

## **Who supports the Populist Radical Right?**

The Determinants of Vote for Chega: a Case-study of Populist Radical  
Right Voters in Portugal: 2019-2022

### **Master Thesis**

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*“Being naked approaches being revolutionary;  
going barefoot is mere populism.”*

- John Updike, *On the Vineyard* (1980)

## Abstract

This dissertation evaluates who votes on Chega in three domains, a) socioeconomic profile, b) voter transference and c) electoral geography for three landmarks: 2019 and 2022 legislative elections, and the 2021 presidential election. Through a descriptive analysis combining *Centro de Estudos e Sondagens de Opinião* (Centre for Studies and Opinion Polls, CESOP) exit polls and election data of *Secretaria Geral do Ministério da Administração Interna* (Secretary General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, SGMAI, SGMAI), this investigation finds that Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters aged 25-54 who completed high school than the electorate as a whole. Also, those voting on Chega previously voted on *Partido Social Democrata* (Social Democratic Party, PSD) to a greater extent or, to a lesser extent, did not vote at all. Support for Chega is disproportionately low in Northern regions. The main contribution of this study is the analysis of a large sample of the electorate of Chega. Comparisons between the findings on the profile of Chega's voters and that of populist radical right voters in France, Italy, and Spain corroborate theories that there is no single populist radical right voter. Future studies should evaluate the attitudinal profile of Chega's voters and introduce supply-side variables.

**Keywords:** Chega, Party-choice, Populist radical right, Portugal, Voting behavior

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## Introduction

Oh, the populist radical right voter! Who is he? Where is he? What does he stand for? These are some of the questions that have interested political scientists for quite some time.

Early seminal works, as is the example of that of Betz, dared to answer such questions and contended that “by the end of the 1980s, the typical radical right-wing voter more often than not came from the lower classes, had only a low to moderate level of education, and tended to live in the disadvantaged areas of Western Europe's large and medium-sized cities.” (Betz, 1994, p. 166). From that moment on, the populist radical right voter was more often than not painted by the media and academics alike as an ‘angry white man’ (Ford & Goodwin, 2010) who works a manual job, cannot afford to live in cities, despises all-things progressive values, is not educated nor is a fan of immigration, and is young.... or perhaps old (Rydgren, 2018).

Especially in the fields of electoral sociology and voting behavior, many other studies added up to this narrative (see Rydgren, 2018) while others challenged it deeply (see also Rydgren, 2018). Perhaps the most important one is that of Cas Mudde (2007), who firmly asserts that there is no such thing as a populist radical right voter. In other words, amongst those who vote for the populist radical right one is able to find a plethora of social backgrounds. In fact, there is empirical evidence of several kinds anchoring competing arguments, thus adding to the complexity that characterizes this debate.

Currently, hundreds of works and articles exist (see Mudde, 2017), and it can be safely pointed out that the populist radical right occupies an ever-more relevant place within political and social sciences studies. And yet, still, until this date, no consensus

has been reached on whether some individuals are more prone to support the populist radical right given their particular socioeconomic profiles and previous party choices.

Questioning who the populist radical right voter is, therefore, remains far from over. On the contrary, studies contemplating this voter are becoming every day more predominant – and perhaps rightly so. Nowadays, most Western countries have a relevant populist candidate or party, if not in government sometimes as leaders of the opposition (Lewis, 2019).

As numerous doubts regarding the profile of the populist radical right voter persist unanswered, the discussion around this could unquestionably benefit from empirical insights of Portugal, a country that until recently had no populist radical right party entering into parliament. Hence, and naturally, there is a gap regarding the study of populist radical right voters, stemming from the fact that only in the legislative elections of 2019 did Chega - the new populist radical right party - achieve the landmark of having parliamentary representation.

The relevance of this dissertation thus results from the urgency in quantitatively studying the profile of Chega's voters, considering the novelty of the party and the modest amount of rigorous empirical studies (Afonso, 2021; Carvalho, 2022; Dennison & Mendes, 2019; Heyne & Manucci, 2021; Jalali et al., 2021; Mendes, 2021; Mendes & Dennison, 2021) on the phenomenon.

The main objective of this study is certainly to add to the general literature on the so-called 'populist radical right voter'. I believe this is fulfilled through three aspects, notably, i) studying the profile of the 'populist radical right voter' in a country that until recently was an 'exceptional case' and for which, consequently, literature is lacking; ii) the possibility of analyzing the voter base of Chega using CESOP exit polls; and iii) the opportunity to study Portugal, a country that is peculiar in terms of its

cleavage structure and the salience - or lack thereof - of immigration and other issues (Afonso, 2021).

This study's main contribution is the analysis of a large sample ( $N = N_{2019} + N_{2021} + N_{2022} = 202 + 1,260 + 937 = 2,399$ ) of the electorate of Chega.

This dissertation seeks to answer the questions: “What is the socioeconomic profile of Chega’s voters?”; and “What is the profile of Chega’s voters in terms of previous party choices?”. Thus, the profile of Chega’s electorate is analyzed in three domains, notably (i) determinants of the vote (focusing on class, gender, age, education), (ii) electoral geography, and (iii) voter transference (i.e., previous party choices of current Chega’s voters).

For the purposes of this study, this dissertation performs a descriptive analysis comprising CESOP exit polls together with election data from SGMAI for the three landmarks under evaluation - the 2019 and 2022 legislative and 2021 presidential elections. Considering that Chega is essentially a one-person party (Pinto, 2020) these three elections are comparable, and it is reasonable to analyze them all.

Besides this analysis, an internal comparison between the profile of Chega and the profile of other Portuguese parties – namely PSD, *CDS-Partido Popular* (CDS-Popular Party, CDS-PP), *Partido Comunista Português* (Portuguese Communist Party, PCP), and *Iniciativa Liberal* (Liberal Initiative, IL) – is performed. (A detailed description of party abbreviations is given in Appendix C).

Moreover, the newness of Chega and the consequent modest number of studies adds to the pertinence of comparing the case in question to others in neighboring countries. In fact, in 2019, Portugal’s closest neighbor - Spain - was also closing a chapter in its history as a country immune to the radical right. As this event is also fairly recent, this dissertation draws parallels not only between Portugal and Spain but also

between France and Italy. In the last two, the populist radical right has been an integral part of political life for some years now, thereby numerous studies focusing on the profile of their electorates exist.

The choice of countries - Italy, France, and Spain - stems from the fact that, despite differences, the three share more in common with Portugal in terms of history, culture, and language than any other European country.

This dissertation is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on the theories regarding populist radical right voters. The second part corresponds to the case study of populist radical right voters in Portugal. In the first part, a theoretical overview of the determinants of the vote, voter transference, and electoral geography is displayed. Secondly, these theories are applied to the cases of France, Italy, and Spain. In the second part, the hypotheses concerning the determinants of the vote and voter transference are displayed, and the electoral geography of Chega is analyzed. Subsequently, the methodology is described. Afterwards, the results are presented. Finally, this dissertation concludes with a discussion of such results and final remarks.

Hopefully, at the end of this dissertation, the reader will have a much clearer picture of who the Chega's voters really are.

## **Part I: The Populist Radical Right in Western Europe - Theory**

The present section is structured as follows. First, a brief history of four populist radical right parties - FN, *Lega*, VOX, and Chega - is given. Secondly, an overview of the main theories regarding the characteristics of radical right voters is provided. This overview includes literature regarding socioeconomic characteristics of voters (class, gender, age, education). In this dissertation, ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ are used interchangeably. Also, it includes a summary of the literature on the question of voters’ transference and electoral geography, respectively. Finally, concrete cases are presented - FN, *Lega*, and VOX.

### **1.1. Populist Radical Right Parties in Western Europe - FN, *Lega*, VOX and Chega**

For quite some time, political scientists and the general public wondered “Where have all the fascists gone?” (Bar-On, 2007). It seemed that the “fascists” had simply faded away, that they were nowhere to be found. On the contrary, those who were curious about the whereabouts of the populists had to look no further. The populists were increasingly relevant all-over Europe. Nonetheless, while for some this led to the conclusion that the “fascists” unlike the populists remain missing, for others the distinction between the “fascists” and the populists is not so unambiguous. In fact, the terms “populist right”, “extreme right”, “radical right” and “new right” are often used interchangeably. Since the differences between these terms are sometimes difficult to grasp, the solution was to come up with a plethora of definitions such as “populist radical right”. The Right has thus become a difficult phenomenon to unravel, as Mudde (1996) had already explained: “We know who they are, even though we do not know exactly what they are.”.

This dissertation does not delve deeper into theoretical discussions respecting the appropriateness or usefulness of such labels, as well as for which party are the given labels more suitable. Instead, this dissertation makes use of the term ‘populist radical right’ and considers that this is a well-suited term to describe all the parties mentioned. It is important to note that this dissertation sometimes refers only to the ‘radical right’. When this happens, it is because radical right is used to mean the same as populist radical right.

Also, this dissertation does not present an extensive overview of the debates around the meaning of populism - which is an “essentially contested concept” (Kaltwasser et al., 2017). Even so, two prominent and opposing accounts on the subject are worth displaying.

The first is that of Cas Mudde, who put forward one of the most influential explanations of populism. For the author, populism is “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté Générale* (general will) of the people” (Kaltwasser et al., 2017).

Benjamin Moffitt, on the other hand, understands the explanation of Cas Mudde to fit in with those that classify populism “as ideology” (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). In fact, Moffitt and Tormey offer a prominent critique of what the authors term ‘dominant conceptions of populism’ (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014), comprising the understanding of populism as a discourse, organization, ideology, and others.

As an alternative, the authors construct a so-called “inductive model of populism as a political style” which, in essence, views populism as being a performance. In other words, “populism is a style that is performed and enacted.” (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014,

p.388). The authors furthermore define ‘political style’ “as the repertoires of performance that are used to create political relations.” (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014, p.387).

This naturally has implications for understanding populism in itself but also for explaining its root causes and growth perspectives. In being a performance, populism is not confined to a certain seat in the political spectrum – usually at the extremes – nor does it belong to a ‘party family’, as authors such as Mudde (2017) posit. Put differently, if populism is to be seen as a performance rather than a party family, it can very much appear anywhere on the political spectrum including the mainstream side of politics. In this sense, mainstream parties can also be termed populist if and when politicians choose to perform populism. Moffitt and Tormey’s model thus opens doors for studying populism beyond extreme parties and their leaders. It incentivizes scholars to focus instead on features that can span across all parties, countries, and occasions (Moffitt & Tormey, 2014). Similarly, Sanders et al., (2017) specify that populist party leaders usually communicate – that is, perform – in ways that are very characteristic, such as by making use of “exclusionary and stigmatizing narratives”.

Nonetheless, if one considers the description of the populist party family of Mudde (2017), then in almost every European country there is a populist radical right party. It is thus not surprising that this topic has attracted ever-growing scholarly attention, especially since now “Far right parties can no longer be thought of as somehow pathological or even parasitical” (Bale, 2010, p.67).

### *Front National*

“The gas chambers were a detail of the war unless one admits that it is the war that was a detail of the gas chambers”<sup>1</sup> (Chez Les Le Pen, *Une Longue Histoire de Conflits Père-Fille*, 2015).

This is one of the several (in)famous declarations of Jean-Marie Le Pen, who was the leader of the anti-immigration and unapologetically xenophobic far-right party *Front National* (National Front, FN). The party, which until October had been named *Front National pour une Unité Française* (National Front for French Unity, FNUF) (Stockemer, 2017) officially came into being in 1972 (Mayer & Perrineau, 1996). It started off as a project of leading figures from *Ordre Nouveau* (New Order, ON), an outright nationalist and activist organization founded in 1969 (Mayer & Perrineau, 1996). The goal was to swiftly move from the activist sphere to the political one as an emblematic far-right parliamentary movement. The inspiration was the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Italian Social Movement, MSI), that by 1972 was an example of electoral success (Mayer & Perrineau, 1996).

As regards the first president of the FN, Jean-Marie Le Pen was the obvious choice (Stockemer, 2017), not least because he is “white (or majority ethnicity/race), male, straight, older, authoritarian, charismatic, crude, violent, and with a military background” (Mudde, 2019). Yet Le Pen was, and until this day still is, a controversial figure. FN likewise experienced a somewhat turbulent path from the French political fringes all the way to the establishment. The years 1973 – 1980 were times of “crossing the desert” - as Le Pen put it himself (quoted in Stockemer, 2017) - due to the weak electoral performances of FN. The feeble showings of the party began with the legislative elections on the 4th of March 1973, where FN solely attained 1.32% of the

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<sup>1</sup> « les chambres à gaz étaient un détail de la guerre, à moins d'admettre que c'est la guerre qui était un détail des chambres à gaz »

national vote (Mayer & Perrineau, 1996). Shortly after, ON abandoned FN to form a competitor far-right party, the *Parti des Forces Nouvelles* (Party of the New Forces, PFN) (Stockemer, 2017), thereby fragmenting the already modest support on the marginal right-wing flank of French politics. In the 1974 presidential election, Jean-Marie Le Pen did not even pass the 1% threshold (Reynié, 2016). Years later, the FN did not run in the 1979 European Parliament elections, and Jean-Marie Le Pen did not meet the requirements for the 1981 French presidential run (Reynié, 2016).

These subsequent elections thus added to the despair of the party leadership and seemed not to corroborate the initial ambitions of becoming the French MSI. Nonetheless, the results of the legislative election of 1981 in *Dreux* brought some rays of optimism (Mayer & Perrineau, 1996). By this time, France was already experiencing a higher influx of North African immigrants. Simultaneously, the country was dealing with what was considered 'poor' economic policy options of the incumbent socialist government and the president of the Socialist Party (PS) François Mitterrand - who had won the 1981 presidential election (Stockemer, 2017). FN was particularly successful in capitalizing on the immigration issue and thus in the 1983 municipal elections its electoral victories were reinforced with the result of 11.26% of the national vote, culminating in the nomination of Le Pen as municipal councilor (Stockemer, 2017). The 1984 European elections were yet another confirmation that FN was not a moribund political force, with two million voters supporting the party (11.2%) (Stockemer, 2017).

Afterwards, the electoral results of FN were both a product of an increasingly stronger anti-immigration stance and the 1986 strategic political choice of the socialists of introducing proportional representation (Reynié, 2016). Unquestionably, the newly established electoral rules were like wind on FN's back. In the 1986 legislative

elections, the party finally acquired parliamentary representation, winning 35 out of the total 577 seats (with 9.65% of the vote) (Stockemer, 2017).

Two years later, in the 1988 presidential election, campaigning on the motto “*Le Pen, Le Peuple*” (Stockemer, 2017) – with ‘the people’ soon becoming a recurring theme of the FN political platform - Le Pen won 14.4% of the vote (Reynié, 2016). This result stated loud and clear that the party was revolutionizing the political arena. Nonetheless, the shift to a two-round majority system had FN out of the French parliament in that same year following the legislative elections (Stockemer, 2017). Even so, in the 1989 European elections, FN had a showing of 11% of the national vote, a result roughly equal to that of 1984.

Still, the result that shocked the French and the world alike came only in 2002 when Le Pen made it to the second round of the presidential election with 16.9% of the vote (Reynié, 2016). Le Pen nonetheless stood no chance against the political opponent Jacques Chirac (from Rally for the Republic, RPR). The former had 17.8% of the vote compared to the 82.2% of Chirac (Reynié, 2016). There was, however, some merit to what Le Pen accomplished, hadn't this been the first time a nationalist party was able to reach the second round of the presidential election (Stockemer, 2017). Despite that, the taste of victory did not last long and failing to enter the parliament after the legislative elections in that same year (Reynié, 2016) quickly eclipsed the presidential election performance.

The following years highlighted the need of reforming the party if it was to abandon the shadows of French political life. The result of the 2007 presidential election (10.4% of the vote) (Reynié, 2016) had Marine Le Pen, the daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, embarking on a mission to reform the party, actively seeking to soften “LePenism” (Stockemer, 2017). She had already initiated this quest in 1998 together with Samuel

Maréchal, with whom she created the “*Génération Le Pen*” (Le Pen Generation) (Stockemer, 2017) in an attempt to attract new supporters. This added up to other initiatives and led to the somewhat predictable change in leadership of the FN in 2011, a time when Le Pen stepped down and his daughter formally assumed control of the party.

Marine Le Pen’s strategy has been labeled “*dédiabolization*” (de-diabolization) (Stockemer, 2017). Under this label, Marine Le Pen tried to soften the image of the party and make it more feminine (Mudde, 2019). Yet, Marine Le Pen kept some if not all of her father’s legacies, including anti-immigration, law and order, and the protection of French identity (Stockemer, 2017). Actually, the FN did not get rid of some of the ideas it had already laid out in the Fifty-Point Program of 1991, such as a “national preference” for the “natives” (Mudde, 2019). Such a “preference” became in the 2012 presidential campaign onwards a disguised expression of “national solidarity (...) for nationals” (Reynié, 2016). In 2007, for example, the presidential program of FN reads “the overrepresentation of immigrants in crime and criminality is a fact” (Stockemer, 2017). Ten years later Marine Le Pen argued that “multiculturalism” was “a weapon for Islamic extremists” (Mudde, 2019). So, in reality, Marine Le Pen preserved the essence of FN while reinforcing a populist rhetoric rooted in welfare chauvinism, anti-Europeanism, and the need to defend the French people - as slogans such as “*au nom du peuple*” (on behalf of the people) let clear (*France - Présidentielle. Marine Le Pen “Au Nom Du Peuple,”* 2016).

The truth is that FN results have improved throughout the years and ever since Marine Le Pen embarked on this mission to “reform” the party. In the presidential election of 2012, the daughter of Le Pen won 17.9% of the vote in the first round. This success was followed by others, notably the 2014 European elections. FN won 25% of

the vote – the best electoral result in the country - beating the mainstream parties PS and UMP and electing 24 deputies (Stockemer, 2017). This made the FN “not only the strongest party in France, but also the most successful radical right-wing party in Europe” (Stockemer, 2017, p. 25). In December of the following year, the 2015 regional elections once again reinforced FN’s electoral strength with a showing of 27.7% (Reynié, 2016), its best result until that date. In 2017, however, Marine Le Pen exceeded all the expectations when once again made an extraordinary achievement. With 21.3% of the vote, the candidate repeated the deed of her father in 2002, only with a far more impressive electoral performance. Even though the presidential candidate was defeated in the second round, support for Marine Le Pen was at an all-time high: 33.9% (Mudde, 2019). To some, this result appeared to indicate that “mainstream parties no longer control French political life” (Reynié, 2016). In the legislative elections that year, the performance of FN nonetheless remained stable (13.2% of votes) when compared to the same elections of 2012 (13.6% of votes).

A year later, in 2018, the FN changed its name to National Rally (RN) (Mudde, 2019) and campaigned in the 2022 presidential election under slogans such as “give the French back their country and their money”, which very much resembled those of Trump and Brexit’s campaigns (Walt, 2022). This year (2022) not only did Le Pen make it to the second round yet again, but the candidate strikingly shortened its distance from the first classified – the incumbent President Macron - with a showing of 41.5% of the vote (*French Presidential Election 2022 Live Results: Macron and Le Pen Face Off Again*, 2022). The party is therefore performing stronger than ever.

## *Lega*

The history of *Lega Nord* (Northern League, LN) - or as it was rebranded now, *Lega per Salvini* (League for Salvini) - is at best peculiar. It has attracted a considerable amount of scholarly attention especially because it is a “onetime regionalist party” (D’Alimonte, 2019) successfully turned “*nazionalista*” (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). Reforms to achieve such endeavor were put forward by Matteo Salvini, the party’s current leader (or as he is often called by supporters, ‘*El Capitano*’ (The Captain)). Also, the party constitutes a fascinating case study as it participated in governing coalitions, something that was not common in Western European politics. So, considering these achievements, it is worth displaying how this singular party came into being.

*Lega Nord* (LN) was initially founded by Umberto Bossi in 1991 as a coalition of six regionalist parties (or “leagues”) of northern Italy (Mudde, 2007), during the 1980s (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). At the time, Umberto Bossi was the leader of the most electorally successful party of this group of six – the *Lega Lombarda* (League of Lombardy) (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). After having founded the party, Bossi went on to be its leader until 2012, when a financial and corruption scandal forced him to resign (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). He founded the party with an ambitious mission in mind, which echoed in the party’s messages and political program. Autonomy – specifically Lombardian autonomy - was the keyword (Betz, 1994) and federalism was the key political aim (*Lega - Italy*, n.d.). In 2011, the party program clearly stated that “the objective which has always inspired the political actions of the *Lega Nord* has been that of transforming our country - which is highly centralized - into a modern federal state” (quoted in Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016, p. 45).

To understand LN is thus crucial to understand the idea the party itself launched in 1996 – that of the nation of Padania. This nation would be situated in the northern region of Italy (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001), composed of several territories from Umbria to South Tyrol that had particular traditions and should thus be independent of Italy. The LN – or ‘*Lega Nord per l’indipendenza della Padania*’ (Lega Nord for Pandanian Independence) - was therefore created in opposition to the Italian state. Indeed, Bossi was very vocal about how Italy was not Padania. In 2001, the former leader even made the controversial statement about only using the Italian flag to “wipe his arse” (Stille, 2018). It should thus not be surprising that throughout the years the LN has been at the forefront of several referendums on the matter of Pandanian independence. Particularly, the one of 1997 declared that “We, the people of Padania, solemnly proclaim: Padania is an independent and sovereign federal republic”<sup>2</sup> (*Quando La Lega Nord Proclamò l’indipendenza Della Padania*, 2017).

LN thus had a very specific geographical map of electoral support, notably the individuals living in the North (where Padania would be situated). Actually, another objective of LN was to try and exploit the so-called ‘Northern question’ (Cento Bull & Gilbert, 2001), whereby Roma was ruling the country in favor of the South (a much poorer region of Italy), and the southern individuals had been taking advantage of the hard-working and wealthier northern class. For this reason, LN has often been termed an “ethnoregionalist” party (Mudde, 2007).

Yet the party is also a ‘protest party’(Mudde, 2007). In fact, LN played a pivotal role in the collapse of the so-called First Republic, due to both its ideas and its electoral performance in the early 1990s (Passarelli, 2015). The party campaigned against the *Paritocrazia* (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018) – meaning ‘rule by the parties’ – of Rome and

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<sup>2</sup> “Noi, popoli della Padania, solennemente proclamiamo: la Padania è una Repubblica federale indipendente e sovrana”

the corrupt elites that supposedly governed in their own favor. The Operation Clean Hands (Stille, 2018) – or what the Italians refer to as *Tangentopoli* (meaning corruption or bribes Ville) and *mani pulite* (meaning clean hands) (Betz, 1994) – implicated post-war political parties such as the Christian Democratic party (DC) and its coalition partner, the Italian Socialist party. Such an operation led to the collapse of both and subsequently ended the First Republic, with all the party system changes that inevitably followed.

Since 1992 and in subsequent years, Berlusconi became the uncontested leader of the center-right, and LN benefited from the affiliation with his party *Forza Italia* (Forward Italy, FI). In 1994, FI, together with the coalition partners *Alleanza Nazionale* (National Alliance, AN) – the former *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (Italian Social Movement, MSI) and LN – won the general election with 46.1% of the vote (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). LN, nonetheless, only acquired 8.4% of the vote (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016).

Slightly after, in 1996, LN decided to no longer support the Berlusconi government. LN thus ran alone in the general election and won the best result it had ever had until that period - a showing of 10.1% of the vote (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). The complex political scenario and the fragmentation on the right did not, however, play in LN's favor during the late 1990s. Hence, the party ultimately rejoined a Berlusconi's alliance that won the 2001 general election yet again, this time under the label *Casa della Libertà* (Liberty House, CDL) – comprising FI, the *Unione di Centro* (Center Union, UDC), AN, and LN. This election was nevertheless the worst since the beginning of LN, winning a meager 3.9% of the vote (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016).

The years that followed were turbulent and in the 2006 general election the center-left union led by Romano Prodi won, thereby temporarily putting an end to

Berlusconi's dominance. However, the results were actually not all bad for the right despite what initial appearances might indicate. In that year LN saw a small increase in support, with a showing of 4.6% (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016).

Shortly after, it was time for Berlusconi to create *Popolo della Libertá* (People of Liberty, PDL) - a collation of FI and AN - that successfully ran alongside LN in the 2008 general election. And with 46.8% of the national vote (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016), Berlusconi went from leader of the opposition to head of the government in that year.

To illustrate the volatility of the Italian electoral system, it is worth noting how by 2008 PDL "became the oldest party group in the Italian parliament." (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016, p. 49). This governing coalition nonetheless managed to last until 2011, in what were shiny years (in electoral terms) for the LN. In the general election of 2008, the LN achieved 8.3% of the vote (Albertazzi et al., 2018). A year later, in the 2009 European elections, it won 10.2% of the vote - its best performance ever to date (Albertazzi & McDonnell, 2016). Subsequently, in the 2010 regional elections, the party performed brilliantly and secured victory both in Piedmont and Veneto (two northern regions).

It was only after Bossi being forced to step down as the party leader, following the already mentioned corruption scandals, that the LN changed drastically. The poor electoral showing of 2013 (4.1% of the vote) (Albertazzi et al., 2018), only exceeded by that of 2001, seemed to have further convinced its future leader Salvini of the need to revitalize the party. For Salvini, the enemies were not Rome and the southern people, but rather Brussels and its leaders (Albertazzi et al., 2018). Salvini himself claimed in an interview that if he "is a nationalist and not a regionalist separatist" that is due to the fact that "the threats to identity have changed"(Stille, 2018). Those threats are now the

EU, immigration, and globalization. In fact, his *Secondo Matteo* autobiography goes as far as comparing the EU to the Soviet Union (Salvini et al., 2016).

Under Salvini, the LN was further radicalized and a new form of “nativist nationalism” instead of “northern separatism” was endorsed (Albertazzi, 2018). Mudde argues that “while nativism has been present throughout its [LN] existence, the party has often been torn between regionalism and nationalism” (parenthesis added, Mudde, 2007, p. 56).

A party that initially had campaigned under the motto “*Roma, ladrona!*” (Rome, thief!) (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018) had thus to undergo a radical change. Yet Salvini’s leadership (Albertazzi et al., 2018) did not halt all the LN ideals. Indeed, the main principles on which LN was anchored, such as federalism, were not abandoned entirely but rather adapted in a way that could also serve the interests of the nation as a whole. In this sense, LN was cunningly able to preserve the ideological traits (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018) that resonated with its initial electorate, alienating few and acquiring new voters.

