formação Militar Básica como ritual de passagem para a integração na vida militar”, à questão “Por qual destas razões decidiu tornar-se militar?”, a opção mais assinalada foi a “oportunidade de frequentar o ensino superior”, com 43% (n = 65), seguida do “patriotismo”, com 25% (n = 39), da “falta de emprego”, com 16% (n = 24), e da “influência familiar”, com 14% (n = 21). Por fim, 2% (n = 3) referiram que "sempre quiseram ser militares", conforme apresentado na Ilustração 2.

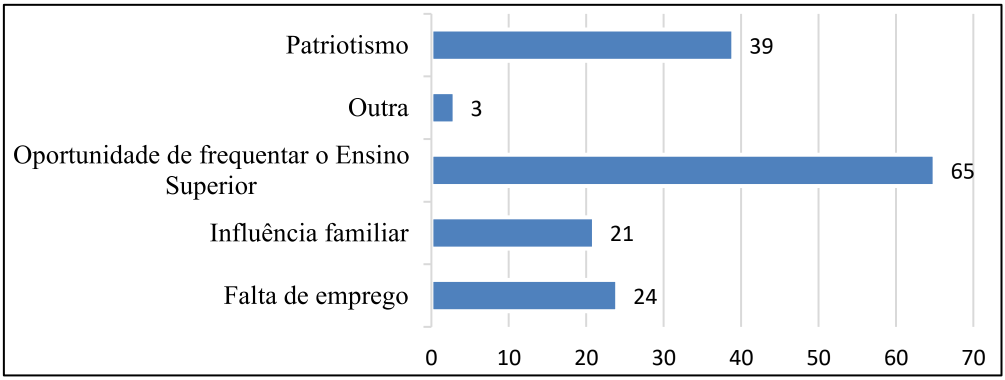

Ilustração 2. Respostas à pergunta n.º 1.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Como se pode conferir na Ilustração 3, à pergunta "Que Valores considera cruciais para a sua integração na vida militar"? a "Disciplina" foi assinalada 144 vezes (34%); a "Hierarquia", 102 vezes (24%); o "Espírito de corpo", 90 vezes (21%); a "Obediência", 80 vezes (19%) e a "Pontualidade" foi assinalada 8 vezes (2%).

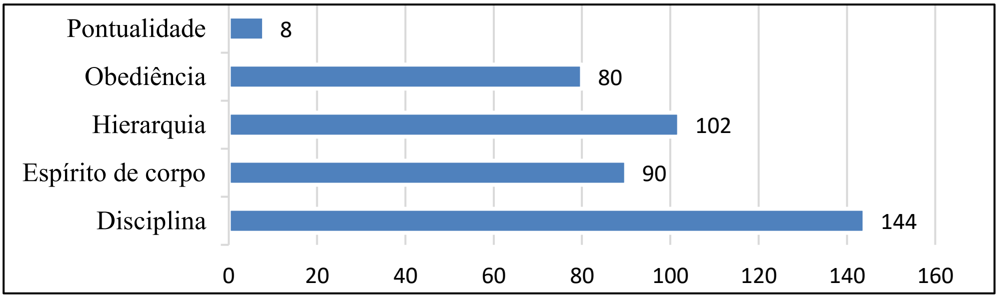

Ilustração 3. Respostas à pergunta n.º 2.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Conforme apresentado na Ilustração 4, relativamente à questão "Em algum momento pensou em desistir da FMB?", verificou-se que a maioria dos inquiridos, correspondente a 71% (n = 109), respondeu negativamente, indicando não ter considerado abandonar a formação. Por outro lado, 29% (n = 44) afirmaram ter pensado em desistir em algum momento do processo formativo, evidenciando que, apesar das exigências e dificuldades inerentes à FMB, a maioria conseguiu manter o compromisso com a instrução até à sua conclusão.

