

Article

Culture War: Exploring the Backing from the Portuguese Catholic Church and Christian Movements to Populist Party Chega

Francisco Batista

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, NOVA University of Lisbon, 1069-061 Lisbon, Portugal; franciscobatista.fds@gmail.com

Abstract: The endorsement from Christian circles in facilitating the rise of radical right-wing populism in Brazil and the United States, as well as the support and alliance of the Polish Catholic Church with the Law and Justice (PiS) government, are widely acknowledged. Embedded within the intricate fabric of multifaceted factors contributing to the surge of right-wing populism, the Culture War assumes a pivotal yet often underestimated role. Manifesting as a profound confrontation, the Culture War signifies an existential clash between contrasting perspectives concerning socio-cultural values grounded in religious scripture. The research employs a qualitative methodology and a singular case study focused on Portugal, owing to the nation's enduring relationship with Catholicism. Portugal emerges as indisputably one of the most religious countries in the Western world, akin to Poland. The research question aims to understand the support or relationship from the Portuguese Catholic Church (PCC) and Christian (social) movements to the populist right-wing Chega (lit. 'Enough!'), slightly departing from their traditional center-right support for PSD and CDS in the Culture War. The results show that the support extended to Chega by the PCC and the Portuguese Episcopal Conference is non-existent in a formal manner. Despite this fact and the lack of formal backing for Chega, some Christian social movements have shown their approval or support for Chega, as the party has some roots in the movement sector, but not as strongly as the Front Nationale. Further research is suggested in order to attain deeper conclusions from both the Portuguese Catholic Church and Christian social movements using other methods for a deeper understanding, such as semi-structured interviews and participant observation of events.



Citation: Batista, Francisco. 2024. Culture War: Exploring the Backing from the Portuguese Catholic Church and Christian Movements to Populist Party Chega. *Religions* 15: 1436. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15121436>

Academic Editor: John P. Hoffmann

Received: 5 February 2024

Revised: 16 July 2024

Accepted: 14 August 2024

Published: 26 November 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: Christianity; politics; culture; social justice; religion in Portugal

1. Introduction

For an extended period, scholars and intellectuals such as Auguste Comte, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, and Max Weber have anticipated the natural secularization of Christianity. Max Weber, in particular, through his concept of the “disenchantment of the world” and the emphasis on rationalization, illustrated the inevitable progression towards a cosmos devoid of mysticism and religious faith (Draaisma and Wilson 2021). Sigmund Freud, in his penetrating analysis, characterized religion as the “greatest of all neurotic illusions” (Shiner 1967), thus exposing the fragility of human belief (Stark 1999). This period saw the dissolution of the Church–State apparatus at the beginning of the last century. Secularization theorists have since contended that because religion and Christianity are perceived as irrational, their secularization will naturally occur through the process of modernization (Draaisma and Wilson 2021).

Historically, scholars argue that the radical right is closely linked to Christianity (Minkenberg 2022), highlighting the inherent challenges in reconciling Christian doctrine with liberal democracy. Following the Second World War, there was a significant shift towards liberal democracy and pluralism (Minkenberg 2022), influenced primarily by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and heightened levels of modernization. This increased modernization, among other factors, has led scholars to identify evident post-material

values and cultural shifts (Inglehart 1990; Minkenberg 2022). Ulrich Beck (1986) describes these changes as “the other modernity”, which have contributed to both the secularization of Christianity and the resurgence of the radical right.

Connected to this topic in contemporary times is the populist radical right wing. There exists a widespread consensus regarding its increasing significance within the realm of social sciences, society, and politics. It is widely acknowledged that the radical right or right-wing populism is fundamentally based on the establishment of an antagonistic connection between two collective entities: ‘the people’ and ‘the elites’, resembling a Schmittian friend/enemy distinction from these parties (Cammaerts 2022). The academic community reached a consensus that suggests the rise of populist radical right parties (PRRP) has multifaceted reasons (Mudde 2021; Berman 2021; Betz 1994). These parties typically exhibit an ethno-nationalist notion of citizenship (Muis and Immerzeel 2017), and are nativist and “anti-immigration parties” (Van der Brug et al. 2005) due to their resistance to cultural and religious diversity (Betz 1994; Rydgren 2005). However, as Minkenberg points out (Minkenberg 2022), the return of religion into the political and social landscape has been introduced by the radical right, and some others have also posited similarly (Haynes 2014; Hennig and Weiberg-Salzmann 2020).

The resurgence of religious discourse by these parties is often viewed as a manifestation of a “cultural backlash” or conflict (Cremer 2022; Scheiring et al. 2024) against secularization (Hunter 1991; Minkenberg 2022), cultural progressivism (Margalit 2019; Inglehart and Norris 2019; Sides et al. 2019), and its connection with multiculturalism and Islamophobia (Minkenberg 2022), as the radical right argues it is incompatible with their Christian identity (Marzouki et al. 2016). The radical right argues that cultural progressivism from social justice movements and ideologies are creating a cultural revolution, akin to Inglehart’s thesis, in what they consider as “wokeism” (Phiri 2023), “wokeness” (Smith et al. 2023), “cultural Marxism” (Bolton 2019; Ramaswamy 2021; Levin 2021; Kaufmann 2022), or short-form for “woke” (Smith et al. 2023; Crews 2023). These terms will be used interchangeably.

The academic literature suggests this phenomenon primarily stems from the dissemination of post-materialistic values (Inglehart 1977, 1990) propagated by the “New Left” and “global justice movements” (Della Porta and Diani 2006), which has instigated a “silent cultural revolution” (Inglehart 1977). Some scholars attribute the rise of right-wing conservative and populist parties to this cultural shift (Minkenberg 1992; Mudde 2007; Betz 1994; Green et al. 1996). These parties are seen as conducting a “silent counter-revolution” (Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 2000; Hutter 2014), as they and conservative religious movements perceive socio-cultural and religious values to be under existential threat from post-materialism or post-modernity and its associated values (Berman 2021; Arzheimer and Carter 2009; Minkenberg 2022). This “counter-revolution” phenomenon encompasses both the Christian Right (CRW) and the Populist Radical Right Parties (Ignazi 1992; Minkenberg 1992; Betz 1994; Green et al. 1996). In both instances, religion exerts a pivotal influence (Minkenberg 2022; Marchi 2024), and this perspective that the rise of the radical right wing is a “counter cultural revolution” is the theoretical framework for this research. This backlash and the rise of radical right parties leads to the formulation of morality policies and a culture clash (Permoser 2019) within a post-secular world, creating a battleground where traditional values clash with modernity’s march (Hunter 1991; Inglehart and Norris 2019; Minkenberg 2022), resembling Augustine’s “City of God” versus the City of Man, as the first upholds transcendental values inherently incompatible with postmodern, post-materialistic values and humanistic perspectives.

The radical right-wing political ideology is fundamentally characterized by the belief in a homogeneous nation, akin to the German romanticism type of nationalism (Minkenberg 2022). Notably, these parties regard Christianity as integral to this form of nationalism, recognizing its role in upholding significant cultural values and traditions for national identity (Peker 2022). Concerns within religious conservative circles regarding the secularization of Western values have led to the endorsement of populist leaders by

Christian circles. This phenomenon is evident in various contexts, including the support for leaders such as Donald Trump in the USA, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni in Italy, and Vladimir Putin in Russia, the latter of whom has garnered substantial backing from the Russian Orthodox Church (Moniz and Lino 2024). This dynamic is also observed in Brazil (Zilla 2020). In Poland, the Catholic backing for the Law and Justice (PiS) party (Resende and Hennig 2022) is also evident. This alignment is rooted in shared core cultural ideologies centered around religion and moral-ethical issues, particularly pertaining to abortion and gay rights (Resende and Hennig 2022; Zuk and Zuk 2020). In essence, Christian circles and the radical right parties, drawing upon scriptural sources, also manifest this theological dimension in their skeptical approach towards the integration of social justice topics and policies, especially those concerning sexual and gender rights. They believe that abortion, gender transition, identity, and same-sex relations are a violation of the Divine word from scripture, and abortion is a violation of human rights and, therefore both should be insulated from majoritarian decision-making (Resende and Hennig 2022).

The selection of Portugal as the focal point for this research emanates from a deliberate contemplation of its socio-political landscape. Portugal, asserting its presence as arguably one of the most devout nations in the Western hemisphere, pulsates with profound Catholic and religious affiliations (Resende 2022), which naturally poses a challenge to post-materialistic endeavors and secular social justice issues. The emergence of such parties in Portugal has been a relatively recent phenomenon, marking an exceptional case within the European context (Mudde 2019). Consequently, scholarly attention to the populist radical right in Portugal, particularly the Chega party, remains limited, reflecting their emergence in 2019. The party exhibits identitarian conservative characteristics (Marchi and Zuquete 2024), intrinsically linked to its Christian cultural values (Carvalho 2020), with 67.9% of Chega supporters identifying as having a religious identity (Marchi and Zuquete 2024), and 24.4% of Chega's members previously belonged to another party, with 45.2% of these individuals originating from PSD and 22% from CDS-PP (Marchi and Zuquete 2024). These numbers probably can be correlated with other studies, such as that of Bale and Kaltwasser (2021). They suggested that mainstream right parties may have adapted to an electorate that has gradually embraced liberal progressive values due to the 'silent cultural revolution'. Those maintaining their cultural conservatism rooted in Christian values may have transitioned from the mainstream right to the radical right wing in the 'counter-revolution', which can correlate with the study from Moniz and Lino (2024), that identified religious populism in Portugal due to the Chega party.

Moreover, scholarly work has been conducted regarding social movements and their connection to political parties. Recent contributions have introduced the term 'movement parties' (Caiani 2022), usually from the progressive left-wing spectrum (Muis and Immerzeel 2017). The conversion of social movements into political parties is designated as 'movement parties' (Kitschelt 2006). The research conducted by Minkenberg (2018) is particularly significant within this framework, as he broadens the scope of this literature to encompass the radical right wing, in a manner similar to Gattinara and Pirro (2018a, 2018b). Minkenberg posits that radical right-wing parties intrinsically display the attributes of social movements by participating in 'contentious politics'. This is especially evident in the French Front National and the Jobbik party in Hungary, both of which have origins rooted in the movement sector (Shields 2007; Gattinara and Pirro 2018a).