These changes actually seem to have worked out in LN’s favor, especially the strong messages of Salvini against immigration, with his famous saying of “*La pacchia è finita*” (the party is over) (Stille, 2018) – meaning that no more illegal immigrants will easily settle in Italy. The chief success of the party came in 2018, the first time when *Lega* – without the “*Nord*” to illustrate the true national character and with the slogan “Italians first!” (Mudde, 2019) – surpassed FI, winning the title of the most important party on the right (Albertazzi et al., 2018). In that year, the party won 17.4% of the vote (Albertazzi et al., 2018). More concretely, 17.34% votes at the Chamber and 17.63% at the Senate (*Lega - Italy*, n.d.).

When in office, the party was responsible for approving a reform on immigration and asylum leading to an extreme reduction in the number of illegal immigrants coming to Italy (*Lega - Italy*, n.d.). This is no surprise considering that *Lega*'s program on immigration reads that "No one should feel forced to leave their country and their roots for economic reasons. We can truly help the most disadvantaged areas of the planet by supporting projects on-site, certainly not by welcoming everyone. Africa in Italy does not fit!"<sup>3</sup> (Salvini Premier, 2018)

This government may actually be one of a kind in Western politics and it officiated the death of the mainstream parties in Italy. Commanded by Giuseppe Conte of the Five-Star Movement (M5S) (*Lega - Italy*, n.d.), Italy became a country ruled by a populist coalition.

"The League and the 5 Star Movement have done something extraordinary together, working on a program and putting aside their personal potions. Now they must continue on this path. They have been rejected by foreign powers, not by the Italian people, who have given them their full support. It is the first time in history that the left and right have united. Because now the challenge is between sovereigntists and globalists."<sup>4</sup> (quoted in Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

Later on, in the European elections of 2019, and still under the leadership of Salvini, *Lega* was the party that performed better in the country, with 34% of the national vote (*Lega - Italy*, n.d.). However, in August of the same year, *Lega* decided to

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<sup>3</sup> "Nessuno deve sentirsi costretto a lasciare il proprio Paese e le proprie radici per ragioni economiche. Possiamo davvero aiutare le aree del pianeta più svantaggiate sostenendo progetti in loco, non certo accogliendo tutti. L'Africa in Italia non ci sta!"

<sup>4</sup> "La Lega e il Movimento 5 stelle hanno fatto insieme qualcosa di straordinario, lavorando su un programma e metendo da parte le proprie pozioni personali. Ora devono continuare su questa strada. Loro sono stati respinti dalle potenze straniere non dal popolo italiano che li ha appoggiati totalmente. È la prima volta che succeed nella storia che destra e sinistra si uniscano. Perché ora la sfida è tra sovranisti e globalisti"

withdraw its support to the M5S-LN coalition. M5S therefore went on to form a new government with the Democratic Party (PD) (Bauluz et al., 2021).

## **VOX**

VOX is very much the project of Santiago Abascal, a former member of the *Partido Popular* (People's Party, PP) who decided to leave that party to form his own. And so, in 2013, VOX came into being. The party's mission is "defending Spain, the family, and life; reducing the size of the state, guaranteeing equality among Spaniards and expelling the government from your private life"<sup>5</sup> (*Qué Es VOX - VOX*, n.d.).

Similar to what happened in Portugal, Abascal and his party caught many by surprise after the 2019 November general election, a time where - with 15.09% of the vote - VOX won itself the title of third political force (Rama et al., 2021). Thus far, Spain had been known for its immunity to radical right parties, often attributed to a much too painful and still well alive memory of the Franco years. In the country, contrarily, other radical parties positioning themselves on the left-end spectrum of politics - such as *Unidas Podemos* (United We Can) (Santana et al., n.d.) - had already found their footing, especially after several years of austerity measures.

VOX, on the other hand, very much struggled in basically all elections it participated in until 2019. To give just a few examples, in 2014, VOX won an unsatisfactory 1.57% of the vote (Rama et al., 2021), thus falling short of achieving representation in Europe. A year later, this percentage decreased even further - 0.23% was the showing of the party in the 2015 national election. This was more than unsatisfactory: it indicated that the party might never leave the fringes of Spanish

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<sup>5</sup> "la defensa de España, de la familia y de la vida; en reducir el tamaño del Estado, garantizar la igualdad entre los españoles y expulsar al Gobierno de tu vida privada"

political life. But this was not VOX's lowest electoral performance. The 2016 election in June brought yet another woe to the party, a result of 0.20% (Rama et al., 2021).

Actually, it was only with the Andalusian elections two years later that the tides seemed to have changed. Contradicting previous trends, VOX performed quite remarkably. With 10.97% of the vote, it would be seating 12 (out of a total of 109) members of Parliament (MP) in the regional parliament (Rama et al., 2021). Finally, in May 2019, VOX won 6.21% of the votes in the European elections, and thus went from zero (in 2014) to 54 deputies in the European parliament (Rama et al., 2021). The regional elections can be pointed out as another small conquest for the party. It won 49 regional seats along with 8 in autonomous cities - compared to the previous zero. Years later, in 2021, it was time for VOX to earn 11 seats (out of 135) in the Catalan regional elections, with 7.69% of the vote (Rama et al., 2021).

Considering these results, some scholars (Bauluz et al., 2021) argue that VOX's difficult years after its formation are due to the structure of the political competition and the existing cleavages in Spain. Whilst populist radical right parties usually profit from nativist-related issues and their increasing salience (Mudde, 2007), in Spain the center-periphery cleavage has for long coexisted with the socioeconomic one. For this reason, mainstream parties and smaller ones were exploiting this matter long before the existence of VOX - leaving little room for "newcomers" to mobilize voters on such a matter (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). In fact, VOX was unable to capitalize on this for long. Yet the scenario changed when VOX stood as the most reliable defender of Spanish unity and condemned the actions of separatist Catalan figures, in a trial that became well known as "*El procès*" ("The lawsuit") (Rama et al., 2021). This lawsuit followed the illegitimate independence referendum of 1 October 2017. Shortly after, the Catalanian Parliament approved a unilateral declaration of independence that no other

country recognized. Following this, the 155 Article of the Spanish constitution was triggered so as to overturn Catalanian independence. It was during these years that Abascal started to build himself - and especially his party - some notoriety.

Even so, Spanish unity is not the only flagship of VOX. Its other battlegrounds include but are not limited to anti-immigration and security issues (Rama et al., 2021) alongside a preference for conservative values and traditional family models. Abascal pledged to defend “*la España que madruga*” (“the Spain that gets up early”) (Rama et al., 2021) and in 2021 the party presented the so-called “*Agenda España*” (“Spain Agenda”) - a series of measures intended to “protect Spaniards, meet their needs and provide the next generations with a horizon of freedom, equality, prosperity, justice and respect for their values and traditions.”<sup>6</sup> (*Agenda España - VOX*, n.d.). For the time being, this message appears to resonate with a substantial and increasing amount of the electorate, and thus it seems likely that Abascal and its most reliable allies - Javier Ortega Smith, Iván Espinosa de los Monteros, Rocío Monasterio and Jorge Buxadé (Rama et al., 2021) - will continue to shape Spanish politics.

### ***Chega***

Chega (‘Enough’) was founded on the 9th of April 2019. The party entered the Portuguese parliament shortly after its formation, through the election of one MP in the aftermath of the legislative elections of October 2019. From that moment on, the party has attracted considerable media and academic attention, as it was the first time a radical right party has attained parliamentary representation since Portugal became a democracy in the 1970s (Heyne & Manucci, 2021). This therefore called into question

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<sup>6</sup> “*proteger a los españoles, atender a sus necesidades y dotar a las próximas generaciones de un horizonte de libertad, igualdad, prosperidad, justicia y respeto por sus valores y tradiciones.*”

the Portuguese “exceptionalism” (Bauluz et al., 2021) or “immunity” to radical right representation (Heyne & Manucci, 2021). Until that day, extreme right and radical right parties were doomed to the fringes of the Portuguese political arena, failing time and time again to succeed in elections.

Jalali (2017), on his account of the Portuguese party system, had already concluded that it underwent meaningful and disruptive changes on the aftermath of the 2015 legislative elections. There was a considerable degree of stability with regards to the competition between the two main parties *Partido Socialista* (Socialist Party, PS) and PSD, for example. Yet after 2015 the vote for both has nonetheless declined. This and other changes pointed that Portugal is not “permeable” to populism, as the author concludes. Even so, Chega caught many by surprise. What was unique about the Portuguese reality - the fact that it had no relevant radical right party after the years of Salazarism (Pinto, 1995) - is unique no more. In the period after 1974, every right-wing party, and especially CDS-PP, attempted to demark itself from the label of conservative, radical or extreme right (Alves, 2016).

The novelty of Chega lies actually not on its political agenda or ideology but rather on its ability to perform successfully in electoral terms. The *Partido Nacional Renovador* (National Renewal Party, PNR) - one of the most recent actors occupying the space of the extreme right - has never surpassed the threshold of 0.5% of the vote (Marchi, 2020).

Chega actually does not present itself as a party of the extreme right family. André Ventura, the founder of Chega, has more than once clarified that “I do not feel extreme right-wing, because I am a pro-European and I believe in freedom. I think we should drop these labels of the extreme right and extreme left”<sup>7</sup> (Caetano, 2019).

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<sup>7</sup> “*não me sinto de extrema-direita, porque sou europeísta e acredito na liberdade. Acho que devemos deixar cair estes rótulos de extrema-direita e extrema-esquerda*”

Indeed, to avoid such labels, the party describes itself in its Manifesto as a “national, conservative, liberal and personalist party” (Partido CHEGA, 2019).

In reality, classifying the party has been challenging. Some academics (Fernandes & Alves, 2019) consider its doctrine to be in line with that of the French *Nouvelle Droite* and with the intellectuals who founded it such as Alain de Benoist (de Benoist, 1979; Marchi, 2016). Others go even further as to describe this party as belonging to a “populist new right” or a “new anti-establishment right” (Marchi, 2020). However, the title which seems to have resonated is that of ‘populist radical right’.

Nonetheless, independent of the title one attributes to the party, one thing that seems to reunite a fair degree of consensus amongst the academic community is that Chega is André Ventura; and André Ventura is Chega.

Ventura is a charismatic public *persona* who for the past years has built himself a considerable audience by being a sports, security, and political commentator on television (Marchi, 2020). Yet Ventura was already politically active as a member of PSD. In 2017, Ventura was the appointed candidate for the municipal elections in Loures, leading the coalition PSD-CDS-PPM (Marchi, 2020). Back then, Ventura’s campaign was already framed by numerous controversies arising from statements where he would attack the local Roma community (Marchi, 2020), including one where the former social democrat accused the community of living “almost exclusively on State subsidies” (Cunha, 2017). This topic would remain on the top of Chega’s political agenda, together with anti-corruption and security issues.

In the years that followed Ventura became more and more disillusioned with its youth party, declaring that “PSD structurally refused to be this popular right that I understood it should be” (Marchi, 2020, p. 44). The leader of Chega had already formed “*Movimento Chega*” (Chega Movement) within PSD, so it was “just” - after a

controversy involving the forging of signatures - a matter of turning a movement into a formal party (Marchi, 2020).

Ventura afterwards surrounded himself with former disenchanted acquaintances from PSD and CDS-PP, besides the more controversial figures from the Portugal Hammerskins (PHS) - a neonazi organization suspected of several hate crimes (Franco et al., 2021). The different ideological stances and beliefs of Chega's members have resulted in several internal disputes and harsh times as far as organizational matters are concerned, not to mention the critiques which stemmed from Chega's - always denied - association with extreme right movements.

But Ventura is not one to scare easily over this or other polemics - in fact, he may well thrive on it. The founder of Chega actually got everyone talking about his party after having presented extreme proposals. These include, but are not limited to, physical/chemical castration of those convicted of rape crimes and sexual abuse of minors; or changing the constitution so that the reduction of the number of MPs from 230 to 100 becomes feasible (Marchi, 2020). The last suggestion figures under the umbrella of a "IV Republic" - a proposal of Chega that moreover includes the reduction of politicians' salaries and a shift to a presidential system (Mendes, 2021). Finally, it can be listed its opposition to euthanasia and the struggle against gender theory. Actually, Chega's manifesto reads that tyranny is the "power, without reason, to rob another of his life by any kind of murder, whether abortion, infanticide, eugenics or euthanasia" (Partido CHEGA, 2019.).

During the presidential campaign of 2021, Ventura's allegation that he will only be the President of the "good Portuguese" ("*Portugueses de bem*") was unquestionably one of the most contentious moments. Ventura clarified, over a scandal with a black family living in *Bairro da Jamaica* (Neighborhood of Jamaica) - whom he called the

“opposite of the good Portuguese” - that the ‘good Portuguese’ do not comprise “drug dealers”, “pedophiles” and “welfare and subsidy recipients, with parallel survival schemes” (Câncio, 2021). Simultaneously, Chega joined several anti-racist manifestations and claimed that “Portugal is not a racist country” (Lusa, 2020). In Ventura’s perspective, even though racism is not a reality in the country, it is important not to forget that “racism cannot excuse everything” and that “minorities have rights, but also duties”. To more plainly illustrate how the party contradicts itself in this aspect, Ventura went even further as to propose that a former MP of the party *Livre* (Free), Joacine Katar Moreira, “be returned to its country of origin”<sup>8</sup> (Penela, 2020).

As regards the family of the aforementioned neighborhood, Ventura claimed that they are among the many individuals that “came to Portugal to benefit solely and exclusively from what is the Welfare State” (Câncio, 2021). Ventura’s preferred topics tend indeed to include corruption and misappropriation of funds (Mendes, 2021). It could be said that Ventura has an obsession with welfare recipients or what he usually terms “*subsidiodependentes*” (“subsidy-dependents”). Unsurprisingly, Chega is a proponent of diminishing the redistributive functions of the state (Marchi, 2020).

The real aspect on which Ventura more clearly distances his party from others in Europe, such as FN and *Lega*, is on his approach regarding the EU. Concretely, Chega is not anti-Europe, albeit strongly against illegal immigration. The party’s position on this matter is more accurately summarized in Ventura’s statement that “Europe must have solidarity, but at the same time it must have border controls, otherwise it ceases to be Europe and becomes a completely open space. To come and live off our taxes, we already have plenty here, we don't need any more”<sup>9</sup> (Caetano, 2019).

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<sup>8</sup> “*seja devolvida ao seu país de origem*”

<sup>9</sup> “*a Europa tem de ser solidária, mas ao mesmo tempo tem de ter controlo nas fronteiras, senão deixa de ser Europa e passar a ser um espaço completamente aberto. Para vir viver dos nossos impostos, já temos cá muitos, não precisamos de mais.*”

With regards electoral performance, in the European elections of 2019 Chega ran as part of the anti-establishment «*Basta!*» coalition – comprising also the *Partido Popular Monárquico* (Monarchic People's Party, PPM), *Partido Cidadania e Democracia Cristã* (Citizenship and Christian Democracy Party, PPV/CDC) and *movimento Democracia 21* (Democracy movement 21). The coalition did not, however, win any seats. Later that year, in the 2019 legislative elections, Chega won 1.29% of the vote. In the 2020 Azorean regional elections, a right-wing coalition won the majority in an alliance that, for the first time, comprised Chega (with a vote share of 5%) (Mendes, 2021). Chega was not formally included in the regional cabinet, but rather made an agreement to support the center-right provided they complied with certain requests (Mendes, 2021). In the 2021 Presidential election, André Ventura was the third most voted candidate nationally, with 11.90% of the vote. Chega therefore is a party that can no longer be ignored as it appears to represent and cater to an increasing bulk of the Portuguese voters.

## **1.2. Populist Radical Right Voters in Western Europe - Overview**

Three seminal works present an extensive overview of the main theories that explain the vote for the populist radical right, notably Mudde (2007, 2019) and Rydgren (2018). These focus primarily on electoral politics - meaning the study of the radical right “voter constituency” and the attempt to “predict or explain variation in voting results for the radical right” (Rydgren, 2018, p. 30).

For quite some time, the literature tended to center around demand-side explanations. Only later on did scholars recognize the merit of supply-side explanations

(Golder, 2016) and began to understand that radical right success depends on a combination of the former and the latter. Any of these theories alone falls short of explaining the rise of the radical right (Rydgren, 2013).

This dissertation recognizes the importance of supply-side explanations. Yet as the focus lies mostly on uncovering *who* the populist radical right voters are, the literature displayed here mostly comprises demand side explanations. Within those, anti-immigrant attitudes are consistently pointed out as being the most significant factor in predicting radical right support (Betz, 1994; Lubbers et al., 2002; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005; Rydgren, 2018). Nonetheless, theories also point out to alternative factors.

The modernization losers' theory put forward by Betz (1994), for example, posits that the so-called 'losers' – the “unemployed people and unskilled workers threatened by unemployment in the near future” (Rydgren, 2007, p. 249) – are the ones who turn to the radical right as they are not able to rip the benefits of the modernization of the economy and social life. At the same time, these individuals realize that traditional parties are unable to answer their worries.

Betz moreover argues that this post-industrialization process is accompanied by changing cleavages, whereby economic matters steadily lose salience. This may favor the emergence of issue-based politics on which radical right parties thrive. Also, the modernization of society fosters the erosion of traditional parties' ties (1994).

The explanation of Betz (1994) is similar to that of Minkenberg (2000) in that both authors account for the increased electoral relevance of radical right parties following a reshaping and reorganization of the 'socioeconomic' and 'sociocultural' aspects of western democracies (Rydgren, 2007). Nonetheless, Minkenberg has a slightly different interpretation of who the 'modernization losers' are. The author argues that

“the term ‘modernization losers’ is a vague and often ‘ill-defined’ category. Usually, it refers to the unemployed, or those immediately threatened by unemployment or social decline” (2000, p.182).

Minkenberg contends that such a category of ‘modernization losers’ should be more “subjective”, and also include those who lost out from the process of “differentiation of life chances” (2000, p.182). In fact, for Minkenberg, the “radical right-wing voter coalition” “is neither located at the bottom end of the social ladder nor does it cut across all strata of society equally.” (2000, p.184).

Another important explanation is the ethnic competition thesis, which emphasizes tensions between different ethnic groups and places great focus on immigrants (Rydgren, 2018). This theory relates to the ‘modernization losers’ theory as those are more likely to find themselves competing with immigrants for scarce material resources (housing, jobs, welfare benefits, etc.). Those who feel threatened by competition thus turn to the radical right for help and protection. Therefore, it is also stated that support for the radical right will be higher in places with a higher proportion of immigrants (Rydgren, 2007). However, some findings illustrate that the number of immigrants in a given place has no significant effect on radical right voting (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006; Norris, 2005).

The ethnic competition thesis is actually one amongst many realistic conflict theories (Rydgren, 2018). The latter contends that ‘economic scarcity’ (Golder, 2016) fosters distributional conflicts between groups with opposed material interests. Indeed, there is evidence that anti-immigrant attitudes are correlated with a sense of ‘material threat’ (Golder, 2016). Yet, overall, the ethnic competition thesis is not strongly backed by empirical evidence (Rydgren, 2007).

Both theories - the 'modernization losers' and ethnic competition - also relate to the 'security thesis' (Mudde, 2007). The security thesis contends that the populist radical right is a "materialist "counter-revolution" against the economic insecurities produced by globalization and modernization" (p. 223).

The theory of 'status politics' is yet another explanation that states that competition does not happen over material aspects but rather over status, thereupon opposing the ethnic competition thesis (Rydgren, 2018). Lipset, particularly, claimed that fear of economic decline is less significant in explaining support for the radical right than fear of losing status (1960).

This theory moreover relates to social identity theory) as the individuals who fear losing status are the in-group and those who put their status in jeopardy are an out-group (usually immigrants) (Rydgren, 2018). Social identity theory is a belief that a group (in-group) is superior to others (out-group) (Golder, 2016). The radical right thus exploits this "cognitive process" by pitting the two against each other (Rydgren, 2018).

Rydgren also speaks about "popular xenophobia" (2007). This thesis is very much in line with the 'modernization losers' thesis, as both theories acknowledge the role of these 'modernization losers'. Yet the former operationalizes 'losses' on economic grounds whilst the latter does so on cultural terms. The "popular xenophobia" argument thus contends that societal changes foster a resentment rooted in identity loss and threats to culture and values. Consequently, the 'modernization losers' support the radical right as it pledges to protect traditional values and societal structures (Rydgren, 2013).

Another theory is that of "personality traits" - notably, nativism, authoritarianism, and populism (Mudde, 2007). Mudde argues that populist radical right parties are successful amongst people who display such traits. Authoritarianism is

usually seen as the second most important variable - after nativism - in predicting support for the radical right. Finally, populism - often measured as a proxy for “anti-establishment sentiments” - is also correlated with voting on the radical right (2007). Mudde (2007) nevertheless points out that some caution is necessary for distinguishing correlation from causation.

An alternative hypothesis is Ronald Inglehart’s (1997) thesis on post-material value change in advanced industrial democracies. Inglehart explains that older generations - that lived through events such as the Second World War – tend to prioritize material values. On the contrary, younger generations were born in a reality where these material aspects were not scarce, thereby prioritizing post-material values such as freedom and self-expression. This change from material values to post-material values fuels the so-called “silent revolution”. Ignazi (1992) further developed upon this theory, coining the term “silent counter-revolution”. Simply put, this “counter-revolution” arises as those who still hold material (traditional) values will revolt, and consequently turn to the radical right. In sum, the “silent revolution” produces a backlash starrng a hatred towards progressive values.

An additional theory that, despite being backed by contradictory evidence, continues to be used in explaining the vote for the radical right is the ‘protest thesis’ (Rydgren, 2018). This theory posits that the vote for the populist radical right is an expression of resentment and discontent towards the political elites, disillusionment with mainstream parties, and animosity towards immigrants (Eatwell, 2000). However, van der Brug et al. (2000) found no evidence that the new radical right voters are more motivated by protest than other voters. Mudde (2007) argues that van der Brug et al. are proponents of the so-called ‘support thesis’, in opposition to the protest thesis. Simply

put, the ‘support thesis’ contends that since voters are rational, they are specifically choosing to support the populist radical right.

Yet Mudde (2007) identifies several methodological problems in how van der Brug et al. (2000) make the case for the ‘support thesis’. These include the need to distinguish between populist parties and measuring protest as a proxy or indirectly (such as equating support to the absence of protest). The author also recognizes that the ‘support thesis’ cannot successfully explain why voters choose to cast a vote for a populist radical right party to detriment of others protest parties.

The theory of the protest vote is still strongly linked with theories of discontent, whereby the increasing disenchantment with the mainstream parties is successfully exploited by parties on the far right (Rydgren, 2007). Norris (2005) nevertheless found that “political discontent does not account for the substantial variation in the electoral results of new radical right wing parties.” (quoted in Rydgren, 2007, p. 251).

This theory of political discontent moreover relates to theories of party identification (Rydgren, 2018). In fact, being discontent with mainstream parties could also be translated into an erosion of traditional party ties, i.e., a decline in party identification. This, in turn, is an important condition for the radical right to thrive (Rydgren, 2018).

Besides the demand-side explanations thus far listed, supply-side explanations include the political opportunity structure, electoral rules, party competition, and issue salience (see Golder, 2016).

Most supply-side explanations are not included in this dissertation since they are not its particular focus. However, one theory is especially relevant - that of the “realignment processes” (Rydgren, 2018, p. 30). This is the process according to which

parties slowly started not to focus on the socioeconomic dimension of political conflict but rather on the sociocultural dimension. Hence, socioeconomic aspects decreased in salience. The consequence of such a phenomenon is that when sociocultural issues are more prominent radical right parties will have more chances to thrive, whereas when socioeconomic issues are more salient those parties remain at the margins (Rydgren, 2018).

This theory is important for the purposes of this dissertation because, even though it does not address supply-side factors *per se*, it is still curious to see that Portugal is a country where Chega was somewhat successful and yet traditional socioeconomic cleavages are still the most relevant (Bauluz et al., 2021). In other words, political competition is mostly done on a left-right axis. Related to this, Rydgren makes the case for the “politicization of the immigration issue” (2018, p. 31) and how it benefits the radical right. Yet, once again, Portugal is a country where this issue is not particularly relevant (Afonso, 2021).

After this selection of various theories, an analysis of the determinants of the vote is now presented. Again, it is important to reiterate that despite the importance of supply-side explanations, it is demand-side arguments that offer the answer to *who* the populist radical right voters are. Thus, the debates within each determinant comprise mostly demand-side explanations.

It is worth noting that most studies paint a socioeconomic picture of the typical radical right voter. Ford & Goodwin (2010) and Kriesi et al. (2006), for example, stated that the supporters of the radical right are the ‘losers of globalization’. As a general trend, the radical right voter is more often than not portrayed as being low-educated, male, and a manual worker (Rydgren, 2013). This profile was substantiated in

subsequent studies (see Rydgren, 2018), even though some scholars contradict these findings, notably Mudde (2007) and Rooduijn (2018).

One of the determinants under focus is that of class. To study class as a determinant of the vote implies engaging in discussions that could stand alone as a topic of a dissertation. Firstly, the analysis of class as a determinant of the vote usually implies engaging in debates in which no single universal agreement appears to have been built within the academic community. These debates include not only the meaning of class itself, with new classes and new labels appearing as societies evolve (Evans & Tilley, 2017; Gest, 2016; Savage & Mouncey, 2016; Standing, 2011), but also, and perhaps most importantly, the relevance of looking at class in the first place.

Dalton, for example, posits that “Class-based voting, as conceived of from Marx to Lipset and Rokkan, currently has limited influence in structuring voting choices.” (in LeDuc, Niemi, & Norris, 1996, p. 324). Contrarily, Evans (2000) demonstrated that class-based voting is still significant.

This dissertation does not delve deeper into these and other discussions for matters of space, but it can still be pointed out that the relevance of considering class as a determinant for the purposes of this study is as simple as the fact that class has been systematically related with support and success of the populist radical right. As a matter of fact, Ignazi explains that

“the larger parties of the nineties—FN, FPÖ, VIB, Northern League, Progress parties, and their offspring—plus the German, Dutch, and British ones have all become ‘workers parties’. In some cases, the quota of blue-collar and low-income people is even larger than in the socialist parties.” (2005, p. 230).