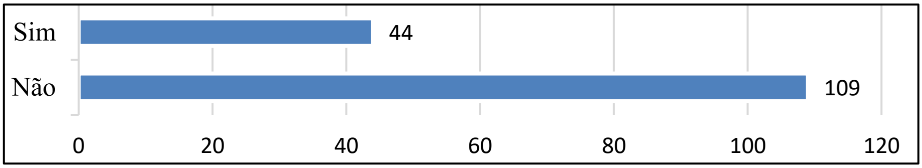

Ilustração 4. Respostas à pergunta n.º 3.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Relativamente à questão "Como classifica o desempenho dos instrutores?", a maioria dos inquiridos, correspondente a 70% (n = 107), avaliou o desempenho como "Bom". Por sua vez, 29% (n = 44) classificaram-no como "Excelente", enquanto apenas 1% (n = 2) o consideraram "Mau", tal como apresentado na Ilustração 5. Estes resultados evidenciam uma perceção globalmente positiva relativamente à atuação dos instrutores durante a FMB, refletindo o seu papel relevante no processo de adaptação e integração dos recrutas na vida militar.

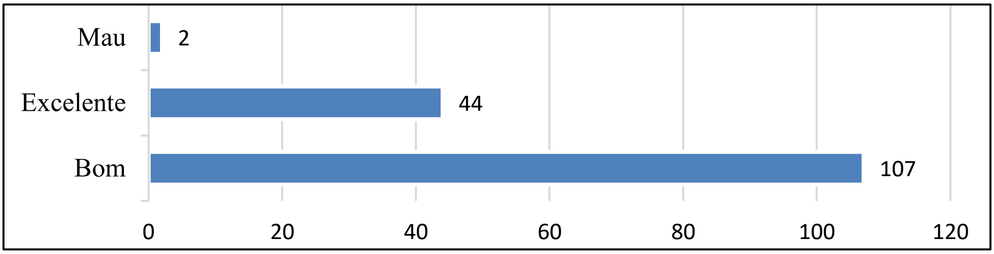

Ilustração 5. Respostas à pergunta n.º 4.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Em relação à questão "A Prova de Fogo fê-lo sentir-se militar?", 97% (n = 149) dos inquiridos responderam afirmativamente, indicando que esta experiência contribuiu significativamente para o sentimento de pertença e identificação com a condição militar. Apenas 3% (n = 4) responderam negativamente, como apresentado na Ilustração 6. Estes resultados evidenciam o forte impacto simbólico e formativo da Prova de Fogo enquanto momento marcante no processo de integração dos recrutas na vida militar.

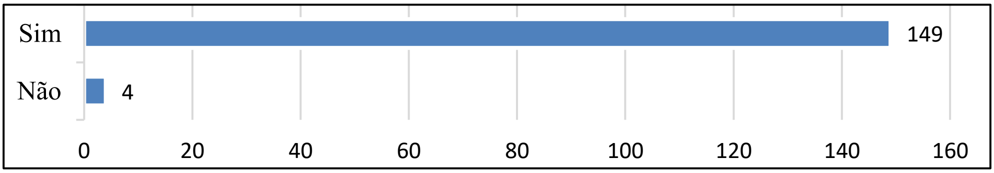

Ilustração 6. Respostas à pergunta n.º 5.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

Por último, e em relação à questão "Terminada a FMB, sente-se integrado na vida militar?", 97% (n = 148) dos inquiridos responderam afirmativamente, demonstrando que a Formação Militar Básica foi percecionada como um processo eficaz de adaptação e inserção no contexto castrense. Apenas 3% (n = 5) indicaram não se sentir ainda plenamente integrados, conforme apresentado na Ilustração 7. Estes resultados reforçam a relevância da FMB enquanto mecanismo estruturante de transição e incorporação na vida militar.

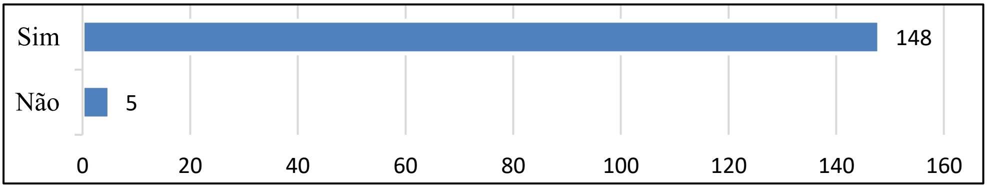

Ilustração 7. Respostas à pergunta n.º 6.
Fonte. Elaboração própria.