The research question endeavors to investigate whether there exists some sort of relationship or support amongst the Portuguese Catholic Church, the Portuguese Episcopal Conference, or Christian social movements to the Chega party, given their shared conservative and religious orientations. This inquiry seeks to ascertain whether a parallel dynamic exists, akin to the reported alignment between the Polish Catholic Church and the Law and Justice (PiS) government, or the support from Christian movements to populist radical options in other Western countries (Moniz and Lino 2024; Shields 2007;

Gattinara and Pirro 2018a), or similarly to the cases in France and Hungary, where radical right parties have ties or derive from the movement sector (Gattinara and Pirro 2018a).

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to be able to answer the research question, if either the Portuguese Catholic Church or Christian social movements demonstrate support for the Chega party in the contemporary phenomenon known as the ‘Culture War’ (counter cultural revolution as posit by Ignazi), or if the Chega party has close ties to the Christian movement sector, the paper will employ several methods for the collection of data. The research focuses on qualitative methodology. The data collection will be from both primary and secondary data.

One method is the collection of interviews and published articles about the topic in the written press and online media. This involves the analysis of interviews pertinent to the research starting in 2019, due to Chega’s creation and rise in the Portuguese political scene, until the elections from 2024, and articles written on this issue. In addition, online material is deemed important as the phenomenon of platforms like YouTube that enable the spread of opinions and messages to a vast audience grows. Here, the Portuguese Catholic Church, Christian social movements, and Chega might use these pathways to spread and reach more people and express their alliances or partnerships.

Moreover, the research will then use content analysis, focusing on official documents. These documents include the PEC, several pastoral notes aiming to assess the Conference’s stance on various social justice issues, the party’s proposed bills to Parliament, Chega’s political manifesto, and the party program for the national elections of 2022 and 2024.

Naturally, the content analysis method is descriptive. Additionally, political speeches in Parliament and interviews will be subjected to scrutiny, in a comprehensive examination focused on online material analysis (written, audio, video). This is considered to be important in order to compliment the content analysis method, as online material analysis incorporates discourse and public speeches, but also interviews in the digital/online media.

Regarding some official documents, the pastoral note named “Reasons to choose Life” is one of the main documents and it was chosen due to focusing on the pro-life stance against abortion. The PEC argued, in 2006, that the Portuguese Parliament should not allow such an important matter to be up for referendum: “First and foremost, we believe, as the Church has since the early centuries, that human life, with all its dignity, exists from the very moment of conception. Considering human life as an absolute value to be defended and promoted in all circumstances, we assert that it cannot be subjected to a referendum. Consequently, no permissive law, including the one already enacted, respects the fundamental ethical values concerning Life.” (PEC 2006). During this time period, as the literature suggests, the support in the political arena was to CDS and PSD (Zuquete 2018; Marchi 2024).

Moreover, the pastoral note entitled “A propósito da ideologia do género (About the gender ideology)”, the Catholic Portuguese Church and the PEC argue that gender identity ideology from the LGBTQ+ community is a cultural movement (PEC 2013), that goes against the Word of God and biblical teachings about the family and the role of sexuality in human life: “However, gender ideology stands in stark contrast to the established civilizational heritage. It fundamentally opposes the biblical and Christian perspectives on human nature and sexuality. This document aims to elucidate the differences between these two perspectives. Motivated by the desire to present the most solid and foundational understanding of the human person, this view has been discovered, valued, and followed for millennia, significantly influenced by Christian humanism. We believe that this same humanism is now called upon to contribute valuably to the rediscovery of the depth and beauty of a properly understood human sexuality” (PEC 2013).

The pastoral note further contends that contemporary progressive social movements challenge fundamental anthropological principles. Specifically, these movements deny sexual differences between sexes, reject the natural complementarity between genders, dissociate sexuality from procreation, prioritize intentional parenthood over biological

parenthood, and aim to deconstruct the heterosexual matrix of society (PEC 2013). In essence, this document critiques progressive social justice movements, often referred to as 'wokeism'. Additionally, other pastoral notes, such as the PEC of 2009 concerning heterosexual marriage, are examined in this research. Notably, all these issues are currently addressed in Chega's political manifesto and program, positioning it as the only party in Parliament to prioritize these concerns following the CDS's loss of representation in 2019.

The preliminary results from the data collection suggest that Chega has clearly endorsed positions similar to the Portuguese Catholic Church and Christian social movements, and denotes an obvious link to defend Christian values. In several speeches from Chega members, the common ground is clear: the strong connection with Christianity as the party leader, André Ventura expressed during the European CPAC (the Center for Fundamental Rights) in Hungary: "The biggest war of our time, it is not military or even political. The biggest war of our time, it's a cultural war. (. . .) But nothing is more important than our identity, our Christian identity, that we must defend at all costs" (ChegaTv 2023b). Here, the leader Ventura, not only highlights the party connection to promote Christian values but the fact the world is witnessing a 'Culture War' to eradicate Christian values by promoting abortion, gender identity, and other progressive initiatives. However, in the last chapter, more data will be analyzed regarding these issues.

Analysis of online materials reveals that certain Christian social movements have engaged in activities, such as pro-life marches, in collaboration with Chega members. The Portuguese Federation for Life, recognizing Chega as one of the only pro-life parties in Parliament, has welcomed its support to have discussion meetings and debates, as documented by both print and online media (Figueiredo 2022). Additionally, the website of this movement reports the organization of a debate on abortion, aimed at understanding the party's position on pro-life issues such as abortion and euthanasia. During this "Manifesto Vida 24" initiative, Pedro Frazão represented Chega, alongside representatives from PSD and CDS (Federação Portuguesa pela Vida 2024). Furthermore, the formation of Chega was facilitated by former members of the pro-life party, which itself emerged from the pro-life social movement sector, indicating visible support from Christian social movements. Additionally, the research, based primarily on online material, indicates that some Evangelical communities in Portugal endorsed the newly established radical right party ADN in the most recent elections according to data collected from both online media and online material like the party's YouTube channel.

The findings underscore the necessity for further investigation into this issue, particularly through the use of semi-structured interviews with Chega party members, representatives of social movements, and members of the Catholic Church. Despite the presence of Catholics and former members of Christian movements within the ranks and parliament of Chega, such as Rita Matias and Pedro Frazão, and notwithstanding recent scholarly categorizations of Chega as a party aligned with 'religious populism' (Moniz and Lino 2024), the research indicates a lack of support from the Portuguese Catholic Church for Chega. While certain Christian social movements exhibit informal connections with Chega, these affiliations are not officially formalized. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that Chega maintains similar ties to other radical right parties in Europe, emerging from the movement sector. Specifically, this includes Manuel Matias's Partido Cidadania e Democracia Cristã (Christian Democracy and Citizenship Party, PPV), which originated from a pro-life Christian social movement. Members of this movement, including the father of MP Rita Matias, eventually joined Chega, right upon its genesis in 2019. Furthermore, the recent 2024 elections saw Chega nominate two Evangelical pastors, demonstrating the party's clear connections with Christian movements that advocate pro-life and pro-family positions, despite the lack of formal or official endorsements thus far.

Also, further studies are warranted due to an intriguing observation: the former Brazilian spokesman for Jair Bolsonaro and prominent figure within the Christian Evangelical community, Marcos Feliciano, has urged Portuguese Christian communities to support not the Chega party but the newly formed radical right-wing populist party, Alternativa

Democrática Nacional (ADN: National Democratic Alternative), as evidenced by data collected from the online platform YouTube (ADN 2024).

2. Culture War

In this chapter, prior to plunging into the ocean of the Portuguese context, where the currents of the Culture War clash and the progressive tide seeks refuge in post-materialistic ideals and a dance with social justice within the tapestry of governance, one must embark on a journey to fathom the profound wellsprings that nourish the theoretical and philosophical roots of these convictions, and to clearly define ‘Culture War’ and ‘wokeism’.

The notion of a ‘Culture War’ is not a recent phenomenon. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, in their seminal work *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, elucidate that the late 1800s witnessed a significant wave of secularization, characterized by a deliberate distancing from Christian and Catholic influences (Clark and Kaiser 2003). This historical parallel resonates in contemporary times, where secularized policies and progressive ideologies dominate Western discourse: “There are also many thematic parallels. The meaning of marriage, for example, is at stake for those who have resisted calls for the legal recognition of non-marital relationships in the 1990s, just as it was for the exponents and opponents of civil marriage in the 1870s” (Clark and Kaiser 2003). Hunter (1991) articulates that the ‘Culture War’ revolves around two “conflicting moral visions” or cultural perspectives: one rooted in religious traditions, advocating for moral absolutism derived from transcendent sources such as Christian doctrine, and the other grounded in progressivism and emancipation, advocating for moral relativism and the social construction of morality (Hunter 1991; Bloom 1987).

Christian groups and populist radical right-wing parties often wield the term ‘Culture War’ as a critique of progressive values and a defense of conservative religious values (Mirrlees 2018). This term is frequently combined with ‘wokeism’ (Rzepka et al. 2023; Phiri 2023), or ‘wokeness’ (Smith et al. 2023), terms that some view as ‘communism in modern clothes’ (Pluckrose and Lindsay 2021; Coyne 2022), or “(...) the anti-abortion battle to opposition against so-called *cultural Marxism*” (Marchi 2024). Wokeism has gained significant traction in Western mainstream media and public discourse (Smith et al. 2023), addressing social justice issues and advocating for societal and cultural changes that diverge from traditional and conservative values, aligning with post-materialism. This dialectical perspective on culture is a fundamental aspect of the Culture War (Cammaerts 2022; Sobande et al. 2022; Hunter 1991; Smith et al. 2023) and is often portrayed as conflicting with conservative cultural and national identities (Pilkington 2022).