For this reason, analyzing the determinants of the vote for such parties without including or at least considering the role of class would be imprudent, even if this dissertation ends up concluding that class, or a certain class, is not relevant when studying the voter base of the populist radical right. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss some of the most important theories related to such a determinant.

Betz (1994) formulated the so-called ‘proletarianization thesis’. This thesis contends that during the 1990s, radical-right parties in Western Europe became working-class parties, with such a finding being later on confirmed (Kitschelt, 2016; Kriesi et al., 2008; Oesch, 2008). Oesch (2008) moreover posits that class is still relevant in explaining political preferences. Nonetheless, Ignazi (2005) reminds us that one should not classify radical right parties on social class grounds.

Lubbers et al., on the other hand, find that “time and again, it has been shown that poorer educated people are more likely to vote for anti-immigrant parties. Furthermore, manual workers and unemployed people are more likely to do so.” (2002, p. 347). Yet evidence supporting that populist radical-right parties have a “trans-class basis” also exists. This “trans-class basis” is the result of an “uneasy marriage” between certain elements of the working and middle-classes (Ivarsflaten, 2005).

Education is yet another determinant, and it is worth noting that the discussion surrounding it is quite complex. Education is sometimes considered inseparable from economic and labor market position, others considered indivisible from attitudes and values; and others deemed as inextricable of both.

The educational profiles found amidst the radical right electorate differ in the literature. Some scholars, for example Lubbers et al. (2002), argue that low-educated voters are overrepresented in the radical right electorate. This is very much in line with the painted profile of the radical right voter and empirical findings of specific parties

(Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018; Rama et al., 2021; Stockemer, 2017). Even so, Arzheimer & Carter (2006) and Evans (2005) demonstrate that individuals with middle school levels of education tend to vote more on the radical right, as opposed to those with low educational levels.

Yet, as argued earlier, low-educated voters are usually pointed out as being overrepresented in the constituency of the populist radical right. Therefore, let us proceed to the explanations of why this is the case.

The first set of explanations argues that low-educated individuals usually find themselves in vulnerable positions in the labor market, as the low levels of education translate into people securing only low-skilled, manual jobs and precariat positions. Thus, this narrative strongly corroborates that of the ‘modernization losers’ and only adds the educational dimension to it, in saying that those who lose out from a modernization and globalization process do so because they have low educational attainment. In other words, people find themselves in this position of ‘modernization loser’ because they are not highly educated (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006).

Mayer (2013) contends that in “post-industrial and globalized societies, this educational divide is taking a growing importance, opposing the educated and qualified workers who benefit from globalization to the unskilled ones, the more vulnerable, the more exposed.” On the other hand, the highly educated individuals, who reap the benefits of globalization, do not feel that the radical right represents their interests (Kitschelt, 2007).

These stances also relate strongly to the ethnic competition thesis since the radical right is all the more appealing to these low-educated individuals as it pledges to restore previous jobs and hinder foreign competition by non-nationals or ethnic minorities (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006).

In contrast with previous accounts, there are some that relate education with values and attitudes. Those explanations posit that individuals who have higher levels of education tend to favor openness, liberalism, diversity, and multiculturalism (Kitschelt, 2007). In fact, low-educated citizens tend to hold anti-immigrant attitudes - considered by several scholars as the most important predictor of radical right support, as mentioned earlier. This consequently makes education an important determinant of voting choice.

Bovens & Wille (2010) corroborate these findings, and further argue that the rise of populist radical parties is deeply connected to the level of education. The authors specifically emphasize the role of mediation. Concretely, they argue that the relationship between education and support for populist parties might be mediated by political attitudes.

Ivarsflaten (2005) also factors in the role of education and mediation, explaining that in the case of France what unites the electorate of the populist radical right are the low educational levels, which are correlated with “exclusionist” attitudes. Highly educated people, so the argument goes, are usually “inclusionist” - and therefore reluctant to support the populist radical right.

Finally, Kriesi et al. (2008) assert that the ‘globalization losers’ – those with low levels of education - are often more willing to support extreme right parties due to their resentment towards immigration, fueled by both economic and cultural aspects.

Besides education, gender is another important determinant. Betz (1990) argued that “As if following some unwritten law, radical right-wing populist parties have consistently attracted a considerably higher number of male than female voters.” Nonetheless, explanations on *why* this is the case have not followed an ‘unwritten law’. That is, those oftentimes differ substantially.

Consequently, it is useful to present a brief overview of some of the most prominent accounts of why women have resisted the radical right's rhetoric and political program.

The first explanation is frequently referred to as 'sociostructural model' (Spierings & Zaslove, 2017) or socio-economic explanations. These attribute women's lack of participation in the populist radical-right electorate due to women's position in the labor market, for example.

On the other hand, others argue that women's reluctance to vote for the radical right can be traced back to women's particular attitudes and values. These are frequently associated with supply-side explanations (not thoroughly discussed in this dissertation), since party aspects, political messages, or leaders' characteristics are frequently the elements that 'repel' women from voting. For example, anti-feminist political messages are incompatible with women's beliefs, and consequently hamper their support (Kitschelt, 1995).

Betz (1994) highlights two distinct factors in explaining women's underrepresentation among the radical right electorate: women's employment and associated labor market position, and religion. First and foremost, Betz (1994) argues that women participate less in the labor market and henceforth do not experience strong competition for jobs and a loathing economic threat. Put differently, women are less likely to be the 'modernization losers', with those being usually men. Consequently, populist radical right rhetoric aligns easily with the worries of the latter and less so with the former. Additionally, Betz (1994) observes that the radical right electorate is less religiously committed (or at least less so than that of traditional center-right parties). Women, in turn, are often more religiously involved. Thus, because Christian churches have consistently fought the extreme right's anti-immigrant and discriminatory position

in the name of the Evangelists, women are less likely to vote for radical-right parties (Mayer, 2015).

Givens (2004) builds on Betz's (1994) argument but adds the unique structure of women's participation in the labor market that Betz's thesis lacked. Givens (2004) moreover considers attitudes towards immigration, frequently correlating them with occupational structure and job competition. The argument is very much in line with the 'modernization losers' thesis. Generally speaking, men are overrepresented amongst blue-collar workers and therefore experience direct competition with immigrants for jobs. Contrarily, women - usually employed in areas such as the public sector - face less competition from foreign workers. Hence, women do not feel as if their position in the labor market is threatened (Mayer, 2015). The author nevertheless concludes that neither of these factors – occupational structure and attitudes towards immigration - is significant in explaining the gender gap among radical right parties. Women do vote less on the radical right than men, but this difference is not rooted in the criteria under analysis.

Givens (2004) notes yet another interesting trend, notably that women usually vote for the left or, less often so, in conservative parties - with age influencing differences in partisan choice. Mayer (2015) further substantiates such a conclusion, claiming that

“It is an established finding that women move more to the left than men whatever the indicator used. It was called the ‘modern’ gender gap, in opposition to the previous ‘traditional’ gender gap”.

The fact that age influences such a choice was recognized by Norris (1996) who first used the expression ‘generation gender gap’.

Spierings & Zaslove (2017) agree with Givens (2004) in that the socioeconomic position and feelings toward immigration do not offer a convincing justification for the gender gap. The authors propose yet another argument, namely that populist attitudes explain the gender gap. Put simply, voters of the populist radical right would be those who hold more populist attitudes (Mudde 2007). Thus, the very question of ‘populism’ in populist radical right parties (i.e., the nature of the parties) would attract a certain type of voters (usually, men) and fend off others (usually, women). Yet as convincing as the argument may be, the authors find only a modest result to support their hypothesis. Populism may be attracting more men than women, but this can only partially explain the gender gap. The authors consequently call for increased supply-side research on this gap, taking into account factors such as country characteristics and election rules.

Harteveld et al. (2015) reiterate both Spierings & Zaslove (2017) and Givens's (2004) position that socio-structural elements do not explain the gender gap. There appears to be a general agreement on this matter, as Hilde Coffé (Rydgren, 2013) had also come to the same conclusion.

The authors propose an explanation for the gender gap based on both mediation (that is, the fact that differences in attitudes and characteristics explain differences in voting for the populist radical right) and moderation (that is, the fact that women do not vote for the same reasons as men). The authors concluded that mediation cannot explain the gender gap. Particularly regarding attitudes, the authors find that men are not more nativist or authoritarian than women (Harteveld et al., 2015).

Men do, however, attribute different saliences to political issues emphasized by populist radical right parties. The authors thus find that moderation is significant in explaining the gender gap. Spierings & Zaslove (2017) argue that this should be an

indication of the need to include supply-side explanations (such as party characteristics) when addressing the gender gap. Something that is not clear, however, is why are there gender differences in the salience attributed to certain issues.

Also, even though the authors do not find men to be more nativist than women, Immerzeel et al. (2015) suggested that this was indeed the case. Immerzeel et al. (2015) consider other individual-level characteristics in their analysis as well as supply-side explanations (party characteristics, populist discourse, etc.) to test whether those account for cross-national variations in the gender gap. Yet their findings show that neither can explain the gender gap successfully. Again, socio-structural variables and political attitudes fail in answering why women vote less on the populist radical right across countries. Concerning party characteristics, even though the authors find them not to be significant, they note that these should be further explored and tested.

Additionally, Spierings & Zaslove (2015) make an important contribution, namely that the gender gap of the populist radical right is exaggerated when compared to the existing one in center-right mainstream parties. Also, the authors conclude that when men and women vote for the populist radical right, they both do so because they oppose immigration.

Finally, other explanations posit that women tend to vote less for new parties (such as the populist radical right) because they are both less interested in politics and initiated their political life later on (Mayer, 2015). Also, it is stated that women, due to a process of socialization, are generally less violent, more touched by social norms, and typically less assertive than men, thus identifying less easily with the radical right ideals (Mayer, 2015).

In sum, it is known that socioeconomic characteristics, attitudes toward immigration, nativism, authoritarianism, and party characteristics are not sufficient in explaining the gender gap. As Cas Mudde argued

“given the large female support for mainstream right-wing groups and parties, sexism is not the main reason why women support the far right at (much) lower levels than men. Neither is the popular misperception that women are less nativist and authoritarian, or have a “natural” solidarity with other marginalized groups. Many surveys show that, in general, women hold largely similar views to men on crime, immigration, and terrorism, among many other issues.” (2019, p. 130)

What aspects can robustly explain the gender gap is yet to be discovered. Nevertheless, thus far, the gender difference in voting for the populist radical right continues to be almost a given. Yet, recently, parties such as FN have presented themselves as an exception to such a trend. The gender gap in voting for the FN is in fact barely nonexistent (Mayer, 2015).

Howell & Day (2015) elucidate that “the gender gap on political issues is indeed a complex phenomenon, produced by a variety of social, economic, and psychological factors” - which is the best possible way to synthesize the discussions around gender.

Finally, age is the last determinant under focus. Debates regarding age are perhaps simpler than those that center on gender. Some authors usually argue that the young are more willing to vote for the populist radical right; others posit that it is the nostalgia and desire to revive traditions of older generations that ignite the willingness to support such parties; others argue that both age groups vote on behalf of the populist radical right.

First, Betz (1994) posits that young people are more attracted to the populist radical right (as opposed to older people), with this being the case due to the higher level of independence of young voters and the less significant role of traditional party loyalties. This age group is thus more susceptible to changing its party affiliation or political choices. In other words, young voters tend to be more volatile.

Lubbers et al. (2002) concur with Betz (1994) in that young people are overrepresented amongst the radical right electorate. The authors posit that such a finding can be explained by ‘social disintegration’ theories. Simply put, individuals who are not sufficiently or satisfactorily integrated into societal structures will rely on other - often-called ‘intermediary structures’ - to fulfill their desire to belong. Radical right parties, in turn, usually provide those ‘intermediary structures’ through, for example, appeals to national identity. The radical right thus readily integrates young people.

Kessler & Freeman (2005) also agree with Betz (1994) in that they argue that younger voters have weaker party ties. However, the authors also elaborate an argument very much in line with that of Arzheimer & Carter (2006), stating that the willingness of young people to support the radical right stems from their more vulnerable and less competitive position in the labor market.

Arzheimer & Carter (2006) initially contended that both young and old people are keen on voting for the radical right, notably because it promises to extend the much-desired welfare benefits both age-groups need. The authors nonetheless find that only young voters are overrepresented in the radical right electorate.

Yet, contrary to this, Norris (2005) argued that

“the specific age-related profile of these parties [radical right] varies cross-nationally, which may be due to their historical roots in each society and their leadership images, campaign strategies, and ideological appeals among different groups of voters.”

So, while some populist radical right parties do disproportionately attract more younger voters, others are more popular amongst the nostalgic older electorate.

Indeed, some claim that the rise of populist authoritarian rulers may have been influenced by an older generation's "backlash" against societal change (Inglehart 1977).

Mudde (2007) finds evidence that both young and older voters are systematically among the populist radical right electorate, with the age profile varying across countries and time. So, the author concludes that age may be an insignificant variable to include in electoral analyses.

In terms of voter transference, there is a well-known notion that populist extreme right parties flourished in part because their mainstream left and socialist counterparts declined. Simply put, this narrative asserts that in late-twentieth-century Europe, left-wing parties attempted to 'modernize' social democracy by liberalizing their economic policies, adopting positions that were – if not identical to – nearly indistinguishable from those of center-right parties. Anthony Giddens used the term "Third Way" to describe this process while assessing British reality and the endeavor to modernize the Labour Party. In the 1980s, the Labour Party rebranded itself as 'New Labour', implying a closer link with markets and deregulation, as well as a less explicit commitment to the state and redistribution. This dynamic – dubbed "ideological convergence" – occurred in various European nations and rendered the mainstream left incapable of rallying voters on economic matters, with the apparent result that class cleavages weakened and cleared the way for new ones to emerge (Rydgren, 2018). Other parties came on the scene and were essentially offered the opportunity to emphasize cultural issues while simultaneously capitalizing on the revolt against the

2008 crisis's neoliberal reforms (Berman & Snegovaya, 2019) and others related to globalization (Hooghe & Marks, 2017). Additionally, they benefited from public support by stressing new concerns associated with the globalization process that were not addressed by established parties, such as immigration (Hix et al., 2014). Hadn't the left “converged” with the right, the populist radical right could have missed such an opportunity. Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser explain that

“The more organized the political space is by the existing cleavage structure, the more difficult it is for a political party to develop by attempting to politicize new themes, such as immigration or environmental challenges.” (2015)

What thus happened, also according to the “Third Way” thesis, is that leftist parties’ new ideological stances disrupted the existing cleavage structure and paved the way for a new one to emerge.

This narrative was bolstered by observations that certain extreme right groups, such as FN, evolved into successful workers' parties in the 1990s - a process termed 'proletarianization' of their voting base. These parties were actually more successful than social democratic parties among this electorate (Mudde, 2019).

Piketty (2018) also provided added evidence for such a narrative in his observation that the cleavage structures of most countries had developed into new “multi-elite party systems”. This new structure of political competition happens as right-wing parties attract business elites (“the Merchant Right”) while parties on the left attract highly educated elites (“the Brahmin Left”) - betraying and abandoning working-class supporters and thereby disenfranchising them. Thus, the vote for populist politicians reflects a working-class base dissatisfied with the mainstream left. The consequence is that “the white working class has abandoned social-democratic parties in

favor of populist extreme right parties” (Mudde, 2019, p.138). In other words, the populist radical right rose in defense of the ‘left behind’ by the mainstream left.

The narrative is quite plausible - when the traditional left became almost equal to the mainstream right on economic terms, voters could only discern between the two on matters where they took opposing positions, such as cultural issues. As a result, new cultural cleavages developed. In fact, it is argued that the

“formation of new partisan divides in a country occurs when parties are able to realign the political landscape by incorporating new competitive dimensions that are salient to the electorate” (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015).

For the populist radical right, the salience of cultural issues greatly benefits its electoral performance (Mudde, 2007; Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015) as the radical right is not effective in competing on the left-right axis (Kriesi et al., 2008). Combining this with findings on the supposed ‘populist radical right voter’ (Mudde, 2007) – namely individuals that are working-class, low-educated, and males whose cultural values are aligned with the radical right – makes it fairly simple to assert that the mainstream left is losing its electorate to the populist radical right.

Nonetheless, this argument is in several ways flawed. To begin, correlation does not imply causation. The mainstream left's demise may simply have coincided in time and geography with the emergence of the radical right, without necessarily implying a direct transfer of the electorate. Thus, it does not mean that the dealignment with mainstream parties was necessarily achieved at the expense of a process of realignment with new parties – such as the Greens and the Populist Radical Right (Mudde, 2019).

Additionally, even if the populist radical right is indeed competing with mainstream parties, the left-wing parties are not the only ones confronted with

difficulties. The mainstream right's troubles across Europe are also a reality that is often overlooked in explanations of the radical right's ascension (see Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021) . Populist radical-right parties may actually entice both the conventional left and right core constituencies, a phenomenon termed “360° degrees of disillusionment” (Reynié, 2016).

Thus, it is worth seriously asking whether the radical right benefits from the mainstream left's collapse, the mainstream right's decline, neither or both. Indeed, all these explanations have some truth to them and determining which is valid and which is not requires an analysis that takes into account elements such as the dimensional space in which parties compete; issue salience; and the existing cleavages.

First, it is critical to grasp the dimensional space in which parties compete in order to comprehend the populist radical right's vote. Parties are arranged along the left-right axis in the one-dimensional space. Where a two-dimensional space exists, political parties compete along two axes: left-right and libertarian-authoritarian. Clearly, the existence of a two-dimensional space is intimately intertwined with the relevance of issues and cleavages. If parties focus exclusively on economic issues, no cultural competition occurs. As a result, cleavage structures would have remained ‘frozen’ as they were for a long period of time in the West - according to the model created by Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967).

Such a model has been used to explain the structure and formation of European party systems. It encompasses four significant social cleavages: (1) “Subject vs. Dominant culture”, (2) “Church(es) vs. Government”, (3) “Primary vs. Secondary Economy”, and (4) “Workers vs. Employers” (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967, p.14). The first two are the result of the ‘National Revolution’, while the third and fourth are the result

of the 'Industrial Revolution'. These cleavages are quite stable and shape partisan divisions and the structure of political conflict. Thus, considering that each party emerged to represent the distinct political interests of certain groups - and accounting for the stability of such groups and their enduring support for specific parties - party systems were 'frozen'. Lipset and Rokkan therefore concluded that "the party systems of the 1960's reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920's." (1967, p.50). If this cleavage structure had remained unchanged, populist radical right parties would have been unable to mobilize a significant number of voters. As existing cleavages weaken and new ones emerge, competition shifts from a left-right to a libertarian-authoritarian dimension. However, it is important to understand what lays behind the weakening of traditional cleavages.

According to Kriesi et al. (2008), three significant political families existed in the 1970s: the conservatives, the social democrats, and the liberals. These parties competed on a left-right axis. However, other parties (as indicated above) such as the Green Party and the New Left gained prominence in the 1990s and began emphasizing concerns other than economics (such as women's rights). Thus, the salience of cultural issues eventually triumphs over that of economic ones, implying that the left-right dimension of political conflict has given way to a new dimension of conflict known as GAL-TAN (Marks et al., 2017). GAL stands for green, alternative, and liberation, while traditional, authoritarian, and nationalist are abbreviations for TAN. In summary, the emergence of new parties altered competition patterns.

Ignazi (1992) further explains that the emergence of the populist radical right during the 1980s is a natural reaction to the rise of the Greens. Green parties represent post-materialist voters who are libertarian in outlook (the GAL), whereas radical right parties represent post-materialist voters who are authoritarian in outlook (the TAN).

The GAL-TAN is therefore the cultural, post-materialistic dimension of political competition (Polk et al., 2017). As this dimension emerged, Lipset & Rokkan's (1967) classic materialistic left-right dimension became less relevant, and party systems consequently "unfroze". Some authors went even further as to argue that the cleavages as Lipset and Rokkan (1967) knew them were replaced by a new "transnational cleavage" as a result of processes such as globalization and the emergence of the post-industrial society (Betz, 1994; Hooghe & Marks, 2017). Other authors argue that traditional materialistic cleavages are still important. It could also be contended that the two dimensions of conflict (left-right and libertarian-authoritarian) compete with one another for attention and salience (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015).

There is a significant debate over whether party systems have been truly altered or disrupted. That is, whether party systems have indeed become two-dimensional (Rydgren, 2013). Nonetheless, some findings indicate that working-class voters are abandoning conventional left parties as they are more culturally aligned with populist radical right parties - despite having economic preferences consistent with mainstream left's policies (Oesch, 2008). Yet the populist radical right also competes with the center-right for "small company owners" (Oesch, 2008). It should be noted, however, that the radical right competes for the "new working-class" electorate due to the cultural conflict.

Van der Brug et al. (in Rydgren, 2013), on the other hand, posit that the radical right's key competitors in Western Europe are the Christian Democrats and Conservatives, owing to their ideological proximity. Their analysis indicates, however, that the radical right may find itself competing – less often so than with the Christian Democrats and Conservatives – for some voters of social democratic parties or, more

improbable, the Greens. Additionally, the radical right may be able to capture voters not yet represented by any political party. The authors furthermore clarify that

“When the electoral spaces are largely uni-dimensional, their [radical right] main competitors will be other parties from the right. However, if they compete along two axes of competition, they will compete with the traditional parties from the left *and* the right.” (p. 56).

Finally, Mudde (2007) believes that the populist radical right competes with other protest parties and with abstention, due to voters’ populist attitudes. However, the claim that voters of the populist radical right are more populist than others has already been debunked.

Regarding electoral geography, considering ‘*place*’ as a determinant of the vote is at least controversial. Although this variable is included in studies of voting behavior (Stockemer, 2017), electoral geography often offers additional explanations for the clarification of voting patterns and political preferences, rather than strives to provide the answer to the ‘why’ people vote. That is because a few problems arise when using ‘place’ as a determinant of the vote.

First, the variable is necessarily a collective one, and cannot be analyzed at the individual-level. This necessarily means that academics are actually studying collective voting choices and are consequently unable to look at outliers. ‘Place’ is but a kind of a ‘mean’ of the voting choices of individuals, and it is crucial to nail several measurements and methodological procedures for it to come close to being accurate (Team, n.d.). Moreover, in studies of electoral geography, not only voting choices are seen as homogeneous, but also the unit of analysis (be it a district, council, municipality,

parish, or other) is assumed to be cohesive - when that is usually not the case (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

In the book *The New Populism: Democracy Stares into the Abyss*, Marco Revelli associates voting on populist candidates with living in declining or 'left-behind' regions. The author illustrates quite successfully one of the most common problems of using geography as an explanation for radical-right wing voting - that of the "ecological fallacy" (Team, n.d.). This is just another word for what has been discussed thus far, as this fallacy arises from the assumption that a collective variable can explain political preferences at the individual-level.

The variable '*place*' has yet another issue, namely the difficulties in isolating its effect from that of other variables that necessarily coexist within a given place (be it socioeconomic or attitudinal ones). In *Lega di Salvini*, the authors provide an account of the electoral geography of voting on M5S and *Lega*, without first making a note of this. They moreover explain that the dynamics of electoral change usually do not mirror the "timing of socioeconomic change" (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

Nonetheless, electoral geography was all the more popularized after the work of Rodríguez-Pose who, following the Brexit referendum of 2016, studied the electoral geography of numerous regions. This analysis is presented in his seminal work *The Revenge of the Places that don't Matter* (2018). Here, Rodríguez-Pose points out how that the outcome of important elections - such as the already mentioned Brexit vote, the 2016 election of former President Donald Trump in the US, the French presidential election of 2017, the German general elections of 2017, among others - is the product of revengeful declining regions. Such regions are those with worrying levels of inequality and poverty as well as a lack of opportunities. In his own account, territorial inequalities are therefore what can truly explain the vote for populist candidates. Put

simply “the places that don’t matter, not the ‘people that don’t matter’, have reacted.” (Rodríguez-Pose, n.d.).

This stance has nonetheless been put into question not least because it is a materialistic explanation of the vote, which assumes that people’s voting choices can be explained by economic interests - and this is a questionable assumption. Still, other authors have found that regions where import shocks repeatedly happen are also those with higher levels of support for radical right parties (Colantone & Stanig, 2018).

On the other hand, others have attempted to curb this criticism by ways of relating ‘place’ to certain values, rather than to economic interests. Ignazi (in Stockemer, 2017) explained that traditional values, love for one’s nation or higher levels of religiosity are often to be found in rural areas, and those factors are associated with a higher willingness to vote for radical right parties. This obviously means that radical right parties that stand up for such values often gain a foothold in rural regions (Stockemer, 2017). Contrarily, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, and openness are more pronounced in the cities. Thus, cities are frequently a stronghold of progressive leftist parties (Stockemer, 2017).

All in all, electoral geography is useful as it provides an overall picture of the trends of voting in a country. Hence, it is an important inclusion in studies of electoral sociology and related areas, insofar as one acknowledges that ‘place’ reflects collective patterns, and any explanation of voting behavior must be completed with the inclusion of additional explanatory variables.

### 1.3. Populist Radical Right Voters in Western Europe – FN, Lega, VOX

#### *FN Voters*

Regarding the voter profile of FN, the most interesting finding that is repeatedly pointed out is that it seems to contradict the profile of the populist radical right voter in one particular aspect – gender. Indeed, whilst there is evidence that the FN voter base was once predominantly male, (especially) since the 2012 presidential election the gender gap narrowed, and it is now almost negligible (Mayer, 2013). Even so, it is not yet totally inexistent. Within women, however, FN does not reunite the support of women both young, single, educated and oftentimes working in the public sector, as well as older widowers, usually not working, and religious (Mayer, 2013).

FN voters were historically older. Yet this trend has seen a reversal during the Marine Le Pen years, with the party presenting itself as a suitable choice for the youth. In fact, an increasing number of young people have cast their vote for FN recently (Stockemer, 2017).

Concerning education, FN has been - and continues to be to this day - the party of the low-educated (Mayer, 2013).