4.2. ENTREVISTAS

Além dos questionários aplicados aos cadetes, foram igualmente realizadas entrevistas a dois oficiais superiores que desempenham funções de chefia e intervêm directamente no processo formativo, desde a recepção dos pré-recrutas na AMEx até à cerimónia de encerramento dos Cursos de Licenciatura em Ciências Militares. Estes entrevistados, identificados como Entrev_1 e Entrev_2, foram seleccionados devido ao seu envolvimento directo na preparação, acompanhamento e execução da FMB.

Relativamente aos valores considerados mais relevantes para a integração do recruta na vida militar, o Entrev_1 destacou "(…) espírito de corpo, disciplina e obediência", enquanto o Entrev_2 salientou "(…) disciplina, hierarquia e obediência". Observa-se, assim, uma convergência em torno da disciplina e da obediência como pilares essenciais da formação e adaptação ao contexto militar.

Quanto à influência da FMB no processo de integração dos recrutas, ambos os entrevistados reconheceram a sua importância. Entrev_1 afirmou que "Sim. Porque durante a preparação militar foram submetidos a um programa específico no qual foram dotados de conhecimentos, hábitos e habilidades da Arte Militar". De forma complementar, Entrev_2 referiu que "Sim. Porque a FMB é o alicerce de todo o processo de instrução. Tem como objectivo acreditar o instruendo para frequentar o Curso de Licenciatura em Ciências Militares na AMEx e posteriores formações". Estas respostas reforçam a percepção da FMB como base estruturante da formação militar.

No que respeita às principais dificuldades enfrentadas pelos cadetes após a conclusão da FMB, Entrev_1 identificou que "(…) são as condições de aquartelamento e de lazer", apontando limitações relacionadas com o bem-estar e as condições de permanência na instituição. Por sua vez, Entrev_2 destacou dificuldades mais operacionais e estruturais, referindo "(…) escassez de munições para a realização do tiro de RPG-7, a escassez de fármacos no Posto Médico da UAI, a escassez de Professores de Técnica Individual de Combate, falta de condições no polígono de Preparação Física".

Relativamente ao desempenho dos instrutores que asseguraram a FMB, apenas o Entrev_2 se pronunciou directamente, classificando-o como "Muito bom", o que revela uma avaliação positiva do trabalho desenvolvido pelos formadores durante o processo de instrução.

Por fim, quanto às propostas para tornar a próxima FMB mais eficaz, Entrev_1 defendeu que "O Comando superior deve pôr à disposição da AMEx meios materiais para assegurar a preparação dos Recrutas de acordo com o Programa da FMB. E, seguidamente, de meios de aquartelamento e de lazer". Já Entrev_2 acrescentou a necessidade de reforço de recursos específicos, referindo "(…) que se disponibilize munições tracejadoras modelo 43, bússolas para orientação terrestre, projécteis PG-7 e OG-7, granada de Morteiro 60, mais Professores de Técnica Individual de Combate, viatura de carga sólida, e o recompletamento do kit de Primeiros Socorros". Estas sugestões evidenciam a necessidade de maior investimento material, logístico e pedagógico para o aperfeiçoamento contínuo da Formação Militar Básica.

5. DISCUSSÃO

Entre as razões que os motivaram a seguir a vida militar, contam-se por parte dos participantes: (i) a oportunidade de frequentar o Ensino Superior (43%); ii) o patriotismo (25%); iii) a falta de emprego (16%); e iv) a influência familiar (14%). Entretanto, 2% referiu que "sempre quis ser militar". À primeira vista, com excepção do patriotismo, as razões apontadas pelos Cadetes podem ser um óbice ao perfil que o Exército Angolano espera de um futuro Oficial. Sendo homens – e jovens – as suas motivações são legítimas, porquanto estão associadas às necessidades vitais humanas que Maslow (1943) discrimina em fisiológicas, de segurança, sociais, de estima e de realização pessoal. A FMB tem precisamente como escopo a eliminação de preconceitos, trivialidades, etc., e garantir que independentemente das motivações iniciais dos Recrutas, estes aprendam e reproduzam os símbolos, crenças e valores identitários da organização castrense de que farão parte.