Marxist scholar Žižek (2023) argues that ‘wokeness’ is a secularized religious dogma perpetuated by a privileged few for moral authority, highlighting awareness and activism surrounding issues of social domination using Gramscian ‘hegemonization’ or ‘cultural hegemony’ (Cammaerts 2022; Krzyżanowski 2020). This intellectual movement aims to deconstruct cultural values and identities, encapsulated by the term ‘identity politics’ (Bolton 2019). Philosophically, this deconstruction is achieved through the application of postmodernism and post-structuralism (Agger 1991; Doherty and Doyle 2006), or what Smith et al. (2023) refer to as ‘postmodern neo-Marxism’.

In contemporary times, the global landscape is marked by the ongoing conflict within the ‘Culture War’ that pervades the Western sphere. This conflict is delineated through the discourse on the progressive spectrum, imbued with principles derived from post-Marxist political theory, juxtaposed against populist right-wing parties and Christian fundamentalists (Hennig 2022). The term ‘Culture War’ encapsulates divergent and antagonistic perspectives regarding the comprehension of the world, its desired mode of operation, and the socio-cultural values deemed imperative for cultural hegemony, fostering human advancement and justice (Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Scholars such as Laclau and Mouffe have examined new social movements (NSMs) through a post-structuralist lens, emphasizing the socially constructed nature of identities and their intersections (Laclau and Mouffe 1985).

The 1960s marked a profound metamorphosis in cultural paradigms, crystallized through the ascendancy of the counterculture movement, which paradoxically heralded the propagation of more conservative ethos. This era, marked by challenges to established social mores, a fervent civil rights crusade, and a repudiation of erstwhile conservative convictions, witnessed the sexual revolution, the emancipation of women, and the advocacy for civil, gender, and sexual rights. In response to the perceived excesses of the counterculture, the late 20th century saw a conservative resurgence, embodied by figures such as Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom, signaling a nostalgic return to traditional values and economic policies diverging markedly from socialist visions. A confluence of contentious issues, including abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, and the role of religion in public life, crystallized as pivotal nodes within the tapestry of cultural debates during this epoch. It was an era wherein conservative and Christian factions, buoyed by social movements like those of pro-family and pro-life, coalesced in a reaction against the perceived encroachment of progressive policies (Wilcox and Gomez 1990; Dowland 2009). The sanctity of religious values served as a bulwark against the tide of change, endorsing a steadfast adherence to conservative principles. In this crucible of ideological contention, the dialectics of cultural transformation played out with profound resonance.

For some, the overwhelming domination in humanities-oriented bookstores (Agger 1991), education from Frankfurt School Critical Theory, and Derrida's deconstruction and post-structuralism encompass a cultural silent revolution. The dissemination of Derrida's deconstruction, critical theory, and post-structuralism is held by cultural studies, gender studies, post-structuralist feminist studies (Agger 1991), or even poststructuralist queer theory (Namaste 1994), which are believed to reimburse the Western cultural shortcomings (Foucault 1976) by erasing the oppressive nature towards gender, racial, and sexual minorities (Reich 1972). These movements encompass individuals and groups from diverse political ideologies, ranging from the far-left to the center or center-right (Suen et al. 2020), while being criticized by populist right-wing parties for being associated with the existing power structure known as the "establishment". Bale and Kaltwasser (2021) further elaborate on this thesis, as they argue that center-right and right-wing parties have adapted to a more post-materialistic Western society and departure from more conservative ethos and stances.

Within this ideological battleground, conservatives assert their fidelity to a moral-ethical code purportedly bestowed by divine providence. In framing their argumentation, they contend that adherence to this code is tantamount to upholding a transcendent standard for humanity. The clash between these opposing perspectives unfolds within the intricate terrain of the Culture War, a multifaceted contest wherein questions of morality, ethics, and cultural foundations converge in a perpetual struggle.

3. The Contemporary Cultural Conflict and Its Intersection with Christian Doctrine

The intellectual landscape of the "New Left", a complex ideological narrative, emerges, advocating for the deconstruction of entrenched conservative frameworks, which are viewed as substantial impediments to human progress and the full realization of universal human rights. As right-wing populism gains prominence, it is perceived as a significant threat to both human rights and post-materialistic values. From the perspective of these ideological proponents, right-wing populists are seen as defenders of a precarious status quo, prioritizing the preservation of national culture and societal homogeneity (Peker 2022). A starkly contrasting narrative unfolds within the populist right-wing discourse. Here, conservative factions and their populist allies emphasize the imperative of preserving socio-cultural traditions, deeply rooted in the "historical legacy of European cultural norms" shaped by Christianity (Furedi 2017; Peker 2022; Cremer 2022). This intricate interplay of perspectives sets the stage for a profound dialogue on the fabric of our shared existence, where competing viewpoints strive to influence the trajectory of a cultural narrative that hangs in the balance.

Conservative and right-wing radical factions assume roles of either protagonists or antagonists, contingent upon the perspective of the beholder. Within this intricate dance, a notion emerges—a notion that within the conservative realm lies a potential hazard, a menace to the advancement of humanity. Detractors assert that a treacherous disregard for human rights resonates throughout the corridors of marginalized voices—the LGBTQ+ community, the resounding call for women’s autonomy over their bodies, and the chorus for sexual liberation (Yazici 2018). This is primarily attributed to their nationalist orientation (Yazici 2018; Afshari 2007; Eagleton 1990) and adherence to Christian values, which fundamentally contradict the foundations of liberal democracies and social justice.

In the context of Portugal, the last four decades have borne witness to a series of government-driven secularization policies. These endeavors signify a broader societal inclination toward the delineation of religious institutions from state affairs, fostering a more secular public sphere. The overarching objective of these policies is to establish state neutrality in religious matters while upholding the principles of religious freedom and pluralism. Amidst Portugal’s historical entwining with Catholicism, the enactment of secularization policies manifests the nation’s dedication to cultivating an expansive and heterogeneous societal fabric, one that upholds the rights and convictions of individuals independent of their religious allegiances. The evolution of these policies throughout the past four decades underscores Portugal’s persistent endeavor to harmonize the secular essence of its institutions with the tenets of religious freedom and pluralism. However, these endeavors do not denote a wholly secular Portuguese society, nor do they signify an absence of religious influence in societal and political realms (Vilaça and Oliveira 2015). The enduring nexus between Portugal and Catholicism, intertwined with Christian doctrine, has historically borne formidable significance. Until 2007, the act of abortion remained circumscribed, relegated to exceedingly restrictive circumstances—specifically, instances of rape, jeopardized maternal well-being, or profound fetal abnormalities. In the ballet of policy, a doctrinal dance unfolded, notably marked by the resolute conservatism that the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality itself encountered during its formative foray into family planning in the late 1970s (Monteiro 2012). The Commission’s activities were perceived as posing a threat to the socio-cultural values of Portugal, a predominantly Christian country, particularly when confronted by the conservative factions within the Democratic Alliance (AD), a center-right coalition that held power in 1980. The ascendancy of these political forces precipitated a contentious atmosphere, especially concerning opposing viewpoints on diverse social justice matters. Within the Portuguese political landscape, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party (PCP) emerged as the primary advocates for the consistent legalization of abortion. This stance elicited discomfort and resistance from conservative and Catholic circles. Consequently, in 1997, the social movement “Juntos Pela Vida” (Together for Life) was established, demonstrating close affiliations with the Catholic Church (Monteiro 2012). In response, commencing in 2002, pro-choice social movements began to observe endorsement from all major left-wing political parties, as documented by Monteiro (2012). Initiatives such as “Jovens pelo SIM” and “Movimento pelo SIM” (Mortágua 2020) garnered support from the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Left Bloc.

However, it was during this juncture that the Portuguese government, led by Prime Minister José Socrates of the Socialist Party (Partido Socialista), orchestrated a pivotal transformation. Through a momentous referendum in 2007, voluntary abortion found legalization, extending the realm of permissibility up to the tenth week of pregnancy, a decision now vested at the woman’s discretion, irrespective of causal motivations. Put differently, voluntary abortion is sanctioned up to the 10th week of gestation upon the pregnant woman’s request, and it may be conducted within the Portuguese National Health Service (Sistema Nacional de Saúde) or approved private healthcare facilities. Governed by Law No. 16/2007, dated April 17, this legislation mandates a compulsory minimum contemplation period of three days. The Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality played a pivotal role in instigating the referendum within the political spectrum through its agenda

advocating for the decriminalization of abortion. This initiative encountered considerable opposition from the more conservative segments of Portuguese society (Monteiro 2012). Therefore, Catholic and Christian communities in Portugal expressed dissatisfaction with the endorsement of increasingly progressive policies concerning abortion. The Catholic Church and the Portuguese Episcopal Conference initially voiced discontent regarding the 2007 referendum on abortion (Sousa and Silva 2023), contending that “human life constitutes an absolute value”, and as such, should not be subject to legislation or referendums (Sousa and Silva 2023). These theological circles regard the Bible as both inerrant and infallible, signifying its status as the “Word of God,” and asserting that God, being incapable of falsehood, is reflected in its contents. Consequently, these circles contend that abortion contravenes one of the Ten Commandments outlined in the Old Testament (PEC 2006). This perspective asserts the sanctity of human life, positing that only God possesses the authority to impart or terminate life (PEC 2015). The Portuguese Episcopal Conference posits an argument concerning the correlation between abortion and the declining natality rates, as elucidated by Sousa and Silva (2023). This is perceived as an alarming reality that could potentially erode pro-family and pro-life values within Portuguese society. Expressing apprehension, the Conference advocates for the intervention of Catholic and Christian politicians in formulating legislation that preserves the inviolable right to life. Additionally, they contend that the implementation of Christian doctrine (PEC 2015) would confer significant benefits upon Portuguese society, with the political party CDS being historically aligned with such Christian organizations (Marchi 2024).

Nevertheless, the issue of abortion in the Portuguese context constitutes a “polysemic and strategically oriented analysis” (Monteiro 2012), necessitating an understanding of the intricate and multidimensional process, given the roles played by various entities, including the State, political parties, progressive-oriented social movements, and the Catholic Church itself. The Patriarch of Lisbon and President of the Portuguese Episcopal Conference (CEP) posits the existence of a prevailing “legal voluntarism” within the Portuguese context (Lopes 2013). As articulated by D. Manuel Clemente, the legal frameworks guiding matters of abortion and same-sex marriage are perceived as incongruent with the convictions held by the majority of the Portuguese populace (Lopes 2013). Nevertheless, as highlighted by Monteiro (2012), a 1982 poll conducted by the journal *Expresso* revealed that 72% of the Portuguese population already expressed support for abortion.