The class base of the party, on the other hand, has been subject to considerable changes. In the 1970s and 1980s, FN was the party of the bourgeoisie (Mudde, 2019), capturing a significant part of the conservative electorate (Stockemer, 2017). Yet, in the 1990s, the party saw a ‘proletarianization’ of its core constituency (Oesch, 2008). Hence, it became a workers’ party, even more so than the socialists’ party (Mudde, 2019). Naturally, blue-collar workers started being overrepresented amongst FN supporters (Im et al., 2019).

As does *Lega*, FN competes both with left-wing and center-right parties. Competition is done over working-class votes in the first case and over small business owners - traditionally right-wing - in the latter (Oesch, 2008).

As a matter of fact, scholars (Bussi & Fourquet, 2007) have pointed out how FN under Marine Le Pen is in direct confrontation with the PS, due to the similarity of the messages the two parties convey on some issues. Actually, especially in the periphery and rural areas, François Hollande (a presidential candidate of PS) lost a significant amount of the working-class vote to the FN.

However, Bussi & Fourquet (2007) also recognize that the FN secures votes on both left and right territorial spheres of influence. In 2007 the center-right candidate Sarkozy adapted the platform on which his party competed, emphasizing issues of immigration and identity (Gougou & Labouret, 2013). His party thus successfully captured a portion of FN's traditional extreme right electorate. Yet, recently, the right does not appear to be succeeding on its endeavor of attracting radical right voters. To better understand this, it is useful to delve deeper into recent electoral performances of *Les Républicains* (LR), a traditional party of the center-right and the former *Union pour un mouvement populaire* (UMP).

LR underwent a significant implosion in the aftermath of the 2017 presidential and legislative elections (Rispin, 2021). This incident was interpreted as abrupt and unexpected by some, yet the truth is that long-term issues as diverse as party leadership and organizational dynamics culminated in the results obtained in 2017 (Rispin, 2021). In fact, throughout Hollande's term in office, France was experiencing a significant political realignment that was largely ignored by LR's leading figures (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). Indeed, LR only retained the support of its core center-right electorate that soon became a minority (Rispin, 2021).

The authors Bale & Kaltwasser (2021) argue that the crisis faced by the mainstream right stems from the fact that they are currently caught, simultaneously, between two revolutions - the “silent revolution” on the one hand, and the “counter-silent revolution”, to borrow Ignazi’s term (1992), on the other. This means that the parties on the center right are saddled with a quandary. They either appeal to the ‘liberal, cosmopolitan and progressive’ individuals that are a product of the ‘silent revolution’ - usually highly educated and in comfortable positions -, or they attract the individuals that resent the former, who hold authoritarian and nativist values and are often low-educated and not particularly well-placed in society. In Western Europe, notwithstanding some efforts of the mainstream right to try and conquer votes, it has been witnessed that the first group of individuals are opting for new liberal alternatives, while the second group chooses to support populist radical right parties (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

The ‘silent revolution’ was indeed particularly disregarded by right-wing Gaullists, who focused on appealing solely to its traditional, conservative constituency and turned a blind eye on emerging and increasingly salient issues. This was a mistake that cost the Gaullists the emergence of a new competitor - *La gauche plurielle* - that did not nothing but fill an ideological vacuum (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

Yet the attempt to fight the ‘counter-silent revolution’ soon backfired. Chirac and particularly Sarkozy once again adopted more radical positions on issues such as immigration. This, however, served only FN, as the party attracted and retained the voters for whom this issue was salient, while the LR simultaneously alienated the liberal and mainstream electorate - that eventually turned to Macron's newly formed party *En Marche!* (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

What the mainstream right did not comprehend correctly was that those who, on cultural grounds, understood immigration as harmful also viewed LR's neoliberal policies the same way. Indeed, Gougou & Labouret (2013) acknowledge that FN voters would sometimes "abstain, cast a blank ballot, or even vote for the left" over voting for the moderate right. In the end, FN's "welfare chauvinist" platform was much more suitable to serve the interests of anti-immigration, largely working-class individuals (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

One aspect that stands out immediately when analyzing the electoral geography of FN is that the party has overtaken the left in industrial bastions mainly in the southwest, but also in the Nord (Bussi & Fourquet, 2007).

One specific industrial province stands out as an exception - that of Vendée. Here, despite the significant concentration of workers, FN did not perform satisfactorily. Bussi & Fourquet (2007) refer to this as the "Vendée paradox".

As a general trend, FN presents its best electoral performances in the proximities of major urban centers (Bussi & Fourquet 2007) and in the countryside. Perrineau (1988) had already been studied this phenomenon with respect to the leftist vote, asserting that it was greater in regions where, due to its geographical location, residents feared that events taking place in urban centers could expand to the surrounding rural areas (in Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). In fact, whilst FN performs remarkably in the latter locations, it consistently fails to gather support in large cities (Bussi & Fourquet 2007).

Two particular rural regions have been showing an increasing willingness to cast a vote for the party, notably those in central France and the Grand Ouest provinces (Bussi & Fourquet, 2007).

It should be noted, however, that FN currently has remarkable results on both right-wing and left-wing turfs. On the one hand, it attracts voters in Cantal - a right-wing and religious place (Bussi & Forquet 2007) - whilst also securing support in the once-left-wing rural, and not-so-religious areas of Allier, Haute-Vienne, Puy-de-Dôme, and Creuse (Bussi & Fourquet, 2007).

Other rural areas - albeit right-wing, conservative, and religious - have also turned out for Le Pen. Finally, FN performs poorly in town centers comprising a sizable number of wealthier and highly educated groups (Bussi & Fourquet, 2007).

### ***Lega Voters***

*Lega* is an interesting case in that it discredits the widely popular portrait of the populist radical right voter. To begin with, the voter base of *Lega* is quite heterogeneous, even though some characteristics stand out (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

In general, *Lega*'s voters are neither particularly old nor young, with the age profile of the party being in line with the population average (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). If any, it could be said that the youth is slightly more represented in *Lega*'s electorate.

Similar to the FN, *Lega* is an example of a populist radical right party where the gender gap is barely non-existent, even though it is a much lesser-known case of a party belonging to the radical right whose voters are balanced gender-wise (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

As regards the class profile of the party, *Lega* is not specifically a working-class party, but rather the party of the wealthiest – with self-employed workers being overrepresented (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). This class profile was shaped after the

regionalist character of the party (Piketty, 2018) - as *Lega* was initially rooted in the Northern significantly more affluent regions of Italy.

As the party expanded to central and southern regions of Italy - changing from an “ethno-regionalist” party to an “ethno-nationalist” one - its constituency slightly changed. In the Center-South, its electorate is generally younger, with higher levels of education and, again, from a high social stratum.

Moreover, the party has recently managed to attract a sizable number of working-class voters, notably those that do not work in the public sector and are not highly educated (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). In fact, *Lega*’s voter base is wealthier but not highly educated – it is a so-called “high-income elite” (Piketty, 2018).

Notwithstanding, *Lega*’s voters are also not disproportionately low educated. Instead, those who chose to cast a vote for the party are predominantly those with middle levels of education. Here, South and North voters actually differ slightly, with the former having moderately higher levels of education. Also, in the South, *Lega* voters often have a clerical profile, work in large as opposed to small companies, and are from an even wealthier class (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

*Lega* essentially competes with two other parties. First, for the wealthier high-income class, the party competes with *Forza Italia* (FI). Recently, due to this political competition, *Forza Italia* (FI) - the closest there is to a mainstream-right party - is experiencing a decline. This decline has been happening especially over the 2011-2018 period (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021), and it mostly stems from the weak leadership of FI. Thus, what is happening in Italy is perhaps not the substitution of one party - FI - for another - *Lega* - but rather the replacement of Berlusconi with Salvini (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). The decline of the mainstream right is therefore actually the fall of

Berlusconi. Also, the growing salience of immigration and related issues further adds to the success of *Lega* and Salvini (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

Nonetheless, besides political competition between *Lega* and FI, the former party also competes with M5S for its working-class constituency. M5S is a protest party (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018) founded in 2009 by the comedian Beppe Grillo. The party is positioned (by watchers) on the left of the political spectrum, due to the roots of its core members, its voter base, and some of its proposals. These voters place great emphasis on the fight against the mainstream political system, as well as on environmental and labor concerns.

*Lega's* electoral geography used to be self-evident. Its first leader, Umberto Bossi, more than once emphasized that “if Salvini takes the party to the south, the *Lega* is finished” (quoted in Albertazzi et al., 2018). Obviously, this did not happen. Salvini did indeed take the party to the south and center of Italy, but the party did not die – it reminisced.

*Lega's* traditional bastions are to be found in the North - in a territory extending from Lombardy to Veneto (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). These regions are known for being one of the wealthiest in Italy, with high employment rates and low unemployment rates (Albertazzi et al., 2018). Such regions continue to express significant support for the party.

Currently, however, considerable attention has been devoted to its further expansion, especially to regions traditionally belonging to the ‘Red Belt’ of formerly known bastions of left-wing parties. Those comprise, but are not limited to, Emilia-Romagna (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018) and Bologna (Albertazzi et al., 2018).

To illustrate the party's non-linear expansion progress, in the 2014 regional elections that took place in Emilia-Romagna the party achieved a remarkable result (Albertazzi et al., 2018). In the same year, however, the *Noi con Salvini* (Us with Salvini, Ncs) did not achieve such an outstanding result in the region of Apulia (slightly above 2%), despite having done so in the Center (Albertazzi, 2015). In the latter, *Lega* has actually been achieving quite successful electoral results in places where the Left used to do so (Albertazzi et al., 2018).

Four years later, in 2018, *Lega* had a good electoral performance again in Emilia-Romagna but also in Tuscany, Umbria, and Marche (a region similar to Umbria) (Albertazzi et al., 2018).

Yet, the once-Red Belt southern regions where the party performs better are those where, likewise their northern counterparts, the economic performance is strong (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). Moreover, in the North, *Lega* has a more satisfactory performance in small towns, while it struggles to find its footing in larger centers. In the Center-South, however, this pattern does not repeat itself - with support being apparent regardless of the dimension of the region (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018).

Nowadays, to sum up, the party displays a strong performance all the way through Lombardy but only until Emilia (Passarelli & Tuorto, 2018). So, it can be argued that *Lega* did not fulfill its renewed ambitions of being truly national in character.

### ***VOX Voters***

The profile of the VOX electorate can be described rather easily. It confirms the portrait made of the populist radical right voter in that its voter base mostly comprises

low-educated, male, and young individuals (Rama et al., 2021). However, contrary to findings of other parties, the VOX electorate is not working-class - or the 'modernization loser' - but is rather composed of better-off individuals (similar to *Lega* in this regard). VOX is therefore a party of the bourgeoisie. Also, as can be anticipated, those wealthy individuals do not live in rural or peripheral areas but rather in urban centers (Rama et al., 2021).

In Spain, there has been thus far one party - the *Partido Popular* (People's Party, PP) - that captured the votes of all right-wing voters, from the moderate ala towards the most radical one (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015). Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser (2015) explain that PP was once *Alianza Popular* (People's Alliance): a party comprising individuals with strong ties to the Franco era. Yet, during the 1980s, the party was in deep need of reforming itself to overcome numerous challenges (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015), and those reforms included softening its agenda and image. Thus, from 1989 onwards, the party became the *Partido Popular*. However, such a strategy did not alienate *Alianza Popular's* far-right constituency, who kept supporting the party. PP thus became a catch-all party and enjoyed an uncontested leadership of the right-wing bloc for an extended period (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). Thus, Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser (2015, p.16) conclude that "the mainstream right has pre-empted the rise of the PRR." In this sense, it can be said that VOX is competing with PP for its extreme-right supporters.

In recent years, however, PP also enjoyed renewed competition from another young party - the self-proclaimed liberal but nationalist *Ciudadanos* (Citizens) (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). Following this, PP decided to treat both *Ciudadanos* and VOX as allies (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). Yet, as its French Gaullist counterparts proceeded, PP radicalized its platform so as to retain its far-right constituency. However, contrary to

what happened in France, this tactic did not backfire in the 2019 general election. Such outcome mostly rests on *Ciudadanos*' attachment to nationalism - therefore failing to be the new liberal *En Marche* - rather than on PP's abilities (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021). If any, the radicalization of the PP agenda is only contributing to the steady dismantling of its catch-all nature (Bale & Kaltwasser, 2021).

When it comes to electoral geography, VOX achieves its best electoral performances in Ceuta, a North African autonomous city (Rama et al., 2021), whilst the party performs poorly in the Basque Country. Rama et al. (2021) highlight that in the 2019 general elections, VOX only achieved 2.45% of the vote in the latter compared to the 35.19% in the former. The party has been underperforming in the Basque country since 2015, as can be demonstrated by its result of 0.07% in the 2015 regional election in that region (Rama et al., 2021).

The authors moreover demonstrate that the party also struggles (did not surpass the 10% threshold) in Navarre, Catalonia, and Galicia. Contrarily, it achieved more than 20% of the vote in Murcia, Castile-La Mancha, and Andalusia. The authors note a pattern in this result. All the regions where VOX constantly grapples are also those strongly attached to their national identities, where the Spanish identity is less important or despised. Even so, Valencia and Balearic Islands do not confirm this trend (Rama et al., 2021). It is therefore natural to wonder whether VOX will always perform poorly in regions where regional identity and separatist traits are salient. Yet, the 2021 elections in Catalonia (Rama et al., 2021) call into question the electoral geography of VOX, and whether it will remain stable.

The following section initiates the second part of this dissertation, which corresponds to the case-study of the populist radical right in Portugal. Concretely, of the electorate of Chega.

## **Part II: The Populist Radical Right in Portugal – Case-Study**

The present section is structured as follows. First, an overview of the electoral geography and performance of Chega is displayed, including a reflection on the growth perspectives of Chega, and a comparison between the electoral geography of Chega and that of IL and BE. Furthermore, the hypotheses of this study are designed.

Subsequently, the methodology is presented. Afterwards, the results are laid out.

Finally, this section ends with a discussion and concluding remarks.

### **2.1. Electoral Geography and Performance of Chega in Portugal**

To present the electoral geography this dissertation makes use of electoral results (from SGMAI) of Chega at district level for three elections (2019 and 2022 legislatives, 2021 presidential).

#### ***The Birth of Chega – The 2019 Legislative Election***

Contrary to many European counterparts, where the populist radical-right is already a political force to be reckoned with (Mudde, 2007), Portugal still had a Parliament “immune” to such parties (Heyne & Manucci, 2021). It was only with the 2019 legislative election that political scientists and journalists alike began to wonder whether the Portuguese “exceptionalism” (Heyne & Manucci, 2021) was over. Indeed, 2019 was the year when Chega entered the Parliament, with the election of one representative (Mendes & Dennison, 2021) - André Ventura, the leader and founder of the party himself.

Even though this electoral result might seem modest at first, the truth is that the 2019 Legislative election was characterized by a partisan fragmentation on the Right for long not witnessed (Jalali et al., 2021). This fragmentation is mostly the outcome of two factors.

First, the two establishment right-wing parties –CDS-PP and PSD, both members of the European People's Party (EPP) – did not run together as they did back in 2015 (Jalali et al., 2021). Second, and most importantly, this fragmentation is due to the entrance of new political forces in the electoral contest – notably, Chega, IL, and *Aliança* (Alliance). The first two achieved parliamentary representation, whereas the latter did not win any seats. Curiously, both PSD and CDS-PP obtained considerably worse results in terms of the popular vote when compared with the Legislative elections of 2011 (see Table A1) - a time when both parties also ran separately. When looking at global results, in percentage of votes, PSD went from 38.65% in 2011 to 27.76%, while CDS-PP had a global result of 11.70% in 2011 and a noticeably worse performance in 2019, with only 4.22% of votes.

A thorough elaboration on the underlying reasons for this partisan fragmentation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Even so, one can point out how this variation in global results of the two parties - PSD and CDS-PP – illustrates an increasing and more salient competition at the right of the political spectrum, with parties trying to ‘steal’ political and ideological space to the establishment. This led some (Marchi, 2020) to argue that most of the current supporters of Chega are disenfranchised voters of PSD and, to a lesser extent, CDS-PP. Yet it is crucial to be careful when engaging in such an assessment.

It is worth remembering that since the Portuguese experience with fascism (Heyne & Manucci, 2021) no other relevant political party (i.e., represented in Parliament) spoke the language of populism and readily defended radical-right ideals. Thus, Chega could also be filling in an ideological vacuum left by those on the right.

To better understand the role Chega plays as a party of the Right, it is necessary to analyze the political and electoral history of other parties occupying the same space before its birth.

In 2011, following the legislative elections of 5 June, the then-President Anibal Cavaco Silva handed out the once Prime-Minister Pedro Passos Coelho (Lusa, 2011) the task of designing a stable majority. Passos Coelho, at the time the leader of PSD, had won first place in the legislative contest, with 38.65% of the vote - which was nonetheless only enough to form a minority government. Fortunately, solving such an issue was straightforward as the leader of CDS-PP of the time, Paulo Portas, was more than happy to partner with PSD in a governing coalition. The two parties governed together during what was one of the toughest periods in Portugal, with the effects of the 2008 financial crisis still lingering, and the consequential controversial austerity measures that had to be taken. Ironically, these were both the darkest and brightest years in recent history of the center-right - surpassed by the two absolute majorities of 1987 and 1991 of PSD led by Anibal Cavaco Silva and the 2002 legislative election (40.21% of the vote). Subsequently, in the legislative elections of 2015, PS headed by the Prime-Minister António Costa, formed a minority government with the support of *Bloco de Esquerda* (Left Bloc, BE) and PCP, in a left-wing coalition called *geringonça* ('contraption'). António Costa guided once again its party to victory in 2019, with the partners BE and PCP. Recently, however, PS repeated the deed of PSD, winning an

absolute majority in the early legislative elections of 2022. PSD and CDS-PP thus remained in opposition from 2015 till present day.

It is thus worth wondering what happened to a party that once won two absolute majorities, PSD, as well as its reliable partner, CDS-PP. As it can be seen by the numbers, 2011 was the year under analysis where both PSD and CDS-PP had their strongest global electoral results, the showings of 38.65% and 11.70%, respectively. Four years later, the coalition comprising the two parties won 36.86% of the vote, and thus did not even surpass the 2011 results of PSD on its own. This can be pointed out as the turning point of the right in Portugal, notwithstanding the fact that the 2015 electoral showings were not yet enough to signal a mainstream right decline.

The electoral patterns of CDS-PP and PSD are nonetheless distinct. While PSD has considerably decreased its share of the vote by more than 10 percentage points from the legislative election of 2011(38.65%) to the legislative election of 2019 (27.76%) - where the party ran alone once again - the results from 2019 to 2022 (27.83%) remained essentially stable.

CDS-PP, however, has seen a stark decline in support from 11.70% in 2011, all the way to 4.22% in 2019 and 1.60% in 2022 - a time where the party did not pass the minimum threshold needed to achieve parliamentary representation. So, whilst PSD weakened, CDS-PP disintegrated.

This illustrates that while PSD could be struggling to remain a catch-all party it is not struggling, however, to remain relevant. In fact, contrary to the scenario in France and to a lesser extent Italy, yet much similar to that of Spain, the center - and particularly the center-right PSD - is still very much an influential and somewhat hegemonic political force.

Curiously, the legislative elections in the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores display a different pattern on the right. PSD, similar to the global results displayed, had its best result of the years under analysis in Madeira (49.39 %) and Azores (47.36 %) in the 2011 legislative elections.

In Madeira, support for PSD declined from 2011 (49.39%) to 2015 (37.75%), albeit still being the most voted party of the region in the latter year. From 2015 to 2019 (37.15%) support for PSD remained fairly stable. In fact, in 2019, the party was winning almost 10% more in terms of vote share in Madeira (37.15%) compared to its global performance in the same year (27.76%). In the legislative elections of 2019, PSD was the most voted party yet again in Madeira. And, in 2022, the coalition of PSD and CDS-PP won 39.83 % of the vote, surpassing the socialists' leadership – a difficult deed at national level, where PS won in basically every district.

It is curious to note that the percentage of the vote in 2022 (39.83 %) in Madeira is greater than the global one achieved by the same coalition (PPD/PSD.CDS-PP) in 2015 (36.86%). This thus appears to contradict the theory of decline in support for the center-right.

Madeira seems to be the standard-bearer of the center-right success and its more reliable and stable bastion. In the region, the pattern of results of CDS-PP is similar to that of PSD.

CDS-PP experienced a sharp decrease from 13.74% of the vote in 2011 all the way to 6.02% in 2015, with the electoral showings of the Christian Democrats plateauing at 6% in the following years (specifically, 6.05% in 2019). Again, similar to PSD, CDS-PP performs much more strongly in Madeira when compared to the global results of the same years.

In Azores, however, PSD experienced a steady decline in voter support, with its electoral showings going from 47.36% in 2011 to 36.06% in 2015 (when the party won second place after PS) to yet another second place after PS in 2019, with 30.21% of the vote. These results are still, however, higher than the global results of PSD for the same years under analysis. In 2022, in a coalition comprising the party itself, CDS-PP and PPM, the Right still ended up in second place with 33.92%. This electoral showing did not even surpass that of PSD alone in the legislative elections of 2015.

CDS-PP, on the contrary, had its electoral results following somewhat of a ‘U’ shaped-pattern, starting with 12.11% in 2011, then decreasing sharply in 2015 (3.9% in a coalition with PPM) and growing slightly four years later (4.80% in 2022). The results of 2015 and 2019 are far from being a phenomenal electoral performance of CDS-PP, notwithstanding being slightly higher than the results achieved by the party at global level.

Amidst these turbulent times in electoral terms for CDS-PP and, to a lesser extent, PSD - interpreted by some as the decline of the mainstream right - Chega managed to surprise all spectators and enter the Portuguese Parliament (Mendes, 2021). The exact way through which André Ventura managed to acquire relevance in the Portuguese political scenario is, however, less surprising. The founder and leader of Chega was elected through the electoral circle of Lisbon, as was the one representative of IL.

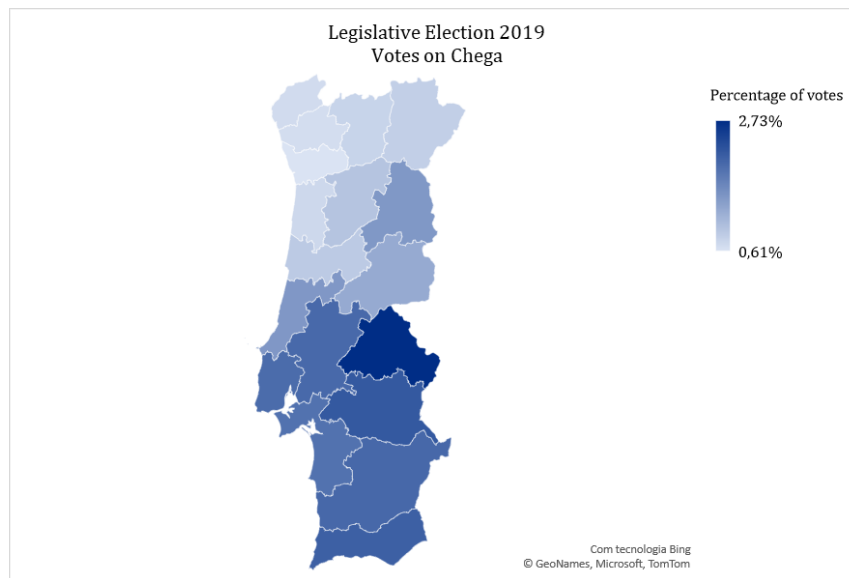
Portugal is a “closed-list d’Hondt PR system” (Jalali et al., 2021). Therefore, and when considering the magnitude of constituencies, electing one MP through Lisbon is neither fascinating nor intriguing. Lisbon is the biggest electoral circle, with a total of 48 mandates to elect (Oficial, 2021). This district is followed by Porto, which comes in second place with 40 representatives (Oficial, 2021). In third place, with less than half

of this number – 19, to be precise – comes the district of Braga. This stark difference between the electoral circle's magnitudes highlights the beauty of odds. The logic is quite simple - the bigger the magnitude, the easier and more likely it is to enter the Parliament.

Bearing this in mind, and regardless of the role the district of Lisbon played in the representation of Chega, support for the party is not more remarkable in that region. In fact, the maps illustrate that there are other six districts where the percentage of the vote is relatively high. In those – Beja, Évora, Portalegre, Faro, Setúbal and Santarém – this percentage is equal or superior to 2. What is more, although these districts are markedly inferior to Lisbon in terms of the magnitude of the electoral circle, it is interesting to imagine a hypothetical scenario where all would be equal in this regard. If that was the case, then Chega would have elected not one but around 7 representatives.

Utopian considerations aside, it is now important to turn to the main objective of the present section – that of looking at the electoral geography of Chega. An analysis of districts could shed light on relevant details. Nonetheless, a first glimpse at the map 1 already points to significant patterns, even though it is necessary to be cautious when drawing conclusions from an analysis of a single election. The map displayed in Figure 1 exhibits how Chega is particularly popular in the interior of the country and the South while having notably unsatisfactory results both in the coastline and in the North. Interestingly, in the North, right-wing and center-right parties are traditionally more relevant, whereas the South is dominated by the left and center-left. Places such as Vila Real, Bragança, Leiria, and Guarda have been faithful to PSD throughout the years (1991-2011) (Samagaio, 2015).

**Figure 1. Map of Votes on Chega on Legislative Election 2019**



*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

Considering that the literature positions Chega on the far-right (Reis, 2022), it is certainly enlightening to verify how Chega draws most part of its support in places that historically have inclined to the left. Opposite to this, the North remains quite immune to Chega's rhetoric. Nevertheless, a thorough examination of all these regions is essential to formulate conclusions and hypotheses.

In the present study, Alentejo comprises Portalegre, Beja and Évora. A closer look at the map 1 leads to clear albeit intriguing inputs. The district where the percentage of votes on Chega is higher, illustrated by the stronger tone in this area, is that of Portalegre. Here, the party had 2.73% of the votes, a result remarkably higher than the national average (1.29%). Évora earns second place in terms of the popularity of Chega, with 2.22% of votes. This district is followed by Beja with 2.04% of the votes.

Alentejo is notably thought-provoking as the region has historically been in the hands of the Communist Party (PCP). This party is the one which occupies the extreme

left in the Portuguese political arena. And Beja and Portalegre, more so than Évora, have been at most a stage of electoral conflict between communists and PS (Samagaio, 2015). Only in exceptional instances - namely 1991 and 2011 – the center-right PSD had any relevance in this area (Samagaio, 2015).