A carreira militar é de per si um desafio constante sujeitando os militares a determinados sacrifícios. Neste quesito, o n.º 2 do Artigo 5.º das Normas Reguladoras da Disciplina Militar consagra que o militar tem por dever especial, "Amar a Pátria e defendê-la com todas as suas forças incluindo o sacrifício da própria vida" (1991, p. 10). Por outro lado, para que haja uma convivência sã entre os militares e nos órgãos de defesa, é indispensável que se cultivem determinados Valores basilares. Para a sua integração na vida militar, 34% dos inquiridos indicou a Disciplina; 24% indicou a Hierarquia; 21% assinalou o Espírito de corpo; 19% indicou a Obediência e apenas 2% assinalou a Pontualidade, como Valores cruciais. Os Entrevistados Entrev_1 e Entrev_2 destacaram a “Disciplina” e a “Obediência”. A propósito, a Constituição da República de Angola (CRA) estabelece no ponto 1 do Artigo 207.º o seguinte: “As FAA são a instituição militar nacional permanente, regular e apartidária, incumbida da defesa militar do país, organizadas na base da hierarquia, da disciplina e da obediência aos órgãos de soberania competentes, [...]”. Entre outros fins, a FMB ministrada pela AMEx destina-se a cultivar Valores que serão úteis aos Recrutas em toda a sua vida, enquanto Soldados, Cadetes, Sargentos, Oficiais, Chefes ou subordinados, tanto em tempo de paz como de guerra.

Geralmente, aceder ao Ensino Superior constitui um desafio ao modus vivendi dos jovens por incitá-los a adaptarem-se a uma realidade inexplorada, diferente daquela que lhes é familiar (Malau-Aduli et al., 2021). Entre os inquiridos, 71% manifestou não ter pensado em desistir da FMB, mas 29% considerou fazê-lo. Contudo, todos terminaram a FMB, podendo este facto estar associado a sua resiliência e compromisso, pois a resiliência reforça a resistência às dificuldades (Ungar, 2021). Se por um lado, a FMB representa um teste à capacidade de os Recrutas resistirem diante de situações difíceis, também fá-los reflectir em torno das razões que os levaram a seguir a carreira militar, pois assim como “Um homem ou uma mulher deve saber todas as tarefas e adquirir todas as habilidades que lhe são próprias" (Rangel, 1999, p. 149.), a FMB exige o máximo dos futuros Soldados a fim de estarem à altura das ordens e disposições emanadas superiormente. Outrossim, tendo em conta o prestígio social e oportunidades que a AMEx oferece, a desistência pode levar a família do Recruta a considerá-lo persona nom grata.

Em qualquer processo educativo-instrutivo, a actuação do formador concorre para o êxito ou insucesso. No geral, 70% da amostra considerou "Bom", 29% considerou "Excelente", e o Entrev_2 considerou "Muito bom" o desempenho dos instrutores, demonstrando o desvelo e profissionalismo dos instrutores que asseguraram a FMB. Registamos que a maior parte dos Recrutas foi fortemente impactada pela Prova de Fogo, uma vez que, 97% afirmou ter-se sentido como militar após a superação da mesma. Como referido, a FMB obedeceu a 3 fases, sendo que a primeira terminou precisamente com a realização do exercício conhecido como Prova de Fogo. Esta, visou avaliar o nível de assimilação dos Recrutas em relação às matérias leccionadas. A Prova de Fogo exige dos Recrutas um grande sacrifício, pois acarreta um grande desgaste físico e emocional. Têm a obrigação de superar diferentes estações, cada uma relacionada com diversas matérias práticas, incluindo superação de obstáculos, orientação topográfica, montagem e desmontagem da AKM-47 (algumas vezes de olhos vendados), tiro ao alvo num cenário que envolve a explosão contínua de blocos de TNT (TriNitroTolueno), disparos de armas de diferentes calibres, além de terem que enfrentar a oposição de um «inimigo» que tenta impedi-los de concluir o exercício. Ao superar a última estação, o Recruta sente que passou por um combate real, mas sobreviveu. No rescaldo, o medo e a insegurança dão lugar a auto-realização.