The matter of abortion and women’s reproductive rights, along with the issue of same-sex marriage, holds considerable significance. Moreover, in 2011, Portugal enacted legislation allowing individuals to change their legal gender without undergoing surgery. This law was further improved in 2018, allowing individuals aged 16 and older to change their gender on official documents based on self-declaration. The decades in the Western world have marked a socio-cultural transformation towards increased secularization, as elucidated by Inglehart (1977). This transformation has materialized through the endorsement of increasingly progressive legal frameworks and policies on these matters across several Western nations (Vilaça and Oliveira 2015). Such a profound shift has given rise to what can be termed a natural ‘Culture War’ within the Western hemisphere. This is owing to the intrinsic connection between socio-cultural values, morality, and ethics with the Christian worldview, thereby engendering an environment of hostility (Dobbelaere and Pérez-Agote 2015). The Portuguese landscape poses a formidable challenge for social justice movements rooted in post-materialism. Portugal emerges as arguably one of the most religious nations in the Western hemisphere, with approximately 80% of the population identifying as Christians (Teixeira 2012).

This prevailing religiosity may elucidate the comparatively belated embrace of progressive policies within the realm of social justice, a delay attributed to theological contradictions and conflicts.

Incompatibility Between Same-Sex Marriage and Christian Doctrine

In the Portuguese 2005 elections, the issue of same-sex marriage appeared to be in its infancy, with only the Left Bloc incorporating a proposal to amend the Civil Code into its program (Vilaça and Oliveira 2015). The fact that the Left Bloc stood alone in this regard could be attributed, perhaps, to the strong religiosity in Portugal; as such, the perspective was considered heretical by the majority. Grounded in post-Marxist philosophy, influenced by critical theory, post-structuralism, and postmodernism, the Left Bloc contends that heterosexual marriage serves as a manifestation of the oppressive nature inherent in Western public structures and the societal oppression perpetuated by religion, acting as a hindrance to social progress and social justice.

The Left Bloc's stance found a growing resonance, weaving support from diverse political spheres. The Socialist Party, in a dance of conviction, cradled this cause at the heart of its political priorities, aspiring to carry the standard of modernization through the corridors of Portugal (Vilaça and Oliveira 2015). Certain members of the Socialist Party accentuate the melody of influence, where the harmonies of the LGBT community's advocacy lend their notes to the chorus (Vilaça and Oliveira 2015). As such, same-sex marriage was legalized in Portugal on 5 June 2010. The legislative measure permitting same-sex couples to marry and avail themselves of equivalent legal rights and protections as heterosexual couples was enacted by the Portuguese Parliament. In response to these political advancements, the Portuguese Episcopal Conference and the Catholic Church characterized the position embraced by the Socialist Party as heretical. Their dissatisfaction was articulated in a pastoral note titled "Em favor do verdadeiro casamento" ("In Favor of True Marriage"), dated 20 February 2009 (PEC 2009). This document delineates their position grounded in Biblical scripture, particularly emphasizing traditional marriage values. In the same light, several Christian social movements emerged in the Portuguese scene, starting with "Juntos Pela Vida" (Together for Pro-Life), closely tied to the Catholic Church (Monteiro 2012), and the Citizenship and Marriage Platform (PCC), the Portuguese Federation for Life (FPV), the National Confederation of Family Associations (CNAF), and the Hope Portugal Movement (MEP). All of these are pro-family and pro-life movements with a Christian conservative origin against abortion and same-sex marriage. Their support was predominantly concentrated within the center-right spectrum, particularly among mainstream parties such as the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Democratic and Social Center—People's Party (CDS) (Lo Mascolo and Marchi 2024; Zuquete 2018).

4. The Rise of the Chega Party and Christian Doctrine

The emergence of the populist radical-right party known as Chega ('Enough!') can be likened to a political phenomenon rising in the dawn of Portuguese politics. Established in 2019 by André Ventura, a former member of the Social Democratic Party (PSD), Chega has garnered recognition for its right-wing orientation (Mendes 2022). The party's platform is distinguished by nationalist and anti-establishment discourse (Mendes 2022; Marchi and Zuquete 2024), coupled with Christian-oriented viewpoints on socio-cultural issues, opposing what it perceives as the "silent cultural revolution" stemming from "wokeism", as was recently said by the leader during the European CPAC: "The biggest war of our time, it is not military or even political. The biggest war of our time, it's a cultural war. (...) But nothing is more important than our identity, our Christian identity, that we must defend at all costs" (ChegaTv 2023b). Furthermore, at Chega's congress preceding the 2024 elections, Ventura emphatically declared his intention to defund gender ideology programs: "Are there '400 million' euros for gender equality? The facts regarding three statements by Ventura at the Chega Convention concerning all that money we are going to allocate to gender ideologies and purportedly to promote any form of gender equality (...), I will take all that money, those 400-some million euros, just for next year (...)" (Costa 2024). Additionally, during this period, Ventura expressed his dissatisfaction with the Socialist Party's bill on gender identity ideology and the implementation of shared bathrooms and changing rooms in public schools based on children's self-identity in a video on Chega's

YouTube channel: “This is fanaticism, without value, a danger to our children that we had a duty to draw attention to. Chega did its part to denounce what is happening. (...) Children share their most intimate spaces, girls and boys, where they can choose the name, they want to be addressed by and change their administrative identification documents.” (ChegaTv 2023a). These remarks from Ventura, alongside those previously cited, clearly indicate an agenda against progressive movements related to gender ideology and LGBTQ+ issues (TVIPlayer 2021), framed as a Culture War concerning identity and Christian values, as argued by some scholars (Zuquete 2018).

The party adopted the name “Enough!” to express its discontent with mainstream political elite policies and agendas, particularly those from leftist orientations. These policies are seen as conflicting with national interests, sovereignty, and values traditionally associated with conservatism. Chega articulates a strong opposition to post-materialistic issues—abortion, same-sex marriage, and gender identity—framing these within the ‘wokeism’ narrative prevalent in the left’s progressive spectrum. This opposition is evident through the analysis of members’ opinions and speeches, collected from interviews and political addresses. For instance, MP Pedro Frazão states, “abortion has claimed the lives of over two hundred thousand children” (ChegaTv 2023c), reflecting a stance rooted in Christian principles of life’s sanctity. This aligns with scholarly studies categorizing Chega as a form of religious populism (Moniz and Lino 2024), resonant with conservative values highlighted in the contemporary literature (Mendes 2022; Moniz and Lino 2024; Marchi and Zuquete 2024).

In parliament, MP Rita Matias critiques orthodox Marxism, attributing the emergence of modern “woke movements” and cultural conflicts from social justice in Western societies to re-interpretations by intellectuals and subsequent postmodern thinkers. Matias argues, “Communism faltered in the West (...) Marxist scholars acknowledged this setback, with the Frankfurt School probing why the masses rejected communism, laying blame on the Christian fabric of the West. Here, where a family embodies a man, a woman, and their offspring (...) the West faces cultural, not economic, peril” (ChegaTv 2023e). Matias further contends that contemporary progressive movements, counter Christian values by endorsing abortion over pro-life principles and challenging traditional family constructs embedded in Christian teachings. Critically assessing LGBTQ+ movements and gender ideologies, she asserts, “A man remains a man, never becoming a woman” (ChegaTv 2023e).

The formation of Chega is characterized by the involvement of individuals previously affiliated with more established political parties, primarily the PSD (Social Democratic Party) and notably the CDS (Marchi and Zuquete 2024). Among these individuals, Pedro Pessanha, Diogo Pacheco de Amorim, and António Tânger Correia, all currently serving as deputies for Chega, had previous affiliations with the CDS party. They collaborate with Pedro Frazão and the leader of the populist party, André Ventura, both former members of PSD. Additionally, notable former members of PSD who have aligned with Chega include António Pinto Pereira and Tiago Moreira de Sá. The majority of the individuals involved in Chega’s leadership identify as professed Catholics and currently serve as deputies for the party. The political party adopted the slogan “God, Fatherland, Family and Work” which bears a striking resemblance to the fundamental principles of Salazar’s Fascist and Catholic regime, as outlined in the 2022 Political Program (Chega 2021).

In the 2024 party program for the national elections, Chega has devoted significant attention to the ongoing Culture War and what they describe as the “dangerous woke culture” that promotes gender ideology and other concepts. The program states: “Promote the fight against woke culture and gender ideology that seeks to infiltrate Portuguese society through educational institutions. (...) A pro-life culture identifies that, in Portugal, pregnant women who are alone are four times more likely to have an abortion (...) Chega vehemently opposes environmental policies that disregard the impact on ordinary citizens, characterizing such policies as a “Trojan horse” for the globalist, neo-Marxist “woke” agenda.” (Chega’s Electoral Program 2024)

According to recent interviews analyzed, the Christian social movement and political party “Portugal Pró-Vida/Portuguese Pro-Life” (PPV) argued that the existence of the Chega party is significantly tied to the coalition formed in 2019. Consequently, the ties of Chega to conservative Christian movements are undeniable. Manuel Matias, father of MP Rita Matias, was the founder of the Pro-Life Party that eventually dissolved and joined Chega. The Family Values Party (FVP) orchestrated a solemn march to champion the pro-life cause and articulate their staunch opposition to abortion, garnering commendation from several distinguished Portuguese bishops (Tiago et al. 2024). This event marked a pivotal moment in April 2024, with Chega members participating. Notably, the Christian social movement “Leave the Children Alone”, spearheaded by Maria Helena da Costa, has revealed profound affiliations with Chega. Da Costa herself assumed a militant role within Chega’s ranks (Marchi 2024). Similarly, the burgeoning Brazilian Evangelical community in Portugal has fervently embraced and publicly endorsed Chega (Carvalho 2020; Marchi 2024), culminating in the election of two Evangelical MPs, Pedro Correia and Daniel Teixeira, during the recent 2024 electoral cycle (Malhado 2024).