So, does this mean that the region is now disputed by both communists and the populist radical-right? Well, not necessarily. Assessing whether PCP and Chega are competing for the same electorate is no straightforward endeavor. As Pedro Magalhães points out (in Marchi, 2020), one cannot analyze electorate transference conceptually and theoretically even though there is some “overlapping” in terms of geography. PCP did obtain worse results between 2015 and 2019 in those regions. Global results follow the same pattern - the party went from 8.25% of votes in 2015 to 6.33% in 2019. However, this is a tendency which started in 2011, with the percentage of votes diminishing from that year to 2015. Between these two years, Chega did not yet exist.

**Table 1. Legislative election Results of PCP**

PCP Legislative elections						
Date	Beja	Évora	Portalegre	Santarém	Setúbal	Global
2011	25.39%	22.06%	12.81%	9.02%	19.65%	7.91%
2015	24.96%	21.94%	12.18%	9.64%	18.80%	8.25%
2019	22.80%	18.89%	10.62%	7.57%	15.75%	6.33%

*Source:* SGMAI

*Note:* Global Results are the results in national and foreign territory. National territory comprises Continental Portugal and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores

Hence, this could indicate that PCP is in fact experiencing a reduction in electoral support. Yet this might also be the result of a lack of mobilization of its electorate. Thus, the party could have lost votes to abstention (of 42% in 2011, 44% in

2015, and 51% in 2019). Also, PCP could be losing votes to other parties such as PS, especially when the former appeals to a tactical vote. Finally, in the worst scenario in electoral terms for PCP, it could mean that its supporters are gradually disappearing due to societal changes, such as the increasing relevance of post-industrial occupations. All in all, the observation of this map could signal different scenarios. Individuals could be supporting Chega *instead* of PCP. Or they could be simply supporting *both* Chega and PCP, regardless of a decrease in the percentage of votes on the latter. In the end, correlation is not causation.

Alentejo is not the only region in the south where Chega did particularly well. In Faro – located in Algarve – Chega’s support is also higher than the national average of 1.29%. Here, the percentage of votes on Chega was 2.14. Even so, and contrary to Alentejo, the region of Faro does not allow to directly (albeit subjectively) speculate on possible electorate transference, since Algarve is an area known for its high electoral volatility (Samagaio, 2015). Nonetheless, Faro may contribute to further the debate on the relationship between PCP and Chega, as the district has had an expressive communist vote (Samagaio, 2015). Nonetheless, both in 2015 and 2019 PS won the first place, while in 2011 PSD took this spot. Moreover, and perhaps more important than the geographical distribution of votes, Faro in particular and Algarve in general are regions with high social heterogeneity - which could lead to interesting findings regarding the socioeconomic characteristics of Chega’s voters.

The apex of social heterogeneity and electoral volatility is, however, the district of Lisbon. The complexity of the social and political fabric in the region renders the task of analyzing support for Chega – and its relationship with previous political choices - way more complex. An assessment at the district level certainly leaves out meaningful findings and prevents a complete understanding of the geography of Chega support.

As mentioned earlier, it was through this constituency that both Chega and IL elected one representative. Yet so did *Livre*, CDS-PP, PCP, PSD, PS, BE, and *Pessoas-Animais-Natureza* (People-Animals-Nature, PAN). Lisbon is actually home to a diverse electorate with a variety of preferences, which range from the extreme-right all the way to the extreme-left. Hence, and exceptionally, Lisbon will be analyzed at the municipality level – a smaller and therefore more elucidative unit of analysis. At this level, Amadora, Odivelas, Loures, Sintra, Vila Franca de Xira, Sobral de Monte Agraço, Azambuja, Alenquer, Torres Vedras, Lourinhã and Cadaval stand out as places where support for Chega is higher (Francisco, 2019). Through this analysis, it is possible to draw a curious conclusion. Chega was strikingly more successful in the suburbs of Lisbon, and in some northern municipalities. On the other hand, the party had disappointing results in the city (Marchi, 2020).

It is also interesting to note that municipalities such as Oeiras and Cascais (Francisco, 2019) – that usually vote for the right (Samagaio, 2015) - are those in which Chega underperforms, whereas IL does remarkably well. This raises questions that need to be addressed in light of empirical methods, as it complicates even further the analysis of electorate transference. Considering that three parties usually associated with the relative success of Chega registered a decrease in voting percentages – PCP on the left and CDS-PP and PSD on the right – and their geographical distribution of electoral support overlaps with that of two new parties - Chega and IL - it becomes quite risky to conclude something on electorate transference on theoretical grounds.

One final remark with respect to Lisbon is that even though Portalegre is the region where the percentage of votes for Chega is higher, Lisbon is the region with the highest number – in absolute terms – of voters for the party. In the latter, there are 22053 votes, compared to the modest number of 1407 in Portalegre.

Finally, in Santarém and Setúbal Chega obtained 2.03% and 1.93% of the votes, respectively. Thus, this seems to again illustrate that Chega's rhetoric may be appealing to individuals that, if not the same, may be similar in socioeconomic terms to PCP's electorate. Yet, and once more, it is important to note that the literature (Marchi, 2020) contends that this is not the case. It does not mean that Chega is not attracting a small percentage of former PCP voters. Rather, Chega's electorate might simply share more in common with that of PSD or CDS-PP.

It is true that PCP oftentimes performs satisfactorily in both districts (see Table 1). However, PPD (the coalition of PSD and CDS-PP) was the first political force in Santarém in the legislative election of 2015, and PS won first place in Setúbal in that same year.

Thus far, based on observations similar to this one, many questions were raised, and several assumptions developed. Nonetheless, it is vital to observe the geographical distribution of Chega's popularity in more than one election if one is to achieve any significant conclusion. Consequently, for the sake of certainty and precision, an analysis of the 2021 Presidential election and the 2022 Legislative election is unquestionably useful.

### ***Ever-growing popularity of Chega? - The 2021 Presidential Election***

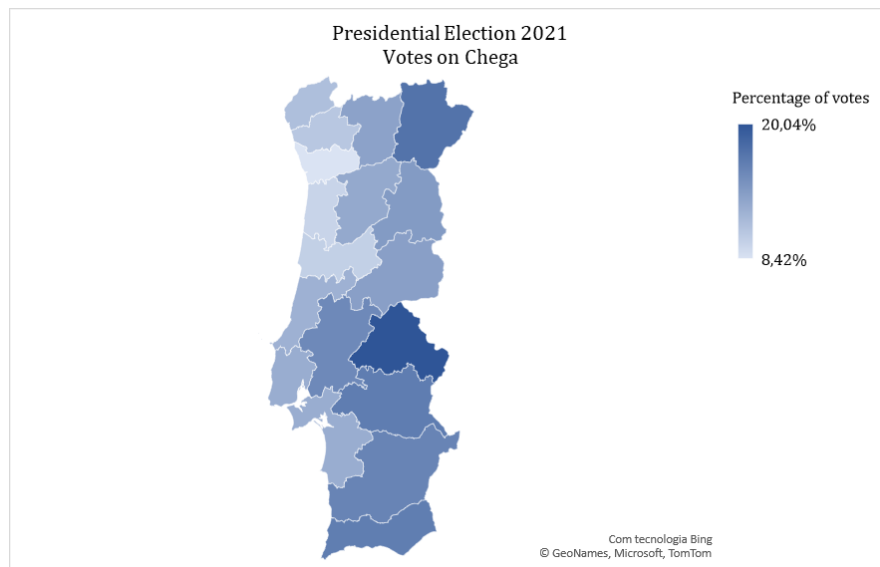
If it was with the 2019 Legislative election that Chega was born, it was the 2021 Presidential Election that put the party – and its leader André Ventura – under the spotlight. The particular setting underscoring this election has certainly contributed to the increasing popularity of André Ventura. The incumbent Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa was not only endorsed by its own party PSD, but also enjoyed informal support of the PS – the party in (minority) government (Lusa, 2021). And despite seeing a reasonable

decrease in popularity during the pandemic (Observador, 2019), the politician was unquestionably a likable and sympathetic figure. In fact, it may be said that Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa enjoyed the advantage of incumbency (Campbell & Mann, 1996). All the pre-election polls gave him victory (Almeida, 2021; Gomes, 2021) and added to the predictability of the election outcome. Actually, this predictability may well be the root cause of André Ventura's unprecedented success, with individuals using an election that had a determined closure at start solely as a way to express their emotions and feelings (Rivas & Rockey, 2021). Whether this means that the electorate was voting for Ventura is yet to be studied. As far as I am concerned, it could be the case that individuals were voting against the incumbent, since having Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa go on a second round against Ventura was the most humiliating scenario.

In any case, it was clear that while Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa sang victory, it was Ventura that went home with the title of "star" (Barbosa, 2021). The founder of Chega won second place in every district but Aveiro, Braga, Coimbra, Lisbon, Porto, Setúbal and Viana do Castelo (*Presidenciais 2021*, 2021). It was only in those regions that the socialist candidate endorsed by Livre, Ana Gomes, managed to get ahead. In total, André Ventura obtained 496,773 votes – corresponding to 11.90% of the votes – in his first run for Presidency. As impressive as this is, Ventura's popularity is not homogeneous throughout the country, much like what happened in the 2019 legislative election.

If doubts remained, the 2021 presidential election really seems to show that the Northern electorate does not fall for Ventura's ideas, a situation which parallels that of 2019, as shown in the map displayed in Figure 2. There are regions that continue to be a stronghold of the candidate, namely Alentejo. As a matter of fact, Ventura had its highest result again in Portalegre, with 20.04% of the votes.

**Figure 2. Map of Votes on Chega on Presidential Election 2021**



*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

The pattern thus seems to repeat itself. In the 2021 Presidential election, Portalegre was followed by Évora with 16.76% of the votes, with Beja earning third place having 16.19% of the votes. In all three regions – Portalegre, Évora, Beja – Ventura performed conspicuously better than João Ferreira of PCP, a party used to conquer promising results in those places (Malta, 2021).

Another region which once more shows great support for Ventura is Faro, where the candidate obtained 16.69% of the votes. In Santarém, the candidate ended up with a result of 15.76%.

Surprisingly or not, the incumbent Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa did not pass the threshold of 60% of votes only in Lisbon, Setúbal, Portalegre, Évora, Beja and Faro – some of the regions where Ventura not only got the second place but also did markedly well (Machado et al., 2021).

Finally, a few outliers stand out. First, based on the results of the 2019 legislative election, it appears that Ventura could have performed largely better than he

did in Setúbal and Lisbon. There, the founder of Chega had almost the same result, with 12.86% of the votes in the former and 12.85% in the latter. Nonetheless, with regards to Lisbon, the same conclusions drawn out of the 2019 election results hold true in the case of the Presidential election. Whereas Portalegre has the highest percentage of votes, Lisbon is the district with more votes on Ventura in absolute terms - a total of 123,644.

Another exceptional situation is that of Bragança, where the candidate had a higher result than that of regions in Alentejo and Faro. Indeed, with 17.61% of votes in Bragança, this place strongly contradicts the pattern seen in the north. Also, as aforementioned, it is worth noting that Bragança usually (1991-2011) votes on the center-right PSD (Samagaio, 2015). However, as this is a result in a Presidential election, it does not indicate that the region is disillusioned with the center-right party. Instead, the electorate might just be disappointed with Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and chose to express its disappointment by turning to Ventura.

All these findings, stemming from the observation of the 2021 Presidential election may not, however, perfectly translate into support for Chega. In Presidential elections, the electorate tends to vote for individual candidates rather than the parties they belong to (Campbell & Mann, 1996). All care is little when comparing elections fundamentally different in nature, even though Chega can be considered an exception to this rule for being a one-person party (Pinto, 2020).

Even if the elections were similar, 20.04% of the votes in Portalegre, for example, is not sufficient to elect one MP (Henriques, 2021). If support for Chega continues to be more expressive in the ‘peripheries of the country’ (Henriques, 2021) and does not grow significantly, the party might not be able to have more than its leader in Parliament. Nonetheless, and despite pessimistic predictions, in 2022 Chega managed to elect 12 representatives.

### *Ventura's Pledge to be the third political force – the 2022 Legislative Election*

If the 2022 Legislative Election had to be described in one word, that word would be unexpected. The State Budget proposal was rejected by Parliament (Carvalho, 2022). PS, the party which ruled the country in minority government alongside leftist parties BE and PCP in the so-called contraption – could not count on the approval of its two partners. In light of such a scenario, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa promised to dissolve the Parliament and call early legislative elections. After the warning, reunions and talks between PS and other leftist parties kept going, but they nevertheless proved unsuccessful. The ‘political crisis’ was installed and the country would have to vote for a new Portuguese Parliament on 30th January 2022.

The months that followed the rejection of the State Budget proposal were anything but simple. PS kept trying to blame his former allies on the left for the political crisis and the instability that arose from that. BE and PCP maintained their position and claimed that the approval of such a proposal would have left their electorate disillusioned. The leader of Livre – Rui Tavares – spent most of the time trying to rip the benefits of these tensions and calling for the establishment of a particular type of coalition, an ‘eco-contraption’. PSD, on the other hand, tried to change the course of things and appeal to all those who were already tired of the incumbent socialist Prime Minister António Costa. Finally, small parties on the right– IL, Chega, and CDS-PP – shared a common enemy with their left-wing counterparts - that of the tactical vote.

Despite all efforts to counter it, on 31<sup>st</sup> January this strategic vote for PS arose victoriously. One reason for such a course of events is the fact that socialists spent the weeks before the election presenting themselves as the only real solution to counter a hypothetical right-wing coalition – in the Portuguese case ‘contraption’ (Borges, 2022) - comprising Chega. In fact, many were those who contended that a socialists’ absolute

majority would be even more unlikely in the absence of Ventura's newly founded party (Martins et al., 2022). Indeed, there are reasons to believe that the result achieved by the socialists - a remarkable result of 41.68% of the votes and the election of a group of 117 representatives (Martins et al., 2022) – is the outcome of both a leftist electorate's resentment with left-wing parties and the fear of a government including Chega. The party therefore played, once again, a central role in these elections.

This central role also stemmed from André Ventura's ability to fulfill the promise of being the third political force in the country. The party had more 300 thousand votes than it did back in 2019 (Albuquerque et al., 2022). To be more specific, with a total of 385,559 votes – corresponding to 7.15% of the votes and the election of 12 representatives – Chega was only surpassed by the greatest winner PS and by the second in the run PSD. In fourth place came yet another star – IL – which went from a single representative to the election of 8 representatives. The party was followed by PCP in fifth place and afterwards BE, which might have lost their electorate to the socialist absolute majority. Another surprising event was the disappearance from Parliament of CDS-PP, incapable of electing a single representative (César, 2022).

This new political conjecture at the right is actually interesting in terms of voter transference, considering that at the same time CDS-PP disappeared, IL and Chega ascended. Even so, whether there is a linear relationship between the disappearance of the former and the rise of the latter is yet to be studied. Bearing that in mind, a first look at the 2022 legislative election map of Chega could advance initial hypotheses on this matter.

Contrary to the 2019 legislative election, Chega was the third political force in almost every district – Aveiro, Braga, Bragança, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Faro, Guarda, Leiria, Portalegre, Santarém, Viana do Castelo, Vila Real and Viseu. Hence, it

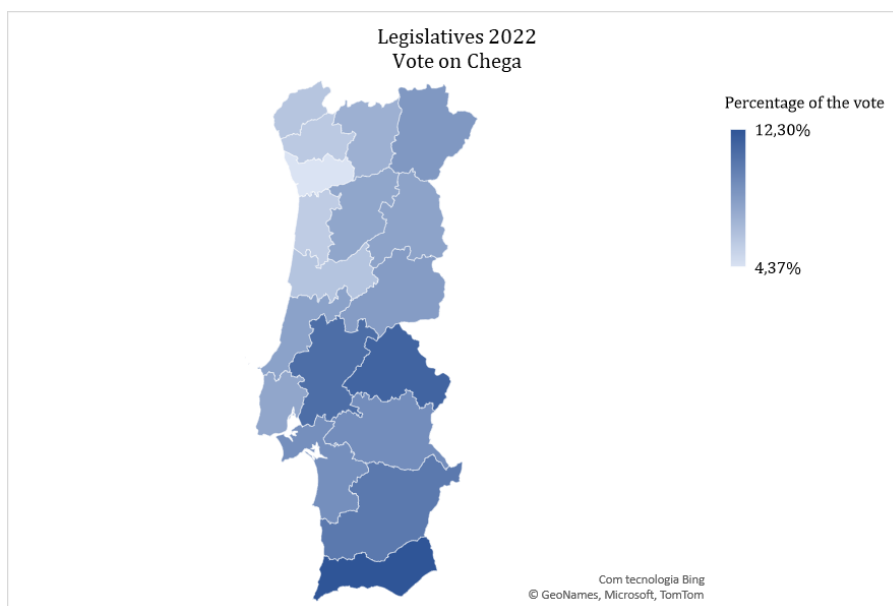
is now necessary to analyze the whole country in order to understand the spatial distribution of support for the party. Nevertheless, and besides this general overlook, interesting conclusions might arise from a detailed analysis of the outliers in this election.

An important outlier is that of Porto, the district where Chega had the worst result – 4.37% of the votes, corresponding to the election of two representatives. This was the only region where the party ended up in fifth place, after PS, PSD, IL, and BE. In general, the worse results of the party are in the Northern regions, such as Aveiro (5.64%), Braga (5.81%), and Viana do Castelo (6.06%). Even so, and as mentioned earlier, the party achieved third place in all three regions stated, which is an unexpected result. Also unexpected is the third place in Coimbra (6.12%), an urban district where the party only achieved 0.90% of the votes in 2019.

Unquestionably, the success of Chega continues to be more pronounced in regions in the South and in the interior. As a matter of fact, the highest result for Chega was in Faro, where the party achieved 12.30% of the votes. This district is followed by Portalegre with 11.46%. Other districts in the interior, notably Évora (9.15%), Beja (10.27%), Setúbal (9.03%) and Santarém (10.91%) continue to exhibit results slightly above the national average of 7.15%. Similar to what happened in 2019, these regions continue to be the main source of support for Chega.

Finally, in spite of this general trend, the map 3 shows how the vote for Chega is slowly becoming a national phenomenon. In other words, the geographical and spatial distribution of the vote for Chega is steadily changing. Thus, a comparison between this distribution in 2019 and that of 2022 is certainly helpful to understand the potential for growth of Chega.

**Figure 3. Map of Votes on Chega on Legislative Election 2022**



*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

Indeed, when compared with 2019, there is a much wider support for Chega. The regions in darker blue, however, continue to be the ones in the interior and in the south. The novelty the map of 2022 brings is the evidence of increased support for Chega in northern regions. Indeed, to the surprise of many, several regions where the party did not reach 1% of the votes in 2019 – Braga (0.68%), Bragança (0.84%), Viana do Castelo (0.70%), Vila Real (0.79%), Viseu (0.97%) – had Chega as a third political force in 2022. Those regions historically support the center-right (Samagaio, 2015), even though 2022 is an outlier in this pattern. Finally, a reality that remained fairly stable is that of Porto, with Chega once more finding it difficult to succeed.

Moreover, it also seems that the party could have performed better in the districts of Lisbon, Setúbal, Beja and Évora when compared with the 2019 results. There, Chega was not the third political force but rather the fourth. The third place was awarded to IL (7.90%) in Lisbon, to PCP (10.05%) in Setúbal, to PSD (15.94%) in Beja

and to PCP (14.56%) again in Évora. Opposite to this, the scenario seen in Portalegre (11.46%), Santarém (10.91%), and Faro (12.30%) was predictable, since it is identical to that of 2019 in terms of the geography of the vote, with an obvious increase in support for Chega.

All things considered, the dissemination of support of Chega to northern regions which usually vote for center-right PSD and right-wing CDS-PP, and the increase in support in southern districts that often vote for the left-wing PCP and BE or center-left PS, cast doubt on whether Chega will be able to grow indefinitely and what its performance will be in the foreseeable future.

### ***Overview – the electoral geography of Chega in 2019, 2021 and 2022***

After analyzing the geographical distribution of the vote for Chega in the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections, as well as the 2021 Presidential election, it can be stipulated that support for this party is stronger in the south and in the interior of the country. As Marchi (2020) explains, “the best results of Chega are registered in some sparsely populated areas of Alentejo and Algarve, as well as high-density suburbs of Lisbon”. It is also known that Chega performs better in regions where there is a higher proportion of the foreign population, in comparison to the national average (Lusa, 2019). Marchi goes even further as to argue that it is not only a ‘foreign population’ in general. Higher results of Chega might be correlated to the existence of specific minorities such as the Roma community and Asian immigrants (Marchi, 2020). This may explain the success of the party in Lisbon’s peripheries, considering that the city is known for the heterogeneity of its social fabric and the presence of several minorities.

Also, Chega is more popular in regions where the number of registered crimes is marginally lower than the national average (Lusa, 2019) and where there is less

purchasing power (Lusa, 2022). Finally, Chega achieved better results in areas where there is a younger population (Lusa, 2019). Nonetheless, it does not necessarily mean that those who vote for the party are mostly young. And to arrive at such a conclusion without empirical testing is imprudent.

For a thorough understanding of the real growth perspectives of Chega, it might prove advantageous to compare and contrast the geography of the vote for that party with that of other parties. The chosen case-studies are IL and BE.

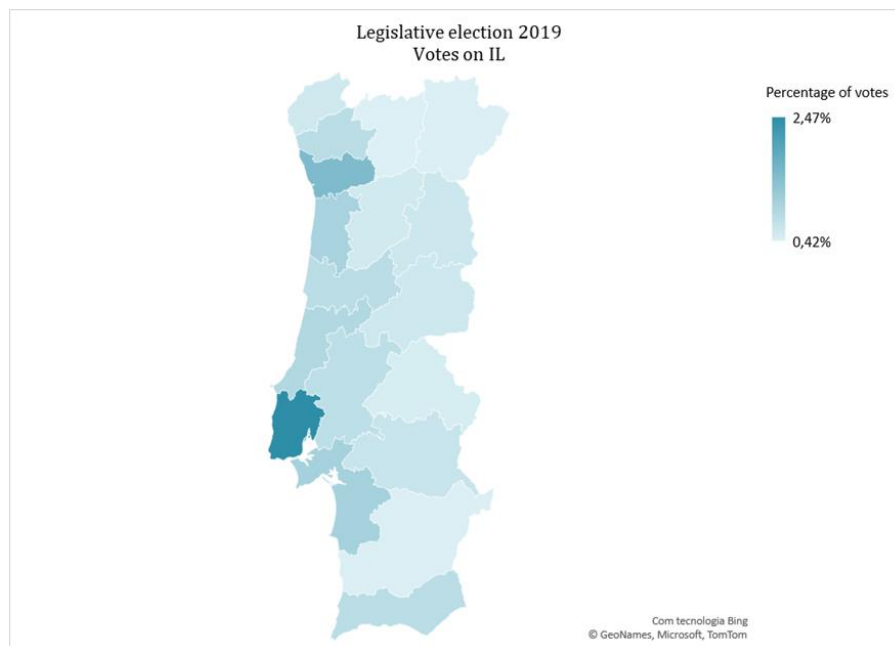
The first was chosen because it is also positioned on the right of the political spectrum, it is a recent party - founded in 2017 - and likewise Chega, it entered the Parliament in 2019 with the election of one MP.

The choice of the latter, a party on the opposite side of the political spectrum, stems from the observation that since its foundation in the late 1990s (Jalali et al., 2021) it managed to achieve the remarkable feat of having widespread support, rooted in a political discourse and rhetoric that appears to resonate with individuals from various regions.

Concerning IL, the party “initially positioned itself as both socially and economically liberal, defending not only free-market policies but also the curtailing of interference in personal affairs” (Jalali et al., 2021). This is a strikingly contrasting ideological position to that of Chega. Indeed, in spite of both being placed on the Right, a comparison between maps shows how the spatial distribution of electoral support of the parties is nothing but diametrically opposed. Where Chega’s map has darker tones, IL does not, and vice-versa. In 2022, both parties achieved better results in terms of percentages of votes and yet the geography of the vote of IL remains almost unchanged. Notoriously, the strongholds of this party are on the coastline. Even so, it is also worth noting that in 2022 the district of Faro demonstrates a new increase in support for IL.

Chega, on the other hand, continues to be more popular in the interior – i.e., in predominantly rural areas - and in the south. The greatest division between the parties is the district of Porto, with Chega failing to conquer votes and IL performing satisfactorily.

**Figure 4. Map of Votes on IL on Legislative Election 2019**



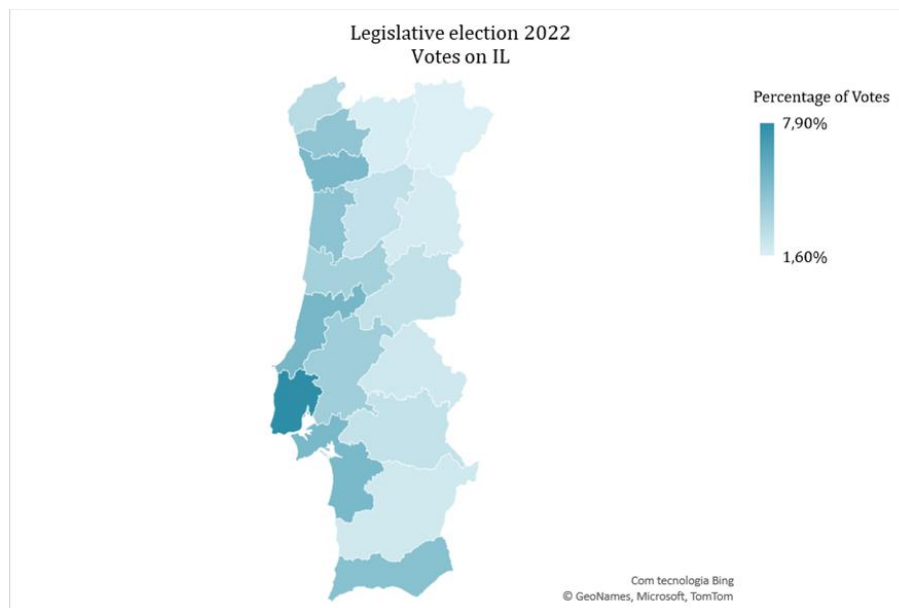
*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

Actually, IL is aligned with the Portuguese tradition of having higher support for the Right in northern regions (Samagaio, 2015). Curiously, one party which used to achieve comfortable results in those places is CDS-PP (Marchi, 2020).