O inquérito por Questionário foi aplicado 45 dias após a conclusão da FMB. A esmagadora maioria (97%) dos inquiridos afirmou sentir-se integrado na vida militar. As mudanças no e do corpo constituem-se como um sinal de passagem levando um indivíduo a despojar-se de algo que o identifica diante de uma realidade social (Le Breton, 2004; Rodrigues, 2006). A propósito, ao começarem a FMB os Recrutas foram compelidos a cortar o cabelo, deixando-o muito raso. Aparentemente frugal e inócuo, o cumprimento desta medida revelou a predisposição dos Recrutas em seguir as regras institucionais, apesar de se tratar de jovens cuja esmagadora maioria (99%) está entre os 18 e 23 anos, faixa etária em que se manifesta uma preocupação exarcebada com a aparência física. Os Entrevistados consideraram que a formação ajudou na integração dos Recrutas na vida militar, pois "foram dotados de conhecimentos, hábitos e habilidades da Arte Militar" (Entrev_1) e estão habilitados a "frequentar o Curso de Licenciatura em Ciências Militares na AMEx e posteriores formações" (Entrev_2).

5.1. *LESSONS LEARNED*

Pelos apontamentos pioneiros de Gennep (1978) *apud* Silva e Ludorf (2011) e Turner (1980), descritos no enquadramento, os rituais de passagem envolvem três fases: separação, marginalização/clausura e reagregação/reincorporação. A FMB ministrada pela AMEx constitui-se como um ritual de passagem original e adequa-se às fases aludidas.

5.1.1. PRIMEIRA FASE DA FMB/AMEX: SEPARAÇÃO

Consistiu na entrada dos pré-recrutas pelo denominado Portão do Comandante com os homens trajando fatos sociais, e a mulheres trajando vestidos de gala. Ocorreu a distribuição de meios, tais como farda, *t-shirt*, meias, botas, chapéu, mochila, etc., e a troca dos trajes civis pela farda (castanha) peculiar para a frequência da FMB. Já uniformizados, os pré-recrutas beneficiaram de um momento cuntatório de despedidas aos familiares registando-se abraços, conselhos parentais e votos de boa sorte. Em seguida, foram separados dos seus entes, do seu modus vivendi e conduzidos para a Unidade de Apoio à Instrução (UAI).

5.1.2. SEGUNDA FASE DA FMB/AMEX: CLAUSURA

Teve a duração de noventa dias. Enclausurados na UAI, ocorreram mudanças significativas nesta fase, pois os recrutas desenvolveram habilidades, a exemplo de técnicas de camuflagem, orientação no terreno, formas de progressão, actuação na defesa, manuseio e limpeza da AKM-47 e RPG-7, além de técnicas de primeiros socorros. A prestação de continência, a entoação frequente de cânticos, o cumprimento rigoroso do horário de aulas, das refeições e do recolher, o porte obrigatório de arma, a ordem unida, a proibição de usar aparelhos electrónicos (o telemóvel, em particular), comportamentos que inicialmente são um choque aos hábitos correntes de indivíduo civis, foram fundamentais neste período de clausura para a almejada coesão do grupo e expectável integração dos Recrutas na vida militar.