Conversely, certain Christian communities have also thrown their weight behind the ADN party, significantly influencing its electoral ascent, particularly through the Evangelical vote. As elucidated by political scientist José Filipe Pinto, the strategic decision by leader Bruno Fialho to appoint three Evangelical pastors as representatives in the recent elections, as reported in *Expresso* (Almeida 2024), underpins the party’s newfound electoral traction (Ferreira 2024). This trajectory aligns harmoniously with the impassioned appeal by Marcos Feliciano, a stalwart of Bolsonaro’s circle, urging “all evangelical leaders and faithful in Portugal to rally behind ADN on the pivotal election day of March 10th” (ADN 2024).

In the Portuguese socio-cultural and political realms, the narratives of legalized abortion, same-sex marriage, and gender identity ideology have already woven themselves into the fabric of public discourse. A succinct panorama reveals that gender identity posits gender as a social construct. Similar to other populist right-wing leaders, like Bolsonaro, there is the prevailing belief among some that the country has been corrupted by “cultural Marxism” (Wink 2023; Rocha 2021), a belief shared by Chega in their political program for 2024.

The progressive doctrinal principles propagated by the Left Bloc party, coupled with the backing of numerous adherents within the Socialist party, manifest eloquently in their public discourses and political agendas. Both these parties, in conjunction with the Communist Portuguese Party and the newly formed party LIVRE, regard social justice issues as inherently fundamental. Their commitment stems from a moral-ethical impetus, as elucidated by Sousa and Silva (2023), seeking to propel society towards loftier and higher standards. Addressing the Constitutional Court’s verdict, the Left Bloc has proactively set forth a proposition for the establishment of a dedicated framework, a strategic response designed to safeguard the exercise of the right to self-determination of gender identity within educational institutions. At the vanguard of this endeavor stands Joana Mortágua, the deputy of the Left Bloc, who ardently strives to bolster the assurance enveloping the right to self-determination. Her efforts extend to encompassing aspects of gender identity, gender expression, and the preservation of sexual characteristics within the educational sphere. In alignment with critical theorists from the Institute of Social Research, Mortágua articulates the profound injustice ingrained within the patriarchal power structure that oppresses women’s rights, particularly in the context of abortion and sexual liberation. Her advocacy reverberates with a dramatic resonance as she endeavors to reshape societal perspectives on self-determination and rectify systemic inequalities: “It is a cause that encompasses all of us, regardless of our identity, gender, or sexual orientation. It is an assertion of our control over our own sexuality. The patriarchal and capitalist system seeks to exert control over our bodies. Within this cause, we persist in addressing vital issues such as the right to abortion (legally achieved but with stagnations and challenges in its concrete implementation) and the right to sexual education.” (Mortágua 2022) The

sexual education promulgated by the Left Bloc extends beyond conventional boundaries to encompass explorations of gender identity, LGBTQ+ issues, and heightened sexual awareness from a tender age, all in pursuit of fostering healthier and more informed sexual relationships.

In a significant development in May 2023, Joana Mortágua championed a legislative project pertaining to gender self-determination. Motivated by a nuanced understanding of the expansive gender spectrum countering the conventional and binary gender framework, this legislative endeavor advocates for the right of intersex and non-binary individuals to abstain from explicitly specifying their gender on Portuguese Identity Cards. As aptly stated by Mortágua, “The society is more diverse than the identities of man and woman. And democracy must adapt its rules to finally recognize this right to existence and identity” (Esquerda 2023).

Populist parties across the Western world consider these progressive ideologies, such as the concept of marriage (or traditional marriage) and the understanding of traditional family dynamics and structure, in short, as an attack towards identity (Zuquete 2018). Henceforth, the burgeoning embrace of progressive ideologies of social justice by mainstream political actors throughout the Western sphere is perceived by some as the primary impetus behind the ascendancy of right-wing populist parties. The radical right distinguishes itself from traditional Christian center-right parties as they argue a contention that mainstream parties are deemed remiss in addressing or acknowledging the paramount need to combat ‘wokeism’, and recent studies show that traditional center-right or conservative right parties have shifted to a more progressive and post-materialistic view of cultural values to adapt to the increased secularization in the West, whereas more orthodox Christian conservatives tend to shift to the radical right due to their steadfast position against these issues (Bale and Kaltwasser 2021).

Chega argues the current socio-cultural and political landscape in Portugal is suffering a form of “ideological indoctrination” (Gomes 2021); this perception has further fueled the ongoing Culture War, leading to calls for an education reform (Gomes 2021). In other words, despite sharing certain aspects with its populist and European counterparts in its approach to “gender ideology” particularly concerning the family, Chega naturally seeks to eradicate this ideology from educational systems (Gomes 2021), also recently shown in their 2024 electoral program and website political manifesto: “Reject the dictatorship of Gender Ideology; reject on-demand abortion or taxpayer-funded sex change surgeries.” (Chega 2019a).

In a more recent development, specifically in April 2023, the Socialist Party proposed in the Portuguese Parliament the Bill No. 332/XV/1st (Projeto de Lei n.º 332/XV/1.), arguing for the auto-determination of gender in public schools and public bathrooms, meaning that children have the right to proclaim the gender they identified as, instead of their biological sex from birth. The political party Chega voted against this Bill, and MP Rita Matias during her speech expressed: “What these parties are proposing today is that in the bathroom (...) where your daughter undresses and takes a bath, male classmates can also enter (...) This chamber prioritizes gender ideology and the indoctrination of your child. And only Chega has firmly opposed this tragedy.” (ChegaTv 2023d). This opposition was particularly evident in its stance against the establishment of public mixed-gender bathrooms in public schools (Cunha 2022). According to Chega’s deputy Rita Matias, articulated in October 2023, she asserted that “Marxist scholars and professors” propagate what she terms as “Marxist propaganda” through concepts such as critical race theory, post-colonialism, or gender studies, and what commonly populist-right wing parties claim to be “cultural Marxism” (Marchi 2024) or ‘wokeism’.

This perspective extends to the issue of public mixed-gender bathrooms, as already demonstrated, with Matias contending that it mirrors the perceived natural consequences of critical theory and Marxist ideology, positing that everything in society is merely a social construct (Sapo Polígrafo 2023). The rhetoric of the populist right wing frequently asserts that issues pertaining to social justice are indicative of Marxist propaganda as believed

by Trump, Viktor Orban, or the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland. This sentiment has been recently articulated by anarcho-capitalists and the newly inaugurated President of Argentina, Milei, who contends that the “post-Marxist” agenda poses a threat to his nation. In his own words, “(…) they moved class struggle into other aspects of life. For example, the struggle between black and white (Black Lives Matter), the entire LGBT lobby, everything related to radical feminism (…). This agenda also includes the agenda of man against nature, where man is the one supposedly harming nature” (Javier Milei 2023).

In Portugal, Iniciativa Liberal (IL) is a political party positioned within the center-right and liberal spectrum, established in 2017. The party espouses classical liberal tenets, endorsing principles of limited government intervention, free-market policies, and individual freedoms, while concurrently adopting more progressive socio-cultural stances. However, a schism within IL resulted in the departure of at least 25 members, citing the party’s perceived alignment with “far-left and radical left agendas” on social justice issues (Malhado 2023), after the IL’s position of approving the bill regarding gender ideology from the Socialist Party. Among these figures, the resonances of names such as Nuno Simões de Melo and Mariana Mendes Silvestre linger prominently. Nuno Simões de Melo contends that the Portuguese political landscape and the Iniciativa Liberal have succumbed to the allure of social justice progressive narratives, colloquially identified as the “Woke culture”. Delving into a deeper elucidation, Melo posits that “the IL must confront the veering of liberalism towards woke, identity-based, or segregationist causes—advocates of cancel culture and, notably, adherents of cultural Marxism.” (Pires 2022), resembling Milei’s and even Chega’s position on the topic.

Their discontent resonates in unison, marking a decisive “tipping point” that shattered the unity: the party’s entanglement with resolutions conceived within the intellectual crucibles of the Socialist Party and the Left Bloc (Malhado 2023). This phenomenon, a dramatic crescendo, may encapsulate the echoes of conservatism resonating within Portuguese society: a society steeped in religiosity and nurtured by Christian-oriented families (Teixeira 2012), viewing ideologies of gender, LGBTQ+, abortion, and same-sex marriages as menacing harbingers, threatening the very fabric of national cultural values and portending the specter of societal secularization. In response, a cadre of politicians, spanning the spectrum of political affiliations, voice their discontent, departing the fold in search of refuge. In essence, after the March 2024 elections, Chega elected 48 deputies, of which at least 10 previously belonged to other political parties, including Nuno Simões de Melo that joined the party due to Chega’s stances against ‘wokeism’ and social issues from the Culture War. Bale and Kaltwasser (2021) suggest that mainstream right parties may have adapted to an electorate that has gradually embraced liberal progressive values due to the ‘silent cultural revolution’ as elucidated by Inglehart (1977). Consequently, those maintaining their cultural conservatism may have transitioned from the mainstream right to the radical right wing in the ‘counter-revolution’. As such, some members or militants may perceive Chega as the solitary “solution” to staunch the tide of progressive and secular policies, perceived as affronts to the sanctity of Christian doctrine. The stage is set, and the political theater unfolds. The delicate connection existing within Christian spheres, such as Opus Dei, and Chega remains shrouded in ambiguity. Historically, the organization has chosen to maintain a certain distance from political affiliations, further enhancing the veil of uncertainty that surrounds their engagement (Marchi 2024).

In the wake of the 2022 electoral winds, leader André Ventura found himself drawn to the grandeur of Almudena’s cathedral in Madrid, a sacred pilgrimage to offer gratitude to the divine. In his fervent gestures, Ventura invoked the name of José Maria Escrivá, the visionary founder of Opus Dei, weaving the threads of divine providence into his political opinions (Correio da Manhã 2022). A whispered belief emerged—a conviction that a celestial mandate had been bequeathed upon him, entrusted to navigate the labyrinthine corridors of Portuguese politics. Opus Dei, a sonnet woven into the annals of Roman Catholicism, unfurls its tale. Born on the breath of Saint Josemaría Escrivá on 2 October 1928, in the soulful landscapes of Spain, it stands as a personal prelature of the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, a recent incident involved Opus Dei's school, "Colégio Planalto", planning to convene a meeting between the two entities. Nevertheless, the gathering was called off by Opus Dei, citing Chega's stance on the obligatory use of masks for children as the reason for the cancellation (Figueiredo 2022). The periodical *Visão*, a considerable contingent of Evangelical Christians, manifests notable endorsement for the populist faction Chega (Carvalho 2020), particularly in the realm of social justice issues encompassing abortion, LGBTQ+ concerns, and the like. Moreover, a noteworthy cohort of influential members within the political party align with this Christian denomination (Carvalho 2020), around 67.9% according to Marchi and Zuquete (2024).