Turning to the district of Lisbon, mostly in the 2019 legislative election but also in 2022, IL is again the oxymoron of Chega. IL finds in metropolitan regions and cities its principal source of support. As mentioned above, the municipalities of Oeiras and Cascais (Francisco, 2019) went to the polling stations to support IL, but they did not do so for Chega. This could indicate that the electorate of the newly born parties is

fundamentally different. Nonetheless, in the 2022 legislative election, besides the municipalities of Oeiras and Cascais, IL had a rise in popularity in Mafra, Montijo, Leiria and Alcochete (Albuquerque et al., 2022).

**Figure 5. Map of Votes on IL on Legislative Election 2022**



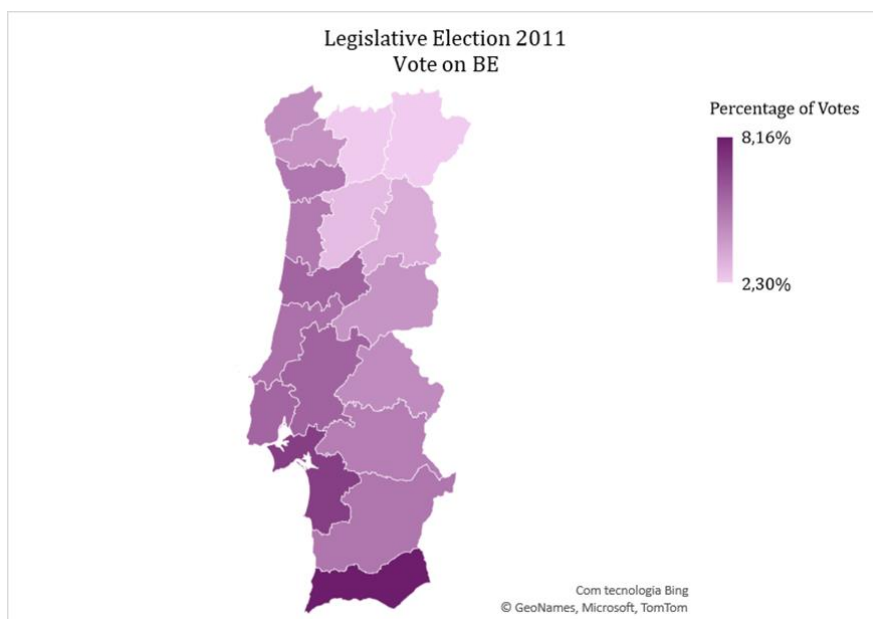
*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

Indeed, when looking at the maps of 2022 of these two parties, one is able to witness how both did considerably better in Lisbon when compared to 2019. Despite that, such observation does not necessarily mean that both parties are competing for the same electorate. It simply means that Lisbon is too big a district and too complex in nature for them to even have to compete in the first place. There are numerous voters within the district with political preferences that are aligned with several parties' ideological positions. In fact, IL and Chega have an identical performance in this district, with the first having 7.90% of the votes and the second having 7.77%.

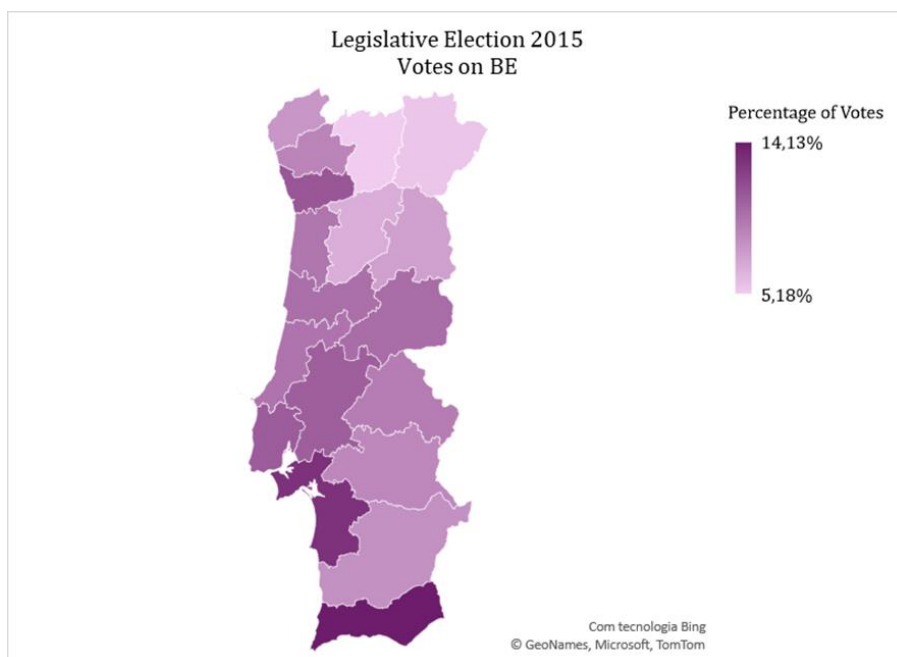
This geography of the vote will unquestionably determine which party – if not both or neither – will grow faster in terms of parliamentary representation. Thus far, it seems that Chega enjoys a comfortable advantage - 7.15% of the votes against the 4.98% of IL - in the run for third political force.

Regarding BE, the party was founded in 1999 “as an alliance of former Maoists, Trotskyites and disillusioned PCP dissidents” (Jalali et al., 2021). The party is unapologetically anti-capitalist and suspicious of Brussels’ political ideas and arrangements. Distancing itself from PS – which oftentimes perceives as being similar to the center-right - BE never adopted the center-left approach to policy of the Socialists, nor strived to moderate its speech. Even so, after little more than 20 years of its initial formation, BE is no longer a party confined to the metropolitan areas and solely appealing to the highly educated intellectuals who live there.

Support for this party is actually peculiar. At first, the party was more popular in Lisbon and Setúbal (Samagaio, 2015), but it rapidly and progressively saw increases in popularity in other urban areas. Nonetheless, and despite the differences that separate those areas from Alentejo and Algarve, BE started to trust those regions to give it decent results (see maps 6,7,8,9). Even though, as a general trend, the party appears to perform better in the south, with the exception of Algarve due to the already-stated electoral volatility. In 2022 the party performed worse in general and experienced losses in terms of support, mostly due to a tactical vote for the socialist party. Nonetheless, and despite this decrease in popularity, the previous geographical distribution of the vote for BE (shown in maps of figures 6,7 and 8) still holds true.

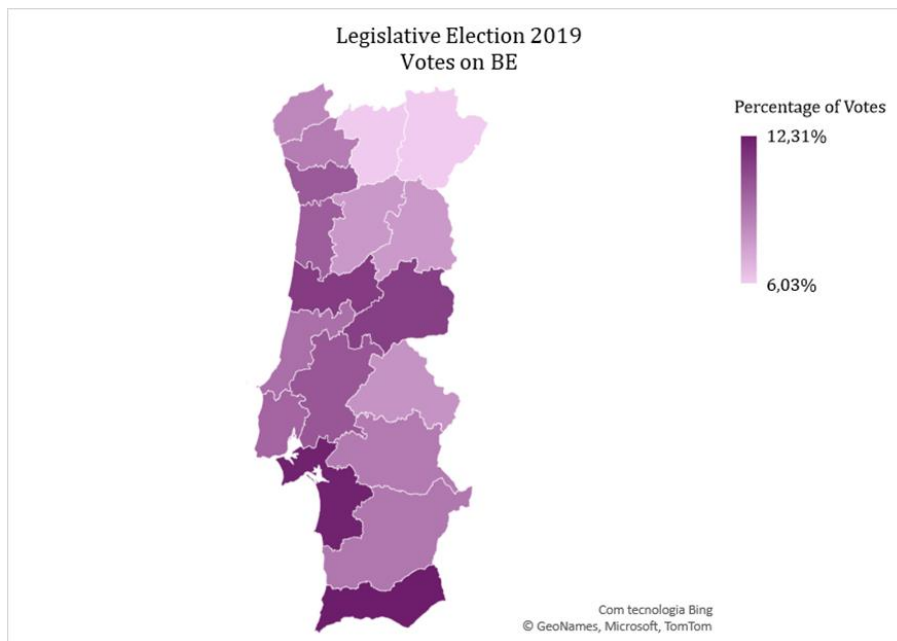
**Figure 6. Map of Votes on BE on Legislative Election 2011**

Source: Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

**Figure 7. Map of Votes on BE on Legislative Election 2015**

Source: Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

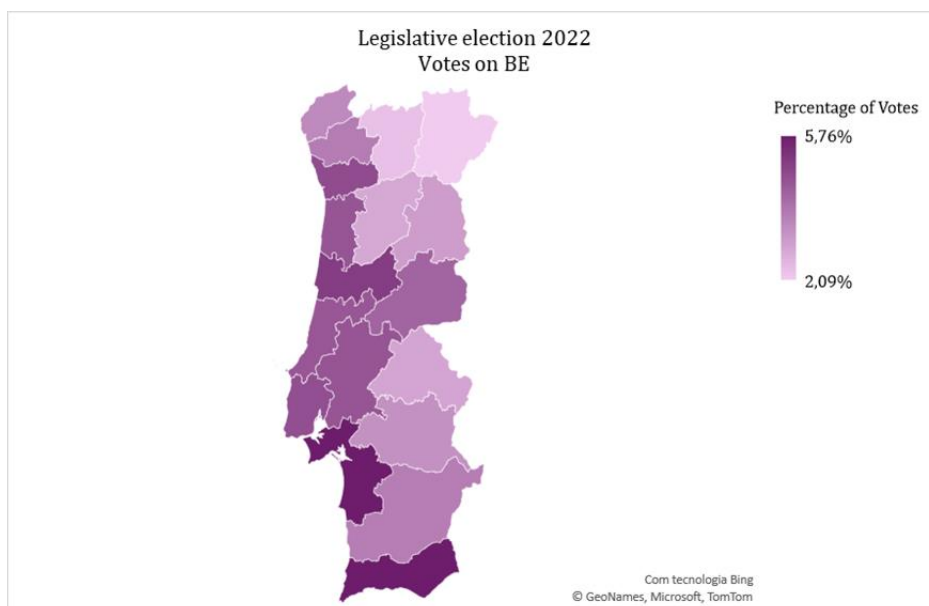
**Figure 8. Map of Votes on BE on Legislative Election 2019**



*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

All things considered, BE is a party whose support and appreciation ceased to be a local trend to start being a national phenomenon as shown in map of Figure 9.

**Figure 9. Map of Votes on BE on Legislative Election 2022**



*Source:* Author's own computation using SGMAI election data

Contrarily, at the time of writing, it seems unlikely that the success of Chega will be, in the foreseeable future, of such widespread character. Even though Chega was the third most voted political party in the 2022 legislative election, the party finds it difficult to appeal to certain regions in the North. Also, it continues to be way more successful in regions of the interior. In fact, the party's ideas appear to be directed to a certain target audience which is neither so large nor so dispersed for it to be the next 2015 and 2019 BE. This is not to say that Chega will never be able to find a subject or matter capable of mobilizing more electorate in the North and on the coastline. Nonetheless, and as authors Lea Heyne and Luca Manucci (2021) contend, for the time being, Chega does not have a "Catalonia independence"-type-of-theme which caters and appeals to a huge mass of the electorate.

### ***What does the Future hold? – Growth Perspectives***

A first indicator that is useful to assess Chega's growth perspectives is that of vote share change. Table 2 exhibits that the average vote share change at the global level is 5.86%. Also, there are more districts with a vote share change higher than this value rather than lower. More specifically, the only districts that register a vote share change below 5.86% are Aveiro, Braga, Coimbra, Lisbon, Porto and Viana do Castelo, with Porto being the district with the lowest vote share change (3.76%). Contrarily, the district which registered the highest vote share change (10.16%) is that of Faro, followed by Santarém (8.88%) and Portalegre (8.73%).

**Table 2. Vote share change between the 2019 and 2022 Legislative elections**

District	Legislative 2019	Legislative 2022	Vote share change 2022-2019 (percentages)
Aveiro	0.74%	5.64%	4.90%
Beja	2.04%	10.27%	8.23%
Braga	0.68%	5.81%	5.13%
Bragança	0.84%	8.55%	7.71%
Castelo Branco	1.27%	8.31%	7.04%
Coimbra	0.90%	6.12%	5.22%
Évora	2.22%	9.15%	6.93%
Faro	2.14%	12.30%	10.16%
Guarda	1.48%	7.95%	6.47%
Leiria	1.49%	8.02%	6.53%
Lisboa	2.00%	7.77%	5.77%
Portalegre	2.73%	11.46%	8.73%
Porto	0.61%	4.37%	3.76%
Santarém	2.03%	10.91%	8.88%
Setúbal	1.93%	9.03%	7.10%
Viana do Castelo	0.70%	6.06%	5.36%
Vila Real	0.79%	7.19%	6.40%
Viseu	0.97%	7.79%	6.82%
<b>Global</b>	<b>1.29%</b>	<b>7.15%</b>	<b>5.86%</b>

Source: SGMAI

Note: Global Results are the results in national and foreign territory. National territory comprises Continental Portugal and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores

With a growth of 5.86% between 2019 and 2022, a period of two years only, Chega went from one representative in Parliament to twelve. Even so, it is unlikely that this growth will be exponential, considering the stable partisan relevance of the parties on the center. Nonetheless, in 2015 BE was the third political force and achieved a global result of 10.19%. Back in 2011, CDS-PP ended in third place with a global result of 11.70%, and in 2009 the party won the same spot with 10.43%.

In 2022, both PSD and PS advocated for a tactical vote that would guarantee stability and governability, and Chega still won 7.15% of the votes. Thus, in an election where the strategic vote does not play a central role, and in the event that the fragmentation on the right continues on its course, it is perhaps reasonable to expect global results of Chega ranging from 10 to a maximum of 11%, similar to CDS-PP. Obviously, and hypothetically speaking, this scenario only holds true if the party manages to maintain its spot as the third political force at the expense of votes from individuals who previously voted on CDS-PP and, to a lesser extent, with votes from former PSD supporters. Nevertheless, support for CDS-PP used to be higher in northern regions, some of the same regions where Chega is not particularly popular.

On the other hand, imagining that the party is mainly capturing the PCP electorate, then when and if this party regains political relevance the percentages of the vote for Chega will likely be smaller. Nonetheless, the 2022 legislative election seems to illustrate that leftist parties BE and PCP mostly lost their electorate to the socialist vote in 2022 and thus mobilizing their voter base again would not interfere with the success of Chega. Also, it seems highly unlikely that the almost 400,000 people that decided to vote for Chega in 2022 will find a suitable alternative to this party in the next election, unless radical changes occur.

Nevertheless, there is another scenario which is actually more unlikely due to the geographical distribution of the vote. This scenario is one where IL becomes the third political force rather than Chega.

All these different possibilities illustrate how assessing the potential of growth of Chega requires evaluating this same potential of other parties. Although the growth potential of Chega is primarily contingent upon the performance of its 12 newly elected representatives in the next four-year period, analyzing the growth perspectives of other parties might also shed light on the likeliness of Chega to secure its title of third political force.

## **2.2. Hypotheses**

The ability to remain the third political force is also related to the two factors analyzed in this dissertation, notably the profile of Chega's voters and voter transference. Regarding the first, it should be noted that the literature (Afonso, 2021; Carvalho, 2022; Dennison & Mendes, 2019; Dinis, 2020; Heyne & Manucci, 2021; Jalali et al., 2021; Lusa, 2019; Magalhães, 2020; Marchi, 2020; Mendes, 2021; Mendes & Dennison, 2021; Reis & António, 2020) already advances some theories on the sociodemographic and socioeconomic profile of Chega voters.

Here, a disagreement needs to be studied regarding gender. While studies agree that Chega's electorate is composed mostly of adults (25-54 according to Reis & António (2020)) with middle levels of education and average incomes, Reis & António (2020) argue that Chega's electorate is mostly male. Yet, Marchi (2020) contends that half of Chega's voters are women. Nonetheless, since the literature before cited points

in the direction of a gender-gap in populist radical-right voting, the hypothesis (1) below elaborated considers this.

As far as voter transference goes, a particularly important finding is the one that shows that support for populist-right candidates comes from a working-class constituency that no longer feels represented by the mainstream left, as evidenced by the literature cited in the former section of this dissertation. Nonetheless, there is also enough evidence pointing that Chega is actually capturing the mainstream right electorate, especially that of PSD (Marchi, 2020) and PAF (Portugal à Frente – Portugal ahead) – the pre-electoral alliance between PSD and CDS-PP (Jalali et al., 2021). Besides, voter transference has thus far mainly been analyzed from an exploratory research perspective (for example, Marchi, 2020) to the best of my knowledge. Hence, studying electorate transference from a descriptive perspective – similar to what Jalali et al. (2021) perform - is important to complement previous findings.

All the literature mentioned thus far throughout this dissertation enabled the drawing of two hypotheses - one related to the socioeconomic profile of Chega voters (H<sub>1</sub>) and one related to voter transference (i.e., previous party choices of current Chega's voters) (H<sub>2</sub>).

**H<sub>1</sub>:** For the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters aged 25-54, that completed high school and have incomes up to 1000 euros, than the electorate as a whole.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega had previously voted on PSD and CDS-PP on the right and PCP on the left.

### **2.3. Methodology**

This section describes the methodology used in this study, including the data sources and analysis.

#### ***Data Sources***

To fulfil the purpose of describing the determinants of the vote for Chega, this dissertation follows a quantitative research approach. The variables are observed and measured for 2019-2022 using election results and polls. The quantitative data was gathered from secondary sources, and it is descriptive. It consists of election results and individual-level data from polls of CESOP.

The reliability and validity of this study mostly depends on the chosen polls. Specifically, on the sampling method, sample size and the questions asked.

Survey data is commonly used to study the determinants of the vote (Norris, 2005; Rama et al., 2021). Yet surveys and polls are not fundamentally different in nature (Bethlehem, 2017) and serve similar research purposes. Indeed, polls have been used since the 1930s to assess the general opinion and are considered a reliable source for such endeavor (Berinsky, 2017). In this particular case, poll data is useful to study the determinants of the vote for Chega. However, the discussion of the results requires special attention as poll data is not exempt from a certain degree of uncertainty (Atkeson & Alvarez, 2018).

The polls used in this study (see Table 3) are exit polls and are not single-question polls. The main reason why exit polls were chosen is due to their large sample sizes, and thus the possibility of gathering a higher number of responses of Chega’s voters when compared to post-election surveys, for example.

CESOP exit polls comprise information about the socioeconomic characteristics of the target population –sex, age, education, and income – as well as information regarding party choices in previous elections. Hence, these polls are particularly useful to evaluate changes in voter profiles and the political preferences of different sociodemographic groups (Bethlehem, 2017). Since the present dissertation focuses on the determinants of the vote for Chega and explores electorate transference, CESOP exit polls are especially suitable. Plus, estimates of exit polls are almost always accurate (Bethlehem, 2017).

**Table 3. Data sources of polls**

Exit Poll	Source
2019 Legislative election	CESOP
2021 Presidential election	CESOP
2022 Legislative election	CESOP

With regards to the target population of the study, exit polls leave out all the non-voters. I will thus be making inferences based on a sample which is only representative of the population that votes, i.e., the target population is people who vote.

Another important feature of exit polls is the low probability of non-response – a common error in the polling exercise. This is linked with another known advantage of these polls, notably high response rates (Bethlehem, 2017). Indeed, the polls used in this study confirm this condition, as shown in Table 4.

The sampling method of exit polls is done in two stages. In other words, there is a two-stage sample selection. First, researchers decide on the voting locations. Afterwards, a sample of voters is chosen (Bethlehem, 2017).

With regards to voting locations, it is common knowledge that most countries simply have too many voting locations and it is not possible to analyze them all. The locations sampled in CESOP polls were not randomly chosen. Contrary to this, in the case of the sample of voters, each participant was randomly selected. Random sampling is a probability sampling method, and it is the best method to estimate with accuracy the characteristics of a given population and to ensure representativity (Bethlehem, 2017).

Other than the sampling method, the sample size is an important part of estimation. A larger sample size enables more precision of the estimation process. With respect to the chosen polls, the sample size of the 2019 and 2022 legislative election polls, as well as the 2021 presidential election poll, is quite large (see Table 4). This is another important advantage of relying on exit polls. As they usually have large sample sizes, it is possible to make inferences with more confidence. In fact, as already stated, the main contribution of this study is the analysis of a large sample of Chega's voters. Contrary to exit polls, most pre-electoral and post-electoral surveys usually have small sample sizes.

**Table 4. Sample size and response rate of polls**

<b>Exit Poll</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
2019 Legislative election	20532	77%
2021 Presidential election	18981	79%
2022 Legislative election	27615	76%

*Source:* ERC

As already mentioned above, estimates of exit polls are almost always accurate (Bethlehem, 2017). This is important to ensure that the findings of this dissertation are reliable and valid. Nevertheless, if one wishes to test the validity and reliability of a given poll, it is possible to compare the projections given by polls with the actual election results (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Actual election results of Chega in 2019 and 2021 and projections of support of Chega and André Ventura**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Global Results</b>	<b>Projection</b>
2019 Legislative	1.29% (67,826 votes)	Min 1% - Max 2%
2021 Presidential	11.90% (496,773 votes)	Min 9% - Max 12%
2022 Legislative	7.18 % (399,510)	Min 5% - Max 8%

*Source:* SGMAI

*Note:* Global Results are the results in national and foreign territory. National territory comprises Continental Portugal and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores.

Considering that the projections always predict with accuracy the election results, it is possible to conclude that the chosen polls are both valid and reliable.

Furthermore, election results are mainly used to complement the information given by polls. A detailed description of data sources of election results is given on Table 6.

**Table 6. Data sources of election results**

<b>Election</b>	<b>Source</b>
2015 Legislative	SGMAI
2019 Legislative	SGMAI
2021 Presidential	SGMAI
2022 Legislative	SGMAI

## *Analysis*

The detailed information on the dependent and independent variables is provided in Appendix B. It is important to note that the age-groups of the variable ‘age’ follow the approach of Reis & António (2020). Data from both election results and polls was processed using Microsoft Excel.

To test the first hypothesis of socioeconomic profile, I analyzed CESOP exit polls for the 2019 and the 2022 legislative election, as well as the 2021 presidential election, and assessed the association of four variables – gender, education, age, and income – with the individual vote for Chega. This was not done by performing correlations, but rather by systematically crossing variables. For example, by crossing the answer “Chega” with the answer to the question “What is your age?”. Afterwards, to elaborate a profile of the typical Chega voter, I assessed and compared the distribution of votes (in percentages) between each category contained in each of the four variables. To illustrate this with an example, consider that from those who answered “Chega”, 60% answered “male” in the question “Sex” and 40% answered “female” to the same question. These calculations were done using Pivot Tables.

Moreover, and as hypothesis 1 presupposes a comparison between the electorate as a whole, I did the same Pivot Tables for the variables under study – gender, education, age, and income – for the years 2019, 2021, and 2022. The comparison between the electorate of Chega and the general electorate is crucial to test hypothesis one.

To test the second hypothesis, I used the same CESOP exit polls and combined them with election results from SGMAI. On a first stage I compared and contrasted the results of the 2015, 2019 and 2022 legislative elections, as it was with the 2019 legislative election that Chega won a seat in the Portuguese parliament. I plotted the

election results using Microsoft Excel and elaborated maps where ‘district’ is the unit of analysis. By looking at these, it was easier to cross results and evaluate where Chega is most popular and what party used to be popular in those same places before.

Nevertheless, this analysis of electoral geography only allowed for modest conclusions, considering that a decrease in support for a certain party does not necessarily equal to an increase in support for Chega. Other parties might have lost support because voters chose to abstain, for example. Thus, I complemented the study of election results with CESOP exit poll data. Specifically, I crossed the answers to questions such as “In the last legislative elections, in October 2015, in which party did you vote?” with those who answered “Chega” in any of the chosen polls. This made it possible to assess what is the principal source of support of Chega in terms of the electorate’s previous party choices.

Moreover, this dissertation performs an internal comparison between Chega and four other Portuguese parties – PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, and IL. The first three were chosen based on hypothesis 2 of voter transference, whereas IL was chosen for being the other newly formed party on the right. The objective of this analysis is to draw a profile of voters of those four parties using three of the four determinants of hypothesis 1 – gender, education, and age. Income is excluded because information on this variable is only available for the presidential election 2021 and the legislative election 2022. In this case, the elections analyzed for the purpose of drawing the profile of those parties are solely the legislative elections (2019 and 2022), considering that the argument of interchangeability between the presidential and legislative elections does not apply to PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, or IL. These parties are not particularly one-person parties as is the case of Chega, thus the vote for specific candidates in the 2021 presidential election is

not analyzed. This vote is primarily cast for a candidate regardless of the party that endorses its candidacy.

This comparison between profiles is useful to thoroughly understand patterns of political competition. The methodology employed to design those profiles is exactly the same one employed in the case of Chega, and so are the data sources (CESOP exit polls). Proportions are also compared to those of the electorate as a whole.

Additionally, this dissertation engages in a theoretical comparison between the voters of Chega in Portugal and the voters of populist radical-right parties in Spain, Italy, and France.

## **2.4. Results**

This section presents the results of this dissertation. All the hypotheses were tested using Pivot Tables of Microsoft Excel. The individual vote for Chega in the legislative elections of 2019 and 2022, as well as the vote for André Ventura in the presidential election of 2021, is treated as the dependent variable. It is important to be aware of the fact that even though in 2021 the choice is not precisely on Chega, but rather on André Ventura as an individual candidate, the results are comparable since Chega is considered a one-person party.

The independent variables analyzed include gender, age, education, and income (for which that is only data available in 2021 and 2022). Also, these include party choices in other elections (2015, 2019, 2021).

This section is divided into two – initially, the assessment of the first hypothesis (and corresponding sub-hypotheses) of the socioeconomic profile is displayed. Subsequently, an analysis of the results concerning the second

hypothesis (and corresponding sub-hypotheses) relating to voter transference is presented. The hypotheses are sub-divided into four and nine, respectively.