5.1.3. TERCEIRA FASE DA FMB/AMEX: INCORPORAÇÃO

Finalmente, o desuso da farda (castanha), a recepção da farda de campanha (camuflada) e o Juramento de Bandeira, constituem a Incorporação. Os sinais imediatos da passagem dos outrora candidatos, de um *status* para outro, puderam ser verificados por aqueles que presenciaram o acto de encerramento do 10.º Curso de FMB, sobretudo os familiares. Ao voltarem a vê-los, fardados, executando movimentos de Ordem Unida, manuseando armas, etc., seguramente tiveram a percepção de que não eram os mesmos indivíduos de quem se haviam despedido três meses atrás. Feito o Juramento, os Recrutas assumiram uma nova identidade: Soldados incorporados nas Forças Armadas Angolanas. Grosso modo, concluída a FMB, os Recrutas passaram a fazer parte do corpo discente da AMEx, recebendo um número de matrícula e, em sentido amplo, às FAA, recebendo um número de identificação pessoal (NIP).

5.2. RESPOSTA ÀS PERGUNTAS DERIVADAS

Segundo Heinemann (2003), "a interpretação dos dados deve servir para responder às perguntas iniciais da investigação" (p. 229), e na medida em que, "À pergunta de partida são acometidas as perguntas derivadas, (...) questões de cariz mais limitado, dispostas em setores de análise que estão circunscritos no domínio da área da pergunta de partida e que atendem, consequentemente, aos objetivos específicos da investigação" (Rosado, 2017, p. 122), podemos responder as PD formuladas. Sobre a PD1: "Quais foram as razões que levaram os recrutas a seguir a vida militar?"; identificamos a oportunidade que muitos procuravam para frequentar o Ensino Superior, o amor à pátria, a falta de emprego e a influência familiar.

Quanto à PD2: "Que Valores os recrutas consideram cruciais para a sua integração na vida militar?"; foram mencionados mais vezes a Disciplina, a Hierarquia e o Espírito de corpo. Terminada a FMB, os ex-recrutas entram em contacto com o Código de Honra do Cadete, e cedo percebem a importância dos Valores apreendidos durante a FMB, pois "a classificação de frequência inferior a dez (10) valores na disciplina de Avaliação Comportamental do Cadete, implica a eliminação do cadete da frequência da AMEx e consequente abate efectivo do Corpo de Cadetes, por falta de perfil para ser Oficial" (AMEx, 2002, p. 13). Ou seja, a FMB é vital para a integração do recruta na vida militar e sua permanência na AMEx enquanto Cadete. Diante da PD3: "Os recrutas pensaram, em algum momento, em desistir da FMB?"; apuramos que 44 Recrutas manifestaram indecisão face à continuidade. Entretanto, os 153 concluíram a FMB. Com a PD4: "Que desempenho tiveram os instrutores durante a FMB?"; constatamos que estes estiveram ao alcance das expectativas. A nossa inferência deve-se ao facto de 151 inquiridos ter dividido as suas opiniões entre "Bom" e "Excelente". De igual modo, o Entrevistado 2 classificou o desempenho como "*Muito bom*", apesar de ressaltar, em paralelo, *"a escassez de meios como munições, (...) fármacos, de professores de Técnica Individual de Combate, a falta de condições no polígono de Preparação Física"* (*Entrev_2*). Em relação ao Entrevistado 1, as únicas dificuldades enfrentadas pelos Cadetes no período pós-FMB estiveram associadas somente, às *"(...) condições de aquartelamento e de lazer"* (*Entrev_1*). Nos próximos Cursos de FMB podiam ser indicados – preferencialmente – os mesmos instrutores e colocar-se à disposição dos executores da formação todas as condições necessárias, a fim de serem alcançados resultados cada vez melhores.

Em último lugar, pela PD5: "Quão impactante foi a Prova de Fogo"?. Foi possível perceber que a Prova de Fogo feita ao longo da FMB teve um enorme impacto sobre os recrutas, funcionando como um *game changer*, porquanto dos 153 inquiridos, 149 afirmaram que o exercício fê-los sentir-se militares, porque apesar do grau de dificuldade, sacrifício e brio que a prova exigiu, conseguiram superá-la e dar seguimento à FMB com maior motivação.