The stance of the Chega party on gender identity has been previously explored, and now attention turns to its position on abortion. In this realm, Chega adopts a more conservative standpoint, arguably the most conservative stance in the absence of CDS representation in the Portuguese Parliament (Figueiredo 2022) until the recent 2024 elections in Portugal. While a comprehensive consensus within Chega, the party tends to harbor traditional and conservative perspectives that closely align with Christian doctrine, as articulated in their "Political Manifesto" on their official website: "Tyranny, which is the power without reason to steal another's life through any form of murder, be it abortion, infanticide, eugenics, or euthanasia. (...) An educational system accessible to all, aimed at consolidating Judeo-Christian cultural and civilizational values, without interference from movements affiliated with so-called 'gender ideology' and 'cultural Marxism' (Chega 2019b, pp. 4, 43). In the year 2023, Pedro Frazão, the representative of Chega, publicly avowed his status as a distinguished adherent of the Catholic faith, and a member of the Catholic organization Opus Dei, when he addressed the Left Bloc party within the parliamentary realm. In this discourse, he castigated Joana Mortágua and her political faction for what he perceived as the culpability for the demise of over 200,000 unborn infants since the legalization of abortion in Portugal in 2007 (ChegaTv 2023c). Furthermore, Frazão disparaged Mortágua's profound apprehensions regarding women's access to abortion in public health facilities, characterizing such concerns as tantamount to endorsing the termination of lives within maternal wombs. This perspective aligns with a conventional and conservative ethos that regards abortion not as an inherent facet of women's rights and reproductive well-being but rather as a transgression against Natural law, and the moral-ethical principles by traditional Christian societies (ChegaTv 2023c). This occurrence catalyzed the emergence of various social networks and advocacy groups, exemplified by the formation of "Deixem as crianças em Paz" (Leave the Children Alone), wherein Maria Helena Costa, a prominent Christian Evangelical activist, became a member of Chega afterwards (Marchi 2024). Hence, there exists an overlap between Christian doctrine and the populist stance on social justice issues arising from post-materialism or what they considered to be a "left-wing agenda" and the so-called "cultural Marxism" (Marchi 2024). This convergence can be attributed, in part, to the increasingly progressive positions adopted by mainstream political parties on such issues. Moreover, the diminishing relevance from CDS as a political party has played a role in the burgeoning endorsement of Christian-oriented sentiments within the ranks of Chega. A noticeable pattern has surfaced, as a significant number of former members of CDS and PSD have decided to disassociate themselves from their previous (conservative) political parties. Instead, they have chosen to align with Chega. Examples include Paulo Veiga from CDS, António Pinto Pereira from PSD, Henrique Freitas who served as Secretary of State in two PSD administrations (Santos and Monteiro 2024), and Nuno Simões de Melo from IL who joined Chega in opposition to "wokeism" (Diário de Notícias 2023).

The recent elections held in March 2024 in Portugal revealed a significant increase in electoral support for the political party Chega, which received over 18% of the vote, compared to only 7.2% two years earlier. This surge in support for Chega can be attributed to the intensifying 'Culture War' and social justice issues within the nation, rooted in Portugal's historically conservative societal outlook and Christian heritage. Notably, 67.9% of Chega supporters identify with a religious identity (Marchi and Zuquete 2024). Despite sharing cultural values with Chega and upholding conservative principles, the Portuguese

Catholic Church refrained from providing official endorsement to the party. Nonetheless, some Christian social movements have engaged in Chega's activities or expressed solidarity with the party (Marchi 2024). Moreover, Chega has been shown to recently include individuals in the party's ranks that were previously from Christian movements, such as Maria Helena and the two Evangelical MPs. Moreover, the newly formed radical right party, ADN, has also been shown to have support from Christian circles, mainly from Evangelicals, as Bolsonaro's "right-hand", Marcos Feliciano, expressed in a video that was analyzed in this research.

5. Conclusions

The gradual support of progressive social movements and the notorious cultural changes and shifts in values amongst Western societies is undeniable (Minkenberg 2022; Inglehart 1990). Oftentimes, these movements claimed to fight for liberating people from the constraints of "false consciousness" and the oppressive cultural values inherent in Western Christian countries, and these cultural changes have been identified not only as Inglehart (1990) posits as "post-material value change" but also as "third modernity", which naturally lead to secularization (Minkenberg 2022). Naturally, this upheaval led to the rise of the radical right, which argues to be the defender of Christianity (Minkenberg 2022; Cremer 2022; Immerzeel et al. 2013) in a "counter cultural revolution" (Ignazi 1992). This phenomenon has led to Christian groups and movements to support these radical right parties, as witnessed in Brazil, the United States with Donald Trump, Orbán in Hungary, Salvini and Meloni in Italy, and Putin in Russia, the latter of whom received significant backing from the Russian Orthodox Church (Moniz and Lino 2024), as well as the already-known case in Poland (Resende and Hennig 2022).

The case of Portugal is rather interesting, as the literature suggests that the Chega party is within the denomination of "religious populism", as several members, including important members such as the leader Ventura, Pedro Frazão, or Rita Matias are very well-known Catholics in their private lives. In fact, Chega is found to share similarities with other radical right parties that possess some ties to it since its creation in the movement sector, as the literature argues about the French Front National or Jobbik party (Shields 2007; Gattinara and Pirro 2018a).

Nevertheless, the support of the Portuguese Catholic Church has been found to not exist, at least in a formal and official manner, whereas some Christian social movements and Evangelical activists support Chega, as also argued by Carvalho (2020). An example is the activist Maria Helena Costa who, before being a Chega militant, belonged to the social movement "Leave the Children Alone", but also other members that previously belonged to Christian political parties or movements, such as Rita Matias or Mário Matias (Rita's father), and, recently, two Evangelical pastors who were elected MPs for the Chega party, Pedro Correia and Daniel Teixeira. Thus, the increase in Chega's electoral vote, despite having multifaceted causes, can be linked to the departure of many Christian voters and circles (including movements) from supporting CDS, a party that has experienced a decline in electoral support, as evidenced by its failure to elect a single MP in the 2019 elections. Additionally, several former members of CDS and PSD, particularly those with more conservative views, have joined Chega. This shift indicates that Christian movements and circles have transferred their support from CDS to Chega in recent years, aiming to address concerns regarding progressive cultural and religious values, as not only 67.9% of Chega members consider themselves Christians, but 24.4% of Chega's members previously belonged to another party, with 45.2% of these individuals originating from PSD and 22% from CDS-PP (Marchi and Zuquete 2024), which demonstrates what Bale and Kaltwasser (2021) suggested, that more conservative members departed from their traditional support of center-right parties to radical right options.

The findings suggest that further research must be conducted on the topic using semi-structured interviews and participant observation methods to have a deeper understanding if either the Catholic Church and Christian social movements organize events with Chega

or other radical right alternatives, such as ADN, and show their formal support for the party, similarly to external cases in other Western countries, like Poland, Hungary, Brazil, or even Italy.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- ADN. 2024. MARCOS FELICIANO DEPUTADO FEDERAL DO BRASIL APOIA AND. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmaytqLSKBw> (accessed on 18 March 2024).
- Afshari, Reza. 2007. On Historiography of Human Rights Reflections on Paul Gordon Lauren's The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen. *Human Rights Quarterly* 29: 1–67. [CrossRef]
- Agger, B. 1991. Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance. *Annual Review of Sociology* 17: 105–31. [CrossRef]
- Almeida, Carlos. 2024. O voto evangélico chegou a Portugal: ADN tornou-se alvo apetecível para alcançar a “bancada evangélica”. Available online: <https://expresso.pt/politica/2024-03-14-O-voto-evangelico-chegou-a-Portugal-ADN-tornou-se-alvo-apetecivel-para-alcancar-a-bancada-evangelica-526ae208> (accessed on 5 June 2024).
- Arzheimer, Kai, and Elisabeth Carter. 2009. Christian religiosity and voting for West European radical right parties. *West European Politics* 32: 985–1011. [CrossRef]
- Bale, Tim, and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2021. The Mainstream Right in Western Europe: Caught between the Silent Revolution and Silent Counter-Revolution. In *Riding the Populist Wave: Europe's Mainstream Right in Crisis*. Edited by Tim Bale and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–37.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1986. *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. München: Beck.
- Berman, Sheri. 2021. The Causes of Populism in the West. *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 71–88. [CrossRef]
- Betz, Hans. 1994. *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bloom, A. 1987. *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Bolton, Kerry. 2019. *Cultural Marxism: Origins, Development and Significance*. Athens: Athens Institute for Education & Research. Available online: https://jspes.org/samples/JSPE543_3_4_bolton.pdf (accessed on 2 June 2024).
- Caiani, Manuela. 2022. 'Movements and Parties: An Introduction'. In *Movements and Parties*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available online: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/movements-and-parties/introduction/C1C80465179CEF63E8A9DCB43017CD27> (accessed on 13 March 2024).
- Cammaerts, Bart. 2022. The abnormalisation of social justice: The 'anti-woke culture war' discourse in the UK. *Discourse & Society* 33: 730–43.
- Carvalho, Miguel. 2020. Investigação: Os segredos do pregador Ventura. Visão. Available online: <https://visao.pt/actualidade/politica/2020-05-20-investigacao-os-segredos-do-pregador-ventura/> (accessed on 22 March 2024).
- Chega. 2021. PROGRAMA ELEITORAL LEGISLATIVAS 2022. Available online: <https://partidochega.pt/index.php/2021/12/23/programa-eleitoral-legislativas-2022-2/> (accessed on 23 March 2024).
- Chega. 2019a. Manifesto Político Fundador. Available online: <https://partidochega.pt/index.php/manifesto/> (accessed on 23 March 2024).
- Chega. 2019b. Programa Político Chega. Available online: https://raquelcardeiravarela.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/programa_polc38dtico_2019_chega-2.pdf (accessed on 23 March 2024).
- ChegaTv. 2023a. André Ventura INDIGNADO com nova lei de identidade de género. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40IBMjHBIJw> (accessed on 22 March 2024).
- ChegaTv. 2023b. Líderes europeus aplaudem discurso de André Ventura na Hungria. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i83gyXD-w34> (accessed on 26 March 2024).
- ChegaTv. 2023c. O aborto é, em primeiro lugar, a principal causa de morte para os fetos abortados. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVrpjzhieE0&t=8s> (accessed on 26 March 2024).
- ChegaTv. 2023d. O CHEGA é contra as casas de banho mistas nas escolas. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMCXGIVfYpo> (accessed on 10 June 2024).
- ChegaTv. 2023e. Que fique claro: Um homem é um homem e nunca poderá ser uma mulher. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeHUPjh1_ns (accessed on 5 June 2024).