The analysis is conducted using CESOP exit polls for 2019, 2021, 2022. Finally, this section displays an internal comparison between Chega and four other Portuguese parties – PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, and IL.

### *Testing the first hypothesis – the socioeconomic profile*

**Hypothesis 1.1.** Hypothesis 1.1 relates to the gender gap in radical right voting:

**H<sub>1.1</sub>:** For the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters than the electorate as a whole.

**Table 7. Vote for Chega by gender, in three elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Presidential 2021		Legislative 2022	
	Total	Chega	Total	Chega	Total	Chega
Sample	12237	202	11872	1260	13472	937
Gender						
Men	46%	59%	45%	66%	47%	66%
Women	54%	41%	55%	34%	53%	34%

*Source:* CESOP polls

For Chega's electorate, the gender gap shows an increasing trend from 2019 to 2021, with 66% of André Ventura's voters being men compared to the previous 59% in the legislative elections of 2019. Yet this gender gap did not increase substantially in the following year (2022) but remained stable (at 66%). In the case of the electorate as a whole, both the percentage of men and women also remained fairly stable between 2019 and 2022. However, the percentage of women is slightly greater than that of men in all three years, something that does not happen in the case of Chega's electorate. Concretely, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters than the electorate as a whole in 2019, 2021 and 2022 (59% compared to 46%; 66% compared to 45%; 66% compared to 47%, respectively). Hypothesis 1.1. is therefore not rejected. Men are overrepresented in Chega' electorate.

**Hypothesis 1.2.** Hypothesis 1.2 relates to age in radical right voting:

**H<sub>1.2</sub>:** For the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters aged 25-54 than the electorate as a whole.

Regarding the variable age, Chega's electorate has a higher percentage of individuals aged 25-54, especially in the 2019 legislative election (78%) and less so in the 2021 presidential election (67%) and in the 2022 legislative election (69%).

**Table 8. Vote for Chega by age, in three elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Presidential 2021		Legislative 2022	
	Total	Chega	Total	Chega	Total	Chega
Sample	12237	202	11872	1260	13472	937
Age						
18 – 24 years	9%	6%	14%	9%	12%	8%
25 – 54 years	56%	78%	59%	67%	58%	69%
> 54 years	36%	16%	26%	24%	30%	23%

*Source:* CESOP polls

In all three years assessed, individuals aged 25-54 account for more than half of Chega's voters. Conversely, younger people (aged 18-24) are consistently underrepresented in the electorate in all three elections (6% in 2019, 9% in 2021, and 8% in 2022). The electorate as a whole follows the same pattern, having a greater percentage of voters aged 25-54 in all three years, followed by those aged >54, and finally those aged 18-24. However, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of individuals aged 25-54 than the electorate as a whole in 2019, 2021, 2022 (78% compared to 56%; 67% compared to 59%; 69% compared to 58%, precisely). Hypothesis 1.2 is thus not rejected. Individuals aged 25 – 54 are overrepresented amongst Chega's supporters in all three elections.

**Hypothesis 1.3.** Hypothesis 1.3 relates to education in radical right voting:

**H<sub>1.3</sub>:** For the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters that completed high school than the electorate as a whole.

**Table 9. Vote for Chega by education, in three elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Presidential 2021		Legislative 2022	
	Total	Chega	Total	Chega	Total	Chega
Sample	12065	200	11619	1229	13096	902
Education						
Did not complete high school	16%	11%	11%	9%	11%	13%
Completed high school	40%	50%	40%	48%	40%	53%
Completed higher education	44%	39%	49%	42%	49%	34%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Regarding education, in the 2019 legislative election, Chega's electorate comprised precisely 50% individuals who completed high school.

This number decreased slightly (to 48%) in the 2021 presidential election. In the 2022 legislative election, the number increased slightly compared to that of 2019, notably 53%. Interestingly, those who did not complete high school are also the ones less likely to be amongst Chega's electorate. In 2019, from this group of individuals, only

11% could be found amongst Chega's voters, with the number marginally increasing in 2022 (13%). This percentage is even smaller in the case of the vote in the presidential election of 2021, a meager 9%. Contrary to the case of Chega's electorate, for the electorate as a whole the percentage of those who completed higher education is slightly greater than the percentage of those who completed high school, in all three years. Those who did not complete high school are also the ones less represented.

Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters that completed high school than the electorate as a whole in 2019, 2021, and 2022 (50% compared to 40%; 48% compared to 40%; 53% compared to 40%, respectively). Therefore, hypothesis 1.3 is not rejected. Individuals who completed high school are overrepresented in the electorate of Chega.

**Hypothesis 1.4.** Hypothesis 1.4 relates to income in radical right voting:

**H<sub>1.4</sub>:** For the 2022 legislative election and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters that have incomes up to 1000 euros than the electorate as a whole.

Regarding income, Chega's voters are mostly individuals with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros (39% both in the 2021 presidential election and the 2022 legislative election). Nonetheless, there is also a considerable percentage of individuals with incomes up to 1000 euros in Chega's electorate (concretely, 25% in the 2021 presidential election, and 32% in the 2022 legislative election).

Opposite to this, individuals on the extremes of the income ladder (both with no income or with incomes above 5000 euros) are consistently underrepresented amidst Chega's electorate in both elections. Nonetheless, for the electorate as a whole, this pattern repeats itself. Concretely, there is a greater percentage of individuals with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros, followed by those with incomes up to 1000 euros.

Chega's electorate does not have a greater proportion of individuals with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros than the electorate as whole in 2021 and 2022 (39% compared to 38%; 39% compared to 40%, precisely). Thus, hypothesis 1.4 is rejected.

**Table 10. Vote for Chega by income, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Presidential 2021		Legislative 2022	
	Total	Chega	Total	Chega
Sample	11099	1199	12716	887
Income				
No income	5%	5%	4%	3%
Up to 1000 euros	24%	25%	28%	32%
Between 1001 and 2500 euros	38%	39%	40%	39%
Between 2501 and 3500 euros	12%	11%	12%	11%
Between 3501 and 5000 euros	6%	7%	6%	5%
Above 5000 euros	4%	5%	3%	4%
Doesn't know/doesn't answer	10%	8%	7%	6%

Source: CESOP polls

### ***Testing the second hypothesis – voter transference***

Regarding voter transference, one main hypothesis - comprising two main theories - is tested, notably that the most significant part of those voting for Chega used to vote for mainstream right parties, on the one hand, and on the traditional left, on the other. This hypothesis is therefore subdivided so that both the vote for the mainstream right and on the traditional left is thoroughly assessed. This hypothesis is moreover divided per year (2019, 2021, 2022) as displayed.

**Hypothesis 2.1., 2.2. and 2.3.** Hypotheses 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 relate to the 2019 legislative election:

**H2.1:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2019 had previously voted on PSD.

**H2.2:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2019 had previously voted on CDS-PP.

**H2.3:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2019 had previously voted on PCP.

Looking at Table 11, those voting on Chega reported (at 28%) having voted on the coalition PSD/CDS-PP in the 2015 legislative election. However, another important group of individuals voting on Chega in the 2019 legislative election reported not having voted in the 2015 legislative election (22%). The third most represented group of voters voting on Chega in 2019 are the ones who do not remember for which party they voted in 2015 (15%). Curiously, a significant

percentage (13%) of those who voted on Chega in 2019 had previously voted on PS in the 2015 legislative election. Contrarily, an almost negligible percentage (3%) of those voting on Chega in 2019 had previously voted on PCP in 2015. For this reason, hypothesis 2.3 is rejected. However, hypothesis 2.1 is not rejected and neither is hypothesis 2.2, as 28% concerns the mainstream right (PSD and CDS-PP).

**Table 11. 2015 party choices of 2019 Chega's voters**

<b>Legislative 2019</b>	
Sample	202
Vote 2015 legislative	
Did not vote	22%
PSD / CDS-PP	28%
PS	13%
BE	5%
CDU (PCP-PEV)	3%
PAN	2%
Other party	9%
Does not remember	15%
Does not reply	0%
Voted blank	1%
Voted null	0%

*Note:* PSD/CDS-PP is the coalition of PSD and CDS-PP respectively; CDU is the Unitarian Democratic Coalition.  
*Source:* CESOP polls

**Hypothesis 2.4., 2.5 and 2.6.** Hypotheses 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 relate to the 2021 presidential election. It is important to note that even though questions on CESOP exit polls ask specifically for the vote for André Ventura, this vote is treated as meaning the same as a vote for Chega, since Chega is considered a one-person party.

**H2.4:** The most significant blocs of voters on André Ventura in 2021 had previously voted on PSD.

**H2.5:** The most significant blocs of voters on André Ventura in 2021 had previously voted on CDS-PP.

**H2.6:** The most significant blocs of voters on André Ventura in 2021 had previously voted on PCP.

Turning to Table 12, those voting on André Ventura in the 2021 presidential election had previously voted on PPD/PSD (36%), on Chega (16%), and did not vote (13%) in the 2019 legislative election. With 36%, hypothesis 2.4. is not rejected. However, the percentage of those voting on André Ventura in the 2021 presidential election that formerly supported CDS-PP is not that significant (8%). Thus, hypothesis 2.5 is rejected. The same happens with hypothesis 2.6 – i.e., rejected – considering that the percentage of those who voted for PCP in the 2019 legislative election is 2%. Again, and interestingly, the percentage of those who used to vote for PS is not that negligible (12%). Barely any of the previous voters of smaller parties and less traditional parties - especially those that fall under the category of the

progressive leftist parties (BE, *Livre*) but also the new liberal right (IL) - voted on André Ventura.

**Table 12. 2019 party choices of 2021 André Ventura's voters**

<b>Presidential 2021</b>	
Sample	1193
Vote 2019 legislative	
Did not vote	13%
PPD/PSD	36%
CDS-PP	8%
CH	16%
IL	2%
PS	12%
BE	2%
CDU (PCP-PEV)	2%
PAN	2%
L	1%
Other party	1%
Voted blank/null	3%
Voted but does not remember which party	4%

*Source:* CESOP polls

**Hypothesis 2.7., 2.8. and 2.9.** Hypotheses 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 relate to the 2022 legislative election:

**H<sub>2.7</sub>:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2022 had previously voted on PSD.

**H<sub>2.8</sub>:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2022 had previously voted on CDS-PP.

**H<sub>2.9</sub>:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega in 2022 had previously voted on PCP.

Looking at Table 13, in the 2022 legislative election the trends displayed in the 2019 legislative election do not repeat themselves. In 2022, according to the responses given, the majority of those voting on Chega had previously (legislative election 2019) voted on this party (42%). This result is followed by that of 16%, corresponding to the percentage of those who did not vote in 2019 and chose to vote for Chega in 2022. The third most represented group amongst Chega's electorate in 2022 is the individuals who voted on PPD/PSD in 2019 (14%). Interestingly, looking at Table 14, those voting on Chega in 2022 had mostly voted on André Ventura in the 2021 presidential election (42%) but also, at a considerable percentage - albeit smaller than the former (34%) - on Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa (a candidate affiliated with PSD whose candidacy was backed by PS in that year). Hypothesis 2.7 is therefore rejected. Also, the percentage of those who previously (2019) voted on CDS-PP is almost insignificant (2%). Hypothesis 2.8 is also rejected.

Finally, regarding PCP, only 1% of those who voted on this party in 2019 voted on Chega in 2022. And not a single one of those voting on Chega in 2022 voted on João Ferreira – the candidate affiliated with PCP - in the 2021 presidential election. Therefore, hypothesis 2.9. is rejected. Again, former voters of small or non-traditional progressive leftist parties (BE, *Livre*) and former voters of the new liberal right (IL) barely vote for Chega.

**Table 13. 2019 party choices of 2022 Chega’s voters**

<b>Legislative 2022</b>	
Sample	897
Vote 2019 legislative	
Did not vote	16%
PPD/PSD	14%
CDS-PP	2%
CH	42%
IL	1%
PS	10%
BE	2%
CDU (PCP-PEV)	1%
PAN	1%
L	0%
Other party	0%
Voted blank/null	4%
Voted but does not remember which party	4%

**Table 14. 2021 party choices of 2022 Chega's voters**

<b>Legislative 2022</b>	
Sample	893
Vote 2021 presidential	
Did not vote	16%
Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa	34%
Ana Gomes	1%
André Ventura	42%
João Ferreira	0%
Marisa Matias	0%
Tiago Mayan Gonçalves	0%
Vitorino Silva	0%
Voted blank/null	2%
Voted but does not remember which candidate	3%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Overall, those voting on Chega come, to a substantial extent, from the mainstream right, especially PSD, but also from abstention. In the elections after the 2019 legislative, to a considerable degree, those voting on Chega previously voted on the same party.

### *Voter profiles of PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, IL.*

Knowing the results on voter transference, it is useful to design the profile of PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, and IL voters, for three determinants – gender, age, and education – using CESOP exit polls. This is done for the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections.

Starting with PSD, with regards to the variable gender, the gender gap of PSD voters did not change from 2019 to 2022, with it being barely nonexistent. In fact, the percentage of women (52%) is only slightly higher than that of men. Nonetheless, when compared to the electorate as a whole, PSD is almost equal to that both in the percentage of men and women. Yet, PSD has a slightly almost negligible higher percentage of men than the electorate as a whole (48% in both years compared to 46% in 2019 and 47% in 2022, respectively).

**Table 15. Vote for PSD by gender, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	PSD	Total	PSD
Sample	12237	3178	13472	3764
Gender				
Men	46%	48%	47%	48%
Women	54%	52%	53%	52%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Regarding age, the proportion of voters aged 25-54 in the PSD electorate, as given by the percentages for 2019 (56%) and 2022 (59%), is the highest. Younger voters (18-24 years) make up the lower percentage of PSD electorate, even though this percentage slightly increased from 6% in 2019 to 11% in 2022. At the same time the

percentage of younger voters amongst the PSD electorate increased, however, the proportion of older voters among PSD voters somewhat decreased (from 38% in 2019 to 30% in 2022). This is nonetheless equal to the trends seen in the electorate as a whole.

**Table 16. Vote for PSD by age, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	PSD	Total	PSD
Sample	12237	3178	13472	3764
Age				
18 – 24 years	9%	6%	12%	11%
25 – 54 years	56%	56%	58%	59%
> 54 years	36%	38%	30%	30%

*Source:* CESOP polls

With respect to education, PSD's electorate comprises a greater proportion of individuals who completed higher education (48% in 2019; 55% in 2022). The percentage of those who completed high school, however, is also considerable for the years under analysis (37% in both 2019 and 2022). On the other hand, the PSD's electorate does not comprise a significant proportion of individuals who did not complete high school, with the percentage slightly diminishing from 2019 (15%) to 2022 (8%). Once more, the distribution of percentages of PSD's electorate is very similar to that of the electorate as a whole.

**Table 17. Vote for PSD by education, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	PSD	Total	PSD
Sample	12065	3137	13096	3658
Education				
Did not complete high school	16%	15%	11%	8%
Completed high school	40%	37%	40%	37%
Completed higher education	44%	48%	49%	55%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Now turning to IL, and regarding gender, the proportion of male voters is the highest for the two elections in focus (60% in 2019 and 58% in 2022). For this party, a considerable gender gap exists as evidenced when comparing with data for the electorate as a whole. As a matter of fact, IL has a greater share of male voters than the electorate in general (46% in 2019 and 47% in 2022). Even so, while the percentage of the male electorate decreased slightly from 2019 to 2022, the percentage of female voters increased slightly (from 40% in 2019 to 42% in 2022). Nevertheless, it is still lower than that of the electorate as a whole.

**Table 18. Vote for IL by gender, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	IL	Total	IL
Sample	12237	237	13472	1148
Gender				
Men	46%	60%	47%	58%
Women	54%	40%	53%	42%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Regarding age, what stands out is the fact that IL voters are not particularly old, considering that the percentage of individuals aged > 54 years is low both in 2019 (10%) and in 2022 (11%), whilst this same percentage for the electorate as a whole is 36% (2019) and 30% (2022). IL has the lowest proportion of individuals in this age group, contradicting the trend of the electorate in general (lowest proportion of individuals aged 18-24). Conversely, individuals aged 25-54 comprise more than half of the IL electorate both in 2019 (68%) and in 2022 (67%) and are the vast majority of voters. The proportion of individuals aged 25-54 in IL's electorate is actually greater than that of the electorate as a whole (56% in 2019, 58% in 2022). Nonetheless, despite the overrepresentation of individuals aged 25-54, it is worth noting that IL performs better with younger voters aged 18-24 years (22% in 2019 and 2022) – when compared to the electorate as a whole (9% in 2019; 12% in 2022).

**Table 19. Vote for IL by age, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	IL	Total	IL
Sample	12237	237	13472	1148
Age				
18 – 24 years	9%	22%	12%	22%
25 – 54 years	56%	68%	58%	67%
> 54 years	36%	10%	30%	11%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Concerning education, voters who completed higher education are overrepresented among the IL electorate in both 2019 (70%) and 2022 (65%), when compared to the electorate as a whole (44% in 2019; 49% in 2022). On the contrary, those who did not complete high school make up a meager percentage of IL voters in the two years (5% in 2019; 3% in 2022). In fact, IL has a smaller share of these voters than the electorate as a whole (16% in 2019; 11% in 2022). It is interesting to note, however, that both the percentage of those who did not complete high school and the percentage of those who completed higher education slightly decreased, whilst the percentage of the IL electorate who completed high school increased to some extent (from 25% in 2019 to 32% in 2022). In the case of the electorate as a whole, that percentage remained steady (at 40%, for both 2019 and 2022).

**Table 20. Vote for IL by education, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	IL	Total	IL
Sample	12065	237	13096	1148
Education				
Did not complete highschool	16%	5%	11%	3%
Completed high school	40%	25%	40%	32%
Completed higher education	44%	70%	49%	65%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Concerning CDS-PP, and on gender, the CDS-PP electorate is marginally more female as shown by the percentage of women amongst the voters (57% in 2019 and 55% in 2022). This percentage is very similar to that of the electorate as a whole (54% in 2019; 53% in 2022). In essence, the gender gap is barely inexistent, with the difference between men and women in the CDS-PP electorate never exceeding 10 percentage points (pp) in the years under analysis, as is the case for the electorate in general.

**Table 21. Vote for CDS by gender, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDS	Total	CDS
Sample	12237	447	13472	209
Gender				
Men	46%	43%	47%	45%
Women	54%	57%	53%	55%

*Source:* CESOP polls

With respect to age, CDS-PP's electorate has a greater share of individuals aged 25-54 (precisely 60% in 2019; 59% in 2022). This is only slightly higher than the share for the electorate as a whole (56% in 2019; 58% in 2022). This group of individuals is followed by those aged > 54 years, also considerably represented among CDS-PP voters, with a percentage of 31% in 2019 and a marginally lower one in 2022 (29%). For the electorate as a whole, this share is slightly higher (36% in 2019; 30% in 2022). Finally, CDS-PP electorate is not particularly young, as the percentage of younger voters (aged 18-24 years) is considerably low albeit slightly higher in 2022 (12%; the same percentage as the electorate as a whole).

**Table 22. Vote for CDS by age, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDS	Total	CDS
Sample	12237	447	13472	209
Age				
18 – 24 years	9%	9%	12%	12%
25 – 54 years	56%	60%	58%	59%
> 54 years	36%	31%	30%	29%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Concerning education, CDS-PP's electorate has a considerable share of highly educated voters (50% in 2019; 51% in 2022). This is marginally higher than that of the electorate as whole (44% in 2019; 49% in 2022). Even so, those who completed high school make up a significant part of this electorate as well, with percentages far from negligible (36% in 2019 and a somewhat higher value of 39% in 2022). In the case of the electorate as a whole, those percentages are slightly higher (40% in both 2019 and 2022). Conversely, those who did not complete high school are consistently underrepresented in this electorate, with percentages exhibiting a decreasing trend (from 14% in 2019 to 10% in 2022). This is marginally lower than the electorate as a whole (16% in 2019; 11% in 2022).

**Table 23. Vote for CDS by education, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDS	Total	CDS
Sample	12065	445	13096	203
Education				
Did not complete highschool	16%	14%	11%	10%
Completed high school	40%	36%	40%	39%
Completed higher education	44%	50%	49%	51%

Source: CESOP polls

Finally, let us turn to PCP. From now on, PCP and CDU (*Coligação Democrática Unitária* - United Democratic Coalition) are used interchangeably, as the election data comprise CDU in particular. CDU is a coalition of PCP and PEV (*Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes"* - Ecologist Party "The Greens"). Yet the percentage of votes on PEV is negligible. On gender, the percentage of male CDU voters in both years (54% in 2019; 52% in 2022) is above that of women (46% in 2019; 48% in 2022), with this difference decreasing from 2019 to 2022. Interestingly, CDU electorate has a greater proportion of men than the electorate as a whole (46% of men in 2019; 47% in 2022).

**Table 24. Vote for CDU by gender, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDU	Total	CDU
Sample	12237	850	13472	568
Gender				
Men	46%	54%	47%	52%
Women	54%	46%	53%	48%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Concerning age, the majority of CDU voters are aged 25-54 (55% in 2019 and 52% in 2022), with almost no change in this percentage. This is very similar to, albeit marginally lower than, the trend seen in the electorate as a whole (56% in 2019; 58% in 2022). Nonetheless, individuals aged > 54 are also represented to a large extent amongst the CDU electorate both in 2019 (39%) and in 2022 (36%), with this percentage only marginally decreasing. Only in 2022 is the proportion of individuals aged > 54 higher than the electorate as a whole (30%). This is in contrast with younger voters (aged 18-24), who only make up 6% and 12% of CDU voters in 2019 and 2022, respectively - with this percentage being similar to that of the electorate as a whole (9% in 2019; 12% in 2022). However, it is interesting to note that this percentage doubled between the two elections.

**Table 25. Vote for CDU by age, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDU	Total	CDU
Sample	12237	850	13472	568
Age				
18 – 24 years	9%	6%	12%	12%
25 – 54 years	56%	55%	58%	52%
> 54 years	36%	39%	30%	36%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Regarding education, there is no straightforward majority of educational groups within the CDU electorate. The individuals who completed high school and those who completed higher education are almost evenly represented amongst CDU voters. In 2019, those who completed high school comprised 43% of the CDU electorate (compared to 40% of the electorate as a whole), while those who completed higher education comprised 40% (compared to 44% of the electorate as a whole). In 2022, the first made up 40% (compared to 40% of the electorate as a whole) whilst the second 46% of CDU voters (compared to 49% of the electorate as a whole). So, the percentage of those who completed high school marginally decreased at the same time the percentage of those who completed higher education somewhat increased, but the results are nonetheless very similar. In comparison with the electorate as a whole, CDU's electorate has only a somewhat lower proportion of individuals who completed higher education. Individuals who did not complete high school are underrepresented

both in 2019 (17%) and 2022 (14%), with the share of these individuals being slightly higher than that of the electorate as a whole (16% in 2019; 11% in 2022).

**Table 26. Vote for CDU by education, in two elections, compared to the electorate as a whole**

	Legislative 2019		Legislative 2022	
	Total	CDU	Total	CDU
Sample	12065	841	13096	568
Education				
Did not complete high school	16%	17%	11%	14%
Completed high school	40%	43%	40%	40%
Completed higher education	44%	40%	49%	46%

*Source:* CESOP polls

Drawing from the results presented in this section, the next section delves deeper into a discussion of its meaning and implications, as well as the conclusions that can be formulated.

## 2.5. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

This section is a discussion of the findings. It starts by interpreting the results, as well as highlighting their importance. Furthermore, limitations and recommendations for future research are provided. Finally, concluding remarks are presented.

The present dissertation aimed to answer two research questions, notably “What is the socioeconomic profile of Chega’s voters?” and “What is the profile of Chega’s voters in terms of previous party choices?”. For this purpose, two main hypotheses were formulated, namely:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** For the 2019 and 2022 legislative elections and the 2021 presidential election, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters aged 25-54, that completed high school and have incomes up to 1000 euros, than the electorate as a whole.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** The most significant blocs of voters on Chega had previously voted on PSD and CDS-PP on the right and PCP on the left.

This study thus sought to uncover *who* the Chega voters are, rather than answering *why* they vote the way they do. This discussion is therefore descriptive in character, as opposed to experimental. It answers the ‘who’ – not the ‘why’. In essence, it focuses on elucidating to the reader the profile of Chega’s voters so as to fulfill the main goals of this investigation.

The results of this dissertation are important considering that, to the best of my knowledge, few studies have been conducted thus far regarding the previous party choice of current Chega voters and, to a lesser extent, their socioeconomic profile (Afonso, 2021; Carvalho, 2022; Dennison & Mendes, 2019; Heyne & Manucci, 2021; Jalali et al., 2021; Mendes, 2021; Mendes & Dennison, 2021). None of these studies has made use of exit polls. The main contribution of this study therefore stems from the use of such polls, which enable the analysis of a large sample of the electorate of Chega not yet possible in any other study.

Concerning the first research question, the findings suggest that Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of male voters aged 25-54 who completed high school when compared to the electorate as a whole. Yet, Chega's electorate does not have a greater proportion of voters with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros than the electorate as a whole.

Regarding the second research question, there is evidence that those voting on Chega had previously voted on the mainstream right (PSD) but also, to a lesser extent, did not vote at all. Therefore, according to the results, Chega does not seem to be competing with the traditional left for its core constituency, nor with the progressive left and the new liberal right.

Let us now turn to the concrete variables analyzed on the socioeconomic profile. Firstly, results regarding gender are in line with previous literature, and further reiterate that the radical right voter base is gender-biased (Betz, 1990). The findings of this dissertation thus contradict to some extent those cited in Marchi (2020), who argued that 50% of Chega's supporters are women. In fact, as is the case with numerous other populist radical right parties, men are overrepresented in Chega's electorate when compared to the electorate as a whole. The difference between the proportion of men in

Chega's electorate and that of the electorate as a whole is considerable (13pp in 2019, 21pp in 2021, 19pp in 2022). Also considerable is the difference between men and women within Chega's electorate (18pp in 2019, 32pp in 2021 and 2022). Thus, in the case of Chega, it does not seem that the gender gap is overemphasized (Spierings & Zaslove, 2015).