5.3. RESPOSTA À PERGUNTAS DE PARTIDA

Recordemos que "à pergunta de partida são acometidas as perguntas derivadas, sendo que (…) as perguntas derivadas são, por seu turno, questões de cariz mais limitado, dispostas em setores de análise que estão circunscritos no domínio da área da pergunta de partida e que atendem, consequentemente, aos objetivos específicos da investigação" (Rosado, 2017, p. 122). Neste momento da investigação, podemos responder à PP: "Que influência teve a FMB no processo de integração dos recrutas na vida militar"? A FMB demonstrou ter sido altamente eficaz na medida em que 97% dos recrutas afirmou sentir-se integrado na vida militar depois de concluir a FMB. Atualmente a frequentar o 2.º Ano, os outrora recrutas, beneficiam enquanto soldados (e Cadetes), de um estatuto peculiar à medida daqueles que de forma resiliente superam a Formação Militar Básica.

6. CONCLUSÕES

A recepção anual de candidaturas de cidadãos que aspiram à frequência de um curso superior militar constitui um desafio relevante para a AMEx, na medida em que as motivações individuais dos candidatos podem influenciar e, por vezes, condicionar a cultura organizacional da instituição e das FAA. Neste contexto, a FMB assume-se como um mecanismo estruturante de transformação, adaptação e integração, desempenhando um papel central na transição do indivíduo civil para a condição de militar.

Os resultados demonstram que a FMB exerce uma influência significativa na integração dos recrutas, possibilitando a aquisição de competências técnicas, operacionais e comportamentais indispensáveis ao exercício da função de soldado. Para além da dimensão funcional, este processo formativo revela uma forte componente axiológica, responsável pela transmissão, consolidação e perpetuação dos valores, normas e princípios próprios da instituição militar. Quase a totalidade dos participantes consideraram que a FMB foi determinante para a sua integração na vida militar, o que reforça a sua relevância enquanto ritual de passagem *sui generis*.

A FMB permite, assim, transmitir e consolidar valores castrenses, moldar comportamentos, desenvolver capacidades essenciais aos futuros agentes da Defesa Nacional e contribuir para o fortalecimento e continuidade das FAA. A FMB confere múltiplas valências aos Recrutas, desde a aprendizagem e praticidade da simples, porém funcional continência, ao manuseio e emprego de armamento em prol da defesa da Pátria. Neste sentido, considera-se fundamental que o Comando da AMEx e os escalões superiores continuem a atribuir especial atenção a este processo formativo, garantindo a sua constante actualização e adequação às exigências institucionais e operacionais.

Todavia, atendendo ao facto de a Cerimónia de Juramento à Bandeira Nacional constituir o momento culminante da FMB e de a Prova de Fogo funcionar como instrumento de avaliação das aprendizagens adquiridas, sugere-se que esta última ocorra apenas no final do período de instrução, assegurando maior coerência pedagógica e simbólica. Propõe-se igualmente a inclusão formal do Juramento à

Bandeira Nacional no Programa Geral da FMB, reforçando o seu valor institucional e formativo.

Entre as principais limitações do estudo destaca-se a utilização de uma amostra por conveniência, circunscrita aos recrutas de um Curso de FMB, o que pode limitar a generalização dos resultados. Acresce ainda o reduzido número de entrevistas realizadas, bem como a ausência de uma análise longitudinal que permitisse acompanhar o processo de integração dos militares após o término da formação inicial.

Neste sentido, considera-se pertinente a realização de estudos futuros que promovam uma avaliação contínua da eficácia e adequabilidade da FMB ministrada pela AMEx. Um estudo multi-sectorial envolvendo vários oficiais docentes e instrutores poderá constituir um contributo relevante para o aprofundamento desta temática.

Paralelamente, considerando que a AMEx ministra igualmente a FMB a candidatos provenientes de outras Instituições de Ensino Superior Militar, revela-se igualmente pertinente o desenvolvimento de estudos comparativos e transversais sobre os processos de integração, o *modus vivendi* e o *modus operandi* dos recrutas no período subsequente à formação inicial, permitindo compreender com maior profundidade os efeitos duradouros da FMB na consolidação da identidade militar.

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