- Clark, Christopher, and Wolfram Kaiser. 2003. *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Correio da Manhã. 2022. André Ventura agradece resultados eleitorais ao fundador da Opus Dei. Available online: <https://www.cmjornal.pt/politica/detalhe/andre-ventura-agradece-resultados-eleitorais-ao-fundador-da-opus-dei> (accessed on 5 June 2024).
- Costa, Fernando. 2024. Há “400 milhões” para igualdade de género? Os factos sobre três afirmações de Ventura na Convenção do Chega. Público. Available online: <https://www.publico.pt/2024/01/14/politica/noticia/ha-400-milhoes-igualdade-genero-factos-tres-afirmacoes-ventura-convencao-chega-2076786> (accessed on 7 June 2024).
- Coyne, Jerry. 2022. Did Wokeness come from Marxism? In *Why Evolution Is True*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cremer, Tobias. 2022. Defenders of the Faith? How shifting social cleavages and the rise of identity politics are reshaping right-wing populists’ attitudes towards religion in the West. *Religion, State and Society* 50: 532–52. [CrossRef]
- Crews, Chris. 2023. The Far Right Culture War on ESG. *Religions* 14: 1257. [CrossRef]
- Cunha, Mariana. 2022. Crianças a mudar de nome? Casas de banho vão ser mistas? Doze perguntas e respostas sobre a nova lei para as escolas. Available online: <https://observador.pt/especiais/criancas-a-mudar-de-nome-casas-de-banho-va-ser-mistas-doze-perguntas-e-respostas-sobre-a-nova-lei-para-as-escolas/> (accessed on 5 June 2024).
- Della Porta, Donatella, and Mario Diani. 2006. *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Diário de Notícias. 2023. Antigo líder da ala conservadora da IL anuncia adesão ao Chega. Available online: <https://www.dn.pt/politica/antigo-lider-da-ala-conservadora-da-il-anuncia-adesao-ao-chega-17394286.html/> (accessed on 13 March 2014).
- Dobbelaere, Karel, and Alfonso Pérez-Agote. 2015. *The Intimate. Polity and the Catholic Church: Laws about Life, Death and the Family in So-Called Catholic Countries. Series: KADOC-Studies on Religion, Culture and Society*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, vol. 15. [CrossRef]
- Doherty, Brian, and Timothy Doyle. 2006. Beyond borders: Transnational politics, social movements and modern environmentalisms. *Environmental Politics* 15: 5. [CrossRef]
- Dowland, Seth. 2009. “Family Values” and the Formation of a Christian Right Agenda. *Church History* 78: 606–31. [CrossRef]
- Draaisma, Linde, and Erin Wilson. 2021. Secularism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Politics and Ideology*. London: Routledge, pp. 23–36.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1990. *Nationalism: Irony and Commitment*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Esquerda. 2023. A Luta Pelos Direitos das Pessoas Trans faz Toda a Sociedade Avançar. Available online: <https://www.esquerda.net/videos/luta-pelos-direitos-das-peopleas-trans-faz-toda-sociedade-avancar/86336> (accessed on 5 June 2024).
- Federação Portuguesa pela Vida. 2024. A AD e o Chega querem conversar sobre o Manifesto VIDA 24’. Available online: <https://www.federacaopelavida.pt/post/a-ad-e-o-chega-querem-conversar-sobre-o-manifesto-vida-24> (accessed on 19 March 2024).
- Ferreira, Daniela. 2024. ADN. O partido que esteve quase a entrar no Parlamento. Sol. Available online: <https://sol.sapo.pt/2024/03/12/adn-o-partido-que-esteve-quase-a-entrar-no-parlamento/> (accessed on 19 March 2024).
- Figueiredo, Inês. 2022. Só Chega quer reabrir discussão sobre o aborto em Portugal (e pouco). Obseador. Available online: <https://observador.pt/especiais/so-chega-quer-reabrir-discussao-sobre-o-aborto-em-portugal-e-pouco/> (accessed on 18 June 2024).
- Foucault, Michel. 1976. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Furedi, Frank. 2017. *Populism and the European Culture Wars: The Conflict of Values between Hungary and the EU*. London: Routledge.
- Gattinara, Pietro, and Andrea Pirro. 2018a. Movement parties of the far right: The organization and strategies of nativist collective actors. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 23: 367–83.
- Gattinara, Pietro, and Andrea Pirro. 2018b. The far right as social movement. *European Societies* 21: 447–62. [CrossRef]
- Gomes, Hélder. 2021. ‘Chega traz a Guerra Cultural. E começa Pelas Escolas’, Expresso, 11 July. Available online: <https://expresso.pt/politica/2021-07-11-Chega-traz-a-guerra-cultural.-E-comeca-pelas-escolas-91553472> (accessed on 16 March 2024).
- Green, John, James Guth, Carwin Smidt, and Lyman Kellstedt. 1996. Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front. *Review of Religious Research* 39: 190.
- Haynes, Jeff. 2014. *Religion in Global Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Hennig, Anna. 2022. Whose War? About Nature and Analysis of “Culture Wars” in Europe and Beyond. *Culture Wars Papers*, no. 16, Illiberalism Studies Program. Available online: <https://www.illiberalism.org/whose-war-the-nature-and-analysis-of-culture-wars-in-europe-and-beyond> (accessed on 15 May 2024).
- Hennig, A., and Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmänn. 2020. *Religion and Illiberal Politics. Concepts, Actors, and Identity Narratives in Europe and Beyond*. Frankfurt (Main) and New York: Campus.
- Hunter, James. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hutter, Swen. 2014. *Protesting Culture and Economics in Western Europe: New Cleavages in Left and Right Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ignazi, Piero. 1992. The silent counter-revolution: Hypotheses in the Emergence of Extreme Right-wing Parties in Europe. *European Journal of Political Research* 22: 3–34. [CrossRef]
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1990. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Pippa Norris. 2019. *Trump, Brexit, and the Rise of Populism: Economic Have-Nots and Cultural Backlash. Faculty Research*. Working Paper no. 16-026. Cambridge: Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government.

- Immerzeel, Tim, Eva Jaspers, and Marcel Lubbers. 2013. Religion as Catalyst or Restraint of Radical Right Voting? *West European Politics* 36: 946–68. [CrossRef]
- Kaufmann, Eric. 2022. *The Politics of the Culture Wars in Contemporary America*. New York: Manhattan Institute.
- Kitschelt, Herbert. 2006. Movements and parties: A political perspective. *Comparative Political Studies* 39: 687–715.
- Krzyżanowski, Michał. 2020. Discursive shifts and the normalisation of racism: Imaginaries of immigration, moral panics and the discourse of contemporary right-wing populism. *Social Semiotics* 30: 503–27. [CrossRef]
- Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.
- Levin, Mark. 2021. *American Marxism*. New York: Threshold Editions, Generic.
- Lo Mascolo, Gionathan, and Riccardo Marchi. 2024. The Christian Right in Europe: Movements, Networks, and Denominations. In *Christian Mobilization in Portugal in the 21st Century*. Edited by R. Marchi. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lopes, Maria. 2013. D. Manuel Clemente diz que leis sobre aborto e casamento gay não espelham convicção da maioria dos portugueses. Público. Available online: <https://www.publico.pt/2013/11/14/sociedade/noticia/igreja-portuguesa-reafirmase-contra-aborto-e-casamento-gay-mas-nao-fecha-portas-ao-dialogo-1612525> (accessed on 12 March 2024).
- Malhado, Alexandre. 2024. Chega elege os dois primeiros deputados evangélicos. Sábado. Available online: <https://www.sabado.pt/portugal/detalhe/chega-elege-os-dois-primeiros-deputados-evangelicos> (accessed on 12 March 2024).
- Malhado, Inês. 2023. Debandada na IL de militantes descontentes com liderança de Rui Rocha. Jornal de Notícias. Available online: <https://www.jn.pt/1921319759/debandada-na-il-de-militantes-descontentes-com-lideranca-de-rui-rocha/> (accessed on 24 March 2024).
- Marchi, Riccardo, and José Zuquete. 2024. Far right populism in Portugal: The political culture of Chega's members. *Análise Social*, Vol. 59 N.º 251. Available online: <https://revistas.rcaap.pt/analisesocial/article/view/36512/25221> (accessed on 22 May 2024).
- Marchi, Riccardo. 2024. Conspiracionismo de extrema-direita entre Estado Novo e transição democrática (1945–1975). *Revista de História das Ideias* 42: 145–66.
- Margalit, Yotam. 2019. Economic insecurity and the causes of populism, reconsidered. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33: 152–70. [CrossRef]
- Marzouki, Nadia, Duncan McDonnell, and Oliver Roy. 2016. *Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion*. London: Hurst.
- Mendes, Mariana. 2022. 'Enough' of What? An Analysis of Chega's Populist Radical Right Agenda. *South European Society and Politics* 26: 329–53. [CrossRef]
- Millei, Javier. 2023. Tucker Carlson Interviews Argentinian Presidential Candidate Javier Milei. [vídeo]. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0-8tAtjStM> (accessed on 12 March 2024).
- Minkenberg, Michael. 1992. The new right in Germany: The transformation of conservatism and the extreme right. *European Journal of Political Research* 22: 55–81. [CrossRef]
- Minkenberg, Michael. 2000. The renewal of the radical right: Between modernity and antimodernity. *Government and Opposition* 35: 170–88. [CrossRef]
- Minkenberg, Michael. 2018. Between party and movement: Conceptual and empirical considerations of the radical right's organizational boundaries and mobilization processes. *European Societies* 21: 463–86. [CrossRef]
- Minkenberg, Michael. 2022. The radical right in Europe: Cultural shifts and religious nativism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Politics and Ideology*. Edited by Jeffrey Haynes. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 91–105.
- Mirrlees, T. 2018. The Alt-Right's Discourse of "Cultural Marxism": A Political Instrument of Intersectional Hate. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 39: 49–69.
- Moniz, Jorge, and José Lino. 2024. Religious populism in Portugal: The cases of Chega! and CDS—People's Party. *Análise Social* 59: 2–30.
- Monteiro, Ricardo. 2012. A descriminalização do aborto em Portugal: Estado, movimentos de mulheres e partidos políticos. *Análise Social* 204: xlvii.
- Mortágua, J. 2020. Na despenalização do aborto escreveu-se direito por linhas tortas. *Esquerda.net*. Available online: <https://www.esquerda.net/opiniao/na-despenalizacao-do-aborto-escreveu-se-direito-por-linhas-tortas/65860> (accessed on 20 March 2024).
- Mortágua, Joana. 2022. Uma maré feminista. *Esquerda*. Available online: <https://www.esquerda.net/opiniao/uma-mare-feminista/79803> (accessed on 20 March 2024).
- Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mudde, Cas. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. London: Polity Press.
- Mudde, Cas. 2021. *Populism in the Twenty-First Century: An Illiberal Democratic Response to Undemocratic Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Muis, Jasper, and Tim Immerzeel. 2017. Causes and consequences of the rise of populist radical right parties and movements in Europe. *Current Sociology Review* 65: 909–30. [CrossRef]
- Namaste, Ki. 1994. The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality. *Sociological Theory* 12: 220–31. [CrossRef]
- PEC. 2006. Razões Para Escolher a Vida. Available online: <https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.pt/v1/razoes-para-escolher-a-vida/> (accessed on 20 May 2024).