Concerning the discussion about the narrowing of this gap, it is not straightforward to predict whether it will follow such a trend or even disappear in the foreseeable future. To arrive at such a conclusion, future studies should monitor the gender profile of Chega's voters over the years while comparing it to that of the electorate as a whole.

On age, the findings do not seem to corroborate the literature stating that young voters are overrepresented (Lubbers et al., 2002). Chega's electorate has a smaller proportion of voters aged 18-24 than the electorate as a whole. Yet, the results do not seem corroborate the other, opposite stream of literature, presenting older voters as the most likely to vote for the radical right (Norris, 2005). Again, Chega's electorate has a smaller proportion of voters aged > 54 than the electorate as a whole. Actually, Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters aged 25-54 than the electorate as a whole.

Turning to education, the findings of this dissertation seem to contradict the famous thesis asserting that low educated individuals disproportionately support the radical right (Lubbers et al., 2002) - or at least more so than those who finished high school or hold college degrees. The results may be more in line with arguments stating that individuals with middle school levels of education (Arzheimer & Carter, 2006) are actually the ones supporting radical right parties. Nonetheless, some caution is necessary when distinguishing age from education, as in Portugal education and age are highly correlated. That is, older people are usually the ones with lowest educational

attainment. With this in mind, this dissertation finds that Chega's electorate has a greater proportion of voters who completed high school when compared to the electorate as a whole.

Finally, in discussions around class, it is important to first acknowledge that there is no data concerning class as a function of occupation in CESOP exit polls. Thus, this dissertation can solely use income as a proxy for class. However, there is an agreement regarding the fact that class as a mere function of income cannot offer a satisfactory picture of current societal divisions and class boundaries.

Bearing this in mind, one solution has been to describe class in relation to professional occupations. The advantage of proceeding as such is that occupations can be interpreted not only in relation to income but also to other dimensions useful to attribute meaning to class, such as education. In fact, back in 1997, Estanque – using the theoretical model of Erik Olin Wright - had already asserted that the working-class in Portugal comprised the industrial worker with no qualifications, the precariat, those with low levels of formal instruction, and those who are not in a position of authority within the Economy (Estanque, 1997).

Actually, Portuguese literature does not appear to have abandoned this way of looking at class (Carvalho, 2011; Godoy, 2008; Nunes, 2008). However, the lens of analysis has been subsequently updated as evidenced by preferences to employ the ACM typology, developed by Almeida, Costa, and Machado (Machado et al., 2003), as opposed to the Wright typology.

Put simply, the ACM typology defines class as a function of socio professional characteristics. Hence, rather than the traditional division between upper-class, middle-class, and working-class, its more extensive model comprehends seven class categories (at individual level) applied to Portuguese reality. Such categories include (1)

executives, directors, and liberal professionals; (2) technical professionals and framing professionals; (3) self-employed workers; (4) independent farmers, (5) executing employees; (6) industrial workers; and finally (7) agricultural wage earners. Other formulation of the ACM indicator aggregates the origins of family class into five categories only (Machado et al., 2003).

Even though none of these categories is *explicitly* working-class, it is nonetheless possible to look at this class as *implicitly* encompassing three of these typologies, notably executing employees, industrial workers, and agricultural wage earners (Ramos, 2011).

Another relevant measure of class, similar to this one in the sense that it presents class in strict relation to professional occupations, is employed by Cancela and Magalhães (Cancela & Magalhães, 2020). The authors make use of the definition advanced by Oesch (2006) which stipulates eight groups of class. Those are (1) large businessmen and liberal professionals; (2) small traders and owners; (3) managers; (4) technicians and specialists; (5) sociocultural professionals; (6) office workers; (7) service workers; and (8) workers.

All these categorizations should serve the purpose of illustrating the usefulness of going beyond income to analyze class structures. However, as the only information available is that of income, it is not significantly useful to adopt a conceptual definition of class based on professional occupations since it is not possible to establish a linear and objective conversion from income to occupation. For this reason, the definition selected to fulfill the purposes of this research project is more simplistic in the sense that it handles class as a function of income - with all the limitations that arise from doing so.

Since questions on exit polls already establish income categories (see Appendix B), the present dissertation considers those with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros to be middle-class, and those with incomes up to 1000 euros to be working-class. This means that this measure of working-class will likely comprise individuals that are executing employees - office employees, some service workers of restaurants, hotels, and others (Cancela & Magalhães, 2020) - as well agricultural wage earners and industrial workers. Some of these individuals, such as the stated service workers, could have incomes slightly higher than the minimum wage of 705 euros for 2022 (*Salário Mínimo Sobe Para 705 Euros Mensais - XXII Governo - República Portuguesa*, 2021) but lower than the national average salary of 1314 euros for 2020 (Ferreira, 2021).

Nevertheless, as stated earlier and given the Portuguese scenario, individuals with incomes between 1001 and 2500 euros are considered to be middle-class. These individuals make up the greatest percentage of Chega's electorate in absolute terms (39% in both the 2021 presidential election and the 2022 legislative election). This result would possibly discredit the widely known proletarianization thesis and contradict the literature that contends that radical right parties usually are (or become) working-class parties. However, Chega's electorate does not have a greater proportion of voters with incomes between 1001 and 2500 than the electorate as a whole. For that matter, neither it has a significantly greater proportion of voters with incomes up to 1000 euros than the electorate as a whole. This might indicate the usefulness of going beyond income when studying party choices and voting behavior.

On voter transference, the results call into question the well-known narrative that social democratic parties and traditional leftist parties alike are losing their electorate to the populist radical right. Chega is only attracting an insignificant percentage of the

mainstream left (PCP) core constituency. It thus appears that any visible mainstream left decline may not be happening at the expense of Chega's rise.

Yet the same does not hold for the mainstream right. Indeed, in light of the findings of this dissertation, Chega competes with the mainstream right (PSD) for a part of its electorate, notwithstanding the fact that not all mainstream center-right voters are volatile. Nevertheless, a considerable chunk of Chega's success is due to the support of the once-mainstream-right-voters.

Interestingly, Chega – or André Ventura – was much more successful in capturing the support of the PSD electorate in the presidential election of 2021 (36%) than in the legislative elections of both 2019 (28%) – where the party ran in a coalition with CDS-PP - and 2022 (14%). This may actually be the result of PS's strategy. In the 2021 presidential election, the socialists endorsed the candidacy of Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, affiliated with PSD. Such a decision might have conveyed that André Ventura was the only truly rightist candidate. Thus, voters may have supported Ventura simply because they opposed the socialists. Another important explanation for this finding is anchored in party leadership, notably the change to a leader – Rui Rio – who has converged with the center-left on some issues, thereby leaving a vacuum on the right. Notwithstanding, this could mean that a new shift in PSD leadership, putting an end to this convergence and positioning the party more to the right, could challenge Chega.

In the case of CDS-PP there is no significant voter transference. Indeed, even if Chega had captured all the once-CDS-PP voters, its electoral results alone would not be enough to win Chega the title of third political force. Yet, this also means that the growth of Chega is not limited to CDS-PP political legacy and its historical sphere of influence. In fact, Chega can go way beyond this party's political space in the Portuguese electoral market.

A possible explanation for the disappearance of CDS-PP is thus that IL preempted its significance. This should, however, be further tested by empirical means.

All these findings - notably that PSD is losing some of its electorate to the populist radical right – are in line with studies of Van der Brug et al. (in Rydgren, 2013). Such studies show that when conflict is done on cultural grounds the radical right will find itself competing with the mainstream left, but when conflict is done on an economic axis the radical right will find itself competing with the mainstream right. This thus seems to confirm that political conflict in Portugal is done on the left-right axis mainly (Piketty, 2018), with cultural divides being less prominent. In other words, in Portugal, voters align with parties on economic matters, to a considerable extent.

Cleavages therefore appear to have remained fairly ‘frozen’, to employ Lipset & Rokkan (1967) terminology, or at least more so than in the case of Portugal’s Western counterparts. In this sense, more research on this topic could prove useful considering that, even though Portugal is not exceptional when it comes to the absence of radical right parties in parliament, it seems to be exceptional when it comes to its cleavage structure - and particularly, the relative *stability* of it. The reasons why this is the case may be especially interesting.

Furthermore, this signals that new research should be devoted to uncovering the real phenomena behind the decline of mainstream left parties. Similarly, more scholarly attention is definitely needed on the subject of the so-called mainstream right decline, which has been thus far a somewhat neglected topic. Concretely, researchers should focus on understanding the relationship between the populist radical right rise and any visible mainstream right decline.

Another important finding of this dissertation concerns abstention. Cas Mudde (2007) had already recognised that those who do not vote are more prone to support the

radical right. The findings of this dissertation seem to confirm this stance to some degree, even though further testing is needed. Thus, it would be interesting to study why and when is the radical right successful in mobilizing voters that previously did not vote at all. A comparison of the results with those of other parties that systematically fail to do so could be useful. Specifically, questions worth answering include ‘do individuals who do not vote share something in common that makes them willing to support the populist radical right?’. And ‘is the populist radical right more successful than other parties in mobilizing individuals who did not vote? If so, why? If not, why?’

### *Comparisons between Chega and PSD, CDS-PP, PCP, IL*

A comparison between the profiles of Portuguese parties can lead to insightful conclusions in terms of political competition. Nonetheless, assessing patterns of political competition is hardly straightforward and it is contingent upon the results of voter transference. With that in mind, the party from which Chega withdrawn most supporters was PSD, with the percentage concerning voter transference between Chega and other parties not being particularly significant. In this sense, analyzing the profiles of other parties and comparing them with that of Chega can solely provide so much detail, as the results of voter transference are the most important ones to assess. Even so, one can observe that PSD and CDS-PP are parties with almost no gender gap. Both parties have, however, a slightly higher percentage of female voters.

In the case of PSD, whilst this explanation could be related to the existence of Chega – meaning that PSD's electorate was formerly somewhat more male, but Chega captured previous male PSD voters, thereby leaving PSD with a non-predominantly

male electorate – it could also be the sole result of the catch-all party nature of PSD. In this case, the gender structure of PSD mimics that of the Portuguese population (the electorate as a whole) whereby, according to 2021 census results (Pordata, 2021), the percentage of women in Portugal is 52,4 and that of men is 47,6. Thus, PSD's gender structure would in this case be independent of any action on the part of Chega.

Nonetheless, this explanation can hardly be applied to CDS, as the party is not a catch-all party. Yet, considering the results of voter transference, the gender structure of CDS appears also to be largely independent of Chega's appearance.

When it comes to competition with IL on the basis of gender, the results show that IL does not follow the trend of the electorate as a whole, with its electorate being predominantly male. This does not, however, translate into direct competition between Chega and IL, due to the results of voter transference.

On the case of CDU, its electorate has a greater proportion of men than the electorate as a whole. Yet there is no significant voter transference between the party and Chega.

When it comes to the variable age, the same previous explanation is applicable. PSD age structure may well mirror that of Portuguese society, rather than being the result of competition with Chega. Again, regarding CDS, the results of voter transference do not corroborate the fact that there is any competition.

On the case of CDU, the party has a considerable share of individuals aged > 54 compared to the electorate as a whole, contrary to Chega. It could thus be posited that CDU's electorate is, in general, older than that of Chega.

The age structure of IL is similar to that of Chega, with the electorate of the former having a greater share of voters aged 25-54 when compared to the electorate as a whole. In fact, IL performs better amongst the youth than Chega. Again, due to results

of voter transference, but also the year of formation and the educational profile, it is unlikely that the parties are competing with each other. What future studies should investigate is the voter transference between IL and CDS-PP, as this is a likely scenario that could shed light on a possible restructuring of the Portuguese Right.

The new parties of the right truly distinguish themselves from each other on education. Whilst Chega has a higher percentage of individuals with middle levels of education when compared to the electorate as a whole, IL has a greater share of individuals who completed higher education (also when compared to the electorate as a whole). Actually, Chega is the only out of the four parties on the right (CDS-PP, PSD, IL, Chega) in the analysis in which the electorate mostly has a middle level of education. In contrast, voters with higher levels of education appear to have remained faithful to center-right parties. Thus, those with intermediate levels of education are possibly the ones shifting from PSD, in particular, to Chega.

On the educational structure of CDU, it is similar to that of Chega. Yet, higher levels of education are more represented amongst CDU voters than amongst those of Chega. In fact, as mentioned earlier, in comparison with the electorate as a whole, CDU's voters only have a somewhat lower proportion of individuals who completed higher education. However, the results of voter transference do not signal that Chega is competing with CDU. Future competition would be possible due to some similarities in the profiles, but not likely – according to the results of voter transference.

For an overall view of the comparisons thus far stated, please refer to Table 27.

**Table 27. Comparison of profiles CDU, CDS-PP, IL, PSD with Chega**

	<i>Left</i>		<i>Right</i>		<b>CHEGA</b>
	<b>CDU</b>	<b>CDS-PP</b>	<b>IL</b>	<b>PSD</b>	
Gender	Almost no gender gap	Almost no gender gap	Predominantly male	Almost no gender gap	Predominantly male
Age	Neither particularly old nor young, only marginally old	Neither particularly old nor young, only marginally old	Neither particularly old nor young, only marginally young	Neither particularly old nor young, only marginally old	Neither particularly old nor young
Education	Middle and high levels of education	Only marginally high levels of education	Mostly high levels of education	Only marginally high levels of education	Mostly middle levels of education

### *Comparisons between Chega and FN, Lega, and VOX*

In general, Chega's voters are not completely equal to those of other European countries, albeit sharing some characteristics in common. The findings of this dissertation therefore contribute to the perennial discussion regarding the so-called 'populist radical right voter'. This voter is portrayed in the literature as being a low-educated, working-class young male individual, who most often than not – for cultural or economic reasons – despises immigration. The results of this dissertation suggest that the voter base of the populist radical right varies deeply. It may be similar in some respects, (see Table 28) but is far from being totally and completely homogeneous.

**Table 28. Comparison of profiles FN, Lega, VOX with Chega**

	<b>FN</b>	<b>LEGA</b>	<b>VOX</b>	<b>CHEGA</b>
Gender	Almost no gender gap	Almost no gender gap	Predominantly male	Predominantly male
Age	Predominantly old	Neither particularly old nor young, only marginally young	Mostly young	Neither particularly old nor young
Education	Mostly low educated	Mostly middle levels of education	Mostly low educated	Mostly middle levels of education
Class	Mostly working class	Mostly middle class (and bourgeoisie)	Mostly middle class (and bourgeoisie)	Mostly middle class

On voter transference, the electorate of Chega is similar to that of VOX and more or less similar to that of *Lega*, notwithstanding the fact that the latter has managed to attract more voters from the working class following its territorial expansion to the South of Italy. In fact, when compared with the cases of these two parties, it should come as no surprise that Chega is competing with the center-right (see Table 29).

**Table 29. Voter transference of FN, Lega, VOX compared with Chega**

	<b>FN</b>	<b>LEGA</b>	<b>VOX</b>	<b>CHEGA</b>
Previous voting choice	Left-wing (mostly) and center-right parties	Center-right parties (mostly)	Center-right parties (only)	Center-right parties (mostly) and abstention

So, does this mean that Chega is set on track to be the next *Lega*, for example?

Well, not necessarily. First and foremost, because each country has a particular structure of political conflict, impacting the issues populist radical right parties are able to exploit and the likeliness they will succeed in doing so. For example, FN was able to thrive once the immigration issue became salient; *Lega* has now turned to immigration as well but has for long exploited the relevant North-South divide. In Spain, VOX has especially sided with those who defend Spanish unity. In Portugal, however, there is no such theme, or at least no such *salient* topic. Therefore, Chega will probably never overturn mainstream parties until one such topic dominates Portuguese politics.

While the most salient issues are material in nature, and comprise topics such as unemployment, pensions and fiscal matters, no party is better positioned than the mainstream center parties to garner voters' support. Also, as Chega is a party on the far right, what happens in this side of politics determines or at least impacts its electoral faith. And looking at the Portuguese political scenario, PSD – the main mainstream party of the right – is not likely to disappear any time soon and leave a vacuum to be fulfilled by others. This was the case of Italy, for example, whereby the decision on the part of Berlusconi to step down from politics meant that the Right was but a huge void of Italian political life. However, PSD is more similar to PP of Spain – a catch-all party that is experiencing some challenges posed by newcomers, but that is highly capable of adapting to new situations, is somewhat flexible and is, most importantly, still historically and politically relevant. Thus, Chega will hardly be the next Portuguese *Lega*. It will struggle to achieve FN's results. And it will strive to be the VOX of Portugal. Whether it will succeed is something that only the future can tell.

### *Limitations*

The first limitation is related to the definition of working-class chosen in Hypothesis 1. As already explained, the criteria used to stipulate who belongs and who does not belong to this class – that of income – leaves out important aspects from the analysis and could not be the most suitable measure when considering current class structures. Another important aspect to consider is that ‘class’ is not always objective and this dissertation does not consider instances of subjective class. These include people – such as recent graduates or others – which fall within a certain income interval stipulated as working-class in this dissertation but nevertheless consider themselves as belonging to other class.

In spite of this, this definition was chosen because it is the most practical way to delineate class boundaries, especially since CESOP exit polls do not offer information on professional occupations. Thus, defining class as a function of income is more objective than trying to develop a subjective link between income and occupation. Also, and as already mentioned, there is no data on class as a function of occupation. Thus, income has to be used as a proxy for class, with the disadvantages that arise from oversimplifying the concept of class. Furthermore, for income, there is only data for two years (2021, 2022).

Finally, another limitation is linked with the type of polls chosen. It is known that exit polls comprise only a few questions due to matters of time and practicality. Thus, the small number of questions asked does not allow for an analysis of behaviors and attitudes. Pre-electoral and post-electoral surveys, on the contrary, usually cover these matters.

In spite of this, exit polls were used for a number of reasons, ranging from the accuracy of estimates to the possibility of having high response rates and especially the

dimension of the sample sizes. In fact, the main contribution of this study stems exactly from the large sample gathered in CESOP exit polls.

However, despite all these advantages, it is important to acknowledge that the lack of data with regard to attitudes is a significant limitation. In fact, many studies have moved beyond the study of sociodemographic characteristics which are considered too narrow to offer a plausible explanation of the vote for the populist radical-right. Instead, those studies center around attitudes. However, attitudes of those who voted for Chega are only assessed until this date in one particular study, notably the 2019 survey of the Portuguese electoral study (ICS/ISCTE, 2019). Also, international studies such as the European Social Survey (ESS) do not analyze Chega, given its recent formation.

In this sense, one solution that this dissertation employs is the elaboration of a conceptual analysis based on existing literature about the party and the social base of other populist radical-right parties.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the findings and the limitations of this study, recommendations for future studies can be developed. Firstly, future studies could go beyond the study of ‘who’ Chega’s voters are – which was already done in the present dissertation – and instead address the underlying reasons for why they vote for the party. These reasons cannot be given by the socioeconomic profile or voter transference alone, but in combination with voters’ attitudes. Therefore, it would be important to – as more data becomes available – empirically study the attitudinal profile of Chega’s voters. Future research testing the attitudinal determinants of the vote for Chega would certainly

provide enlightening findings. For this, it could be useful to combine individual-level data from exit polls with that of post-electoral surveys.

Also, answering the *'why'* people vote for populist radical right parties requires a combination of demand and supply-side explanations (Rydgren, 2013, p. 53). Amidst the supply-side explanations that would be important to study, it is particularly relevant to study Chega's discourse through the use of Manifesto Project database, for example. Chega, contrary to its counterparts, does not emphasize issues of immigration. The lack of salience of the immigration issue is a particular aspect of Portuguese politics (Afonso, 2021). The study of this matter could point to new directions in research and analyze the barely questioned assumption that the motives underlying individuals' willingness to vote for the populist radical right are to be found on their anti-immigrant attitudes.

Also, further studying the cleavage structure of Portugal would be helpful to uncover the phenomenon of the populist radical right success. Again, this could be done by employing Manifesto Project or Chapel Hill Expert Survey data. It could shed light on how the issues parties emphasize determine voters' alignment and cleavage structures (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2015) and, in turn, how newcomers can disrupt existing voters' alignments. In this sense, the study of the populist radical right could very much benefit from an inclusion of the variable *'context'* as it appears that the existing structure of political competition very much impacts the success and growth of populist radical right parties in a given country. Thus, it could be useful to include contextual data (other than election results) in studies of the populist radical right.

Turning again to the specific case of Portugal, it would be important to further assess why some individuals that previously casted a vote for PSD are now turning to Chega. Notably, it would be important to answer what makes this group of individuals

willing to abandon PSD in comparison to those who still vote for the party. I suspect the answer may lay again on attitudes but also on a supply-side factor that should be included –party leadership. Party leadership of center-right parties can impact the possibilities of success of their radical right competitors.

Overall, more attention has to be given in future studies to the relationship between the mainstream right decline and the populist radical right rise.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

To conclude, this dissertation's main objective was to understand who the individuals supporting Chega are, both in terms of their socioeconomic profile and voter transference (i.e., previous party choices of current Chega's voters).

The findings of this descriptive study - comprising CESOP exit polls in combination with election data from SGMAI - suggest that, to a substantial extent, Chega's voters are most typically male individuals aged 25-54 who completed high school, when compared to the electorate as whole. Similar to the population in general, they appear to have incomes between 1001 and 2500. Previously, these individuals voted to a considerable extent on PSD or, to a lesser extent, did not vote at all. Moreover, as this dissertation also delved into the electoral geography of Chega, it can be concluded that support for the party is much lower in northern regions of Portugal, albeit exhibiting an almost national character in the later election under analysis (2022 legislative election).

Given the lack of studies focusing on the case of Portugal and the populist radical right party Chega, this study contributes to the bulk of literature on such parties, in the fields of electoral sociology and voting behavior.

Nonetheless, the results call for complementary research, most importantly to understand the underlying reasons that make individuals willing to support Chega. Important contributions could thus be done by studying the attitudinal profile of the Chega's electorate and including supply-side explanations (such as issue salience and party leadership). A combination of individual-level data and contextual data, besides election results, could also prove useful.

In the end, by drawing parallels between Chega and the populist radical right parties FN, *Lega* and VOX, this dissertation corroborates the literature (Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2018) that states that there is no such thing as *the* populist radical right voter. It shows that there are indeed not one but several populist radical right voters, as the voter base of radical right parties displays several cross-country variations.

The fixed and immutable portrait of *the* populist radical right voter thus serves scholarly debates poorly. The populist radical right voter base is but an assemblage of multiple individuals, endowed with a biting singularity that is characteristic of human existence. Perhaps the most the electorates of populist radical right parties share in common is having little in common. In so being, we should cease questioning who the populist radical right voter is - and instead start wondering *who they are*.

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## Appendix A

This Appendix comprehends Table A1 which relates to the section of Electoral Geography and Performance of Chega in Portugal.

**Table A 1. Global Results of PSD, CDS-PP, and coalitions in Legislative Elections**

Party	Global				Madeira				Azores			
	2011	2015	2019	2022	2011	2015	2019	2022	2011	2015	2019	2022
PSD	38,65%		27,76%	27,83%	49,39%	37,75%	37,15%		47,36%	36,06%	30,21%	
	(2.159.742)		(1.457.704)	(1.571.861)	(68.649)	(47.228)	(48.231)		(42.784)	(33.826)	(25.249)	
CDS-PP	11,70%		4,22%	1,60%	13,74%	6,02%	6,05%		12,11%		4,80%	
	(653.987)		(221.774)	(90.538)	(19.101)	(7.536)	(7.852)		(10.944)		(4.014)	
<b>Coalition</b>												
PPD/PSD.CDS-PP.PPM												33,92%
												(28.520)
PPD/PSD.CDS-PP		36,86%					39,83%					
		(1.993.921)					(50.634)					
CDS-PP.PPM									3,90%			
									(3.654)			

Source: SGMAI

Note: The absolute number of votes (in thousands) is given between brackets. Global Results are the results in national and foreign territory. National territory comprises Continental Portugal and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores. The number of votes is given between brackets. PPD/PSD.CDS-PP.PPM is the collation of PSD, CDS-PP, and Monarchic People's Party (PPM). CDS-PP.PPM is the coalition of CDS-PP and PP

## Appendix B

### Description of dependent and independent variables

This appendix comprehends Table B1 and Table B2 which describe the dependent variable and independent variables used in this study, specifically.

**Table B 1. Dependent variable**

Dependent Variable	Type	Values
Individual Vote for Chega	Categorical. Nominal	Multiple choice question comprising several alternatives of parties, including the option of “CHEGA” for the 2019 and 2022 legislative polls. In the 2021 presidential poll the options given are individual candidates and thus “CHEGA” is not comprehended but rather “André Ventura”

*Source:* ERC

**Table B 2. Independent variables**

<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Values</b>
Sex	Categorical. Nominal	Male, female
Age	Numeric. Discrete	Open-ended question, measured in years
Education	Categorical. Nominal	Did not complete high school, completed high school, completed higher education
Current monthly income of the household	Categorical. Nominal	No income, until 1000 euros, between 1001 and 2500 euros, between 2501 and 3500 euros, between 3501 and 5000 euros, above 5000 euros, do not know/ do not answer
Vote in the 2019 legislative election	Categorical. Nominal	B.E., CDS-PP, CDU (PCPPEV), CHEGA, Iniciativa Liberal, Livre, PAN, PS, PPD/PSD, another party what party?, white/null, did not vote, voted but cannot remember which party
Vote in the 2015 legislative election	Categorical. Nominal	Did not vote, PSD / CDS-PP, PS, BE, CDU (PCP-PEV), PAN, another party what party?, cannot remember
Vote in the 2021 presidential election	Categorical. Nominal	Did not vote, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Ana Gomes, André Ventura, João Ferreira, Marisa Matias, Tiago Mayan Gonçalves, Vitorino Silva, Voted blank/null, Voted but does not remembre which candidate

## Appendix C

### Description of party abbreviations

**Table C 1. Party abbreviations**

Abbreviation	Portuguese nomination	English nomination
BE	Bloco de Esquerda	Left Bloc
CDS-PP	CDS-Partido Popular	CDS – Popular Party
CH	Chega	Enough
IL	Iniciativa Liberal	Liberal Initiative
L	Livre	Free
PAN	Pessoas-Animais-Natureza	People – Animals - Nature
PCP	Partido Comunista Português	Portuguese Communist Party
PSD	Partido Social Democrata	Social Democratic Party