- PEC. 2009. Em Favor do Verdadeiro Casamento. Available online: <https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.pt/v1/em-favor-do-verdadeiro-casamento/> (accessed on 20 March 2024).
- PEC. 2013. A Propósito da Ideologia do Género. Available online: <https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.pt/v1/a-proposito-da-ideologia-do-genero/> (accessed on 20 March 2024).
- PEC. 2015. 186.^a Assembleia Plenária da Conferência Episcopal Portuguesa. Available online: <https://www.conferenciaepiscopal.pt/v1/discurso-de-abertura/> (accessed on 13 March 2024).
- Peker, Efe. 2022. Finding Religion: Immigration and the Populist (Re)Discovery of Christian Heritage in Western and Northern Europe. *Religions* 13: 158. [CrossRef]
- Permoser, Julia. 2019. What are Morality Policies? The Politics of Values in a Post-Secular World. *Political Studies Review* 17: 310–25. [CrossRef]
- Phiri, Peter. 2023. Wokeism: A Critical Analysis of its Impact on Society and the Emergence of Woke Capitalism. *Divers Equal Health Care* 20: 20.
- Pilkington, Hilary. 2022. Why Should We Care What Extremists Think? The Contribution of Emic Perspectives to Understanding the “right-wing extremist” Mind-Set. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 51: 318–46. [CrossRef]
- Pires, José. 2022. Simões de Melo quer uma Iniciativa Liberal menos ‘woke’ e mais nacional. SOL. Available online: <https://sol.sapo.pt/2022/09/26/simoes-de-melo-quer-uma-iniciativa-liberal-menos-woke-e-mais-nacional/> (accessed on 16 February 2024).
- Pluckrose, Helen, and James Lindsay. 2021. *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity—And Why this Harms Everybody*. Durham: Pitchstone Publishing.
- Ramaswamy, Vivek. 2021. *Inside Corporate America’s Social Justice Scam*. New York: Woke, Inc.
- Reich, William. 1972. *The Sexual Revolution*. Translated by Theodore Wolfe. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, p. 28.
- Resende, Madalena. 2022. The Relations Between the Catholic Church and the Political Arena in Portugal. In *The Oxford Handbook of Portuguese Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Resende, Madalena, and Anna Hennig. 2022. Polish Catholic Bishops, Nationalism and Liberal Democracy. *Religions* 12: 94. [CrossRef]
- Rocha, João. 2021. *Guerra Cultural e Retórica do Ódio*. Goiânia: Caminhos.
- Rzepka, Agnieszka, Jan Fazlagic, and Imdiyas Ahamed. 2023. Measuring woke culture in universities: A diagnostic approach. *Journal of Modern Science* 54: 488–509. [CrossRef]
- Rydgren, Jens. 2005. *Movements of Exclusion: Radical Right-Wing Populism in the Western World*. New York: Nova Publishers.
- Santos, João, and Lucília Monteiro. 2024. Os reforços do Chega que André Ventura anda a “contratar” aos outros partidos da direita portuguesa. Visão. Available online: <https://visao.pt/atualidade/politica/legislativas-2024/2024-01-14-os-reforcos-do-chega-que-andre-ventura-anda-a-contratar-aos-outros-partidos-da-direita-portuguesa/> (accessed on 24 March 2024).
- Sapo Polígrafo. 2023. Rita Matias critica “marxismo” dos balneários mistos mas Chega propôs casas-de-banho mistas nas escolas? Available online: <https://poligrafo.sapo.pt/fact-check/rita-matias-critica-marxismo-dos-balnearios-mistos-mas-chega-propos-casas-de-banho-mistas-nas-escolas> (accessed on 23 March 2024).
- Scheiring, Gábor, Manuel Alarcón, Alexandru Moise, Courtney McNamara, and David Stuckler. 2024. The Populist Backlash Against Globalization: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence. *British Journal of Political Science* 54: 892–916. [CrossRef]
- Shields, James. 2007. *The Extreme Right in France From Pétain to Le Pen*. London: Routledge.
- Shiner, Larry. 1967. The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6: 207–20. [CrossRef]
- Sides, John, Michael Tesler, and Lynn Vavreck. 2019. *Identity Crisis: The 2016 Presidential Campaign and the Battle for the Meaning of America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, David, Lee Boag, Connor Keegan, and Alice Butler-Warke. 2023. Land of Woke and Glory? The Conceptualisation and Framing of “Wokeness” in UK Media and Public Discourses. *The Public* 30: 513–33. [CrossRef]
- Sobande, Francesca, Kanai Akane, and Zeng Natasha. 2022. The Hypervisibility and Discourses of ‘Wokeness’ in Digital Culture. *Media, Culture & Society* 44: 1576–87. [CrossRef]
- Sousa, Tiago, and Patricia Silva. 2023. Religião e políticas de moralidade em Portugal: Dos argumentos às estratégias de intervenção. *Análise Social* 58: 294–320.
- Stark, Rodney. 1999. Secularization, R.I.P. *Sociology of Religion* 60: 249–73. [CrossRef]
- Suen, Leslie, Mitchell R. Lunn, Katie Katuzny, Sacha Finn, Laura Duncan, Jae Sevelius, Annesa Flentje, Matthew R. Capriotti, Micah E. Lubensky, Carolyn Hunt, and et al. 2020. What Sexual and Gender Minority People Want Researchers to Know About Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Questions: A Qualitative Study. Available online: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32875381/> (accessed on 24 March 2024).
- Teixeira, Alfredo. 2012. *Identidades Religiosas em Portugal. Representações, Valores e Práticas—2011*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos e Sondagens de Opinião e Centro de Estudos de Religiões e Culturas—UCP.
- Tiago, J., P. Ravara, and E. Bastos. 2024. Contra a eutanásia e o aborto, centenas caminharão “pela vida” em todo o país. SIC Notícias. Available online: <https://sicnoticias.pt/pais/2024-04-06-Contra-a-eutanasia-e-o-aborto-centenas-caminhar-pela-vida-em-todo-o-pais-6e7dc473> (accessed on 12 May 2024).
- TVIPlayer. 2021. Ventura quer a “ideologia de género queimada da história de Portugal”. Available online: <https://tviplayer.iol.pt/programa/jornal-das-8/53c6b3903004dc006243d0cf/video/60e1fa760cf29ea8605c1251> (accessed on 24 March 2024).
- Van der Brug, Wouter, Meindert Fennema, and Jean Tillie. 2005. Why some anti-immigrant parties fail and others succeed. *Comparative Political Studies* 38: 537–73. [CrossRef]

- Vilaça, Helena, and Maria Oliveira. 2015. Ethical challenges of the catholic church in Portugal: The case of same-sex marriage. In *The Intimate. Polity and the Catholic Church: Laws about Life, Death and the Family in So-called Catholic Countries*. Lovaina: Leuven University Press, pp. 25–154.
- Wilcox, Clyde, and Leopoldo Gomez. 1990. The Christian Right and the Pro-Life Movement: An Analysis of the Sources of Political Support. *Review of Religious Research* 31: 380. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Wink, Georg. 2023. Angels at the Top, Rocks at the Bottom: Naturalized Inequality in Brazilian Conservative Thought. *Social Sciences* 12: 692. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Yazici, Emir. 2018. Nationalism and Human Rights. *Political Research Quarterly* 72: 147–61. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zilla, Claudia. 2020. *Evangelicals and Politics in Brazil: The Relevance of Religious Change in Latin America*. Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.
- Zuk, Piotr, and Pawel Zuk. 2020. 'Murderers of the Unborn' and 'Sexual Degenerates': Analysis of the 'Anti-Gender' Discourse of the Catholic Church and the Nationalist Right in Poland. *Critical Discourse Studies* 17: 566–88. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zuquete, José. 2018. *The identitarians: The movement against globalism and Islam in Europe*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.