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*Enough of What?*

A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Portuguese Far-Right Party

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## Abstract

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This thesis analyses the discourses of the Portuguese far-right party, *Chega*, through interviews and statements of its leader, André Ventura. With the rise of the political far-right in the European and Portuguese context, I focused my aim on understanding this politician's use of the legal world in his discourse. Additionally, I sought to understand the representations of women and racialized groups in Portugal. To meet this purpose, the thesis utilizes Fairclough's methodological framework of Critical Discourse analysis. Regarding the first aim, the analysis revealed that law is instrumentalized in Ventura's discourses to assert intellectual superiority and there were important inconsistencies identified, specifically regarding the democratic rule of law. Additionally, I noted an increase of accusatory and inflammatory statements in the material. Regarding the second aim, references to Roma communities were extensive but mainly implicit, and references to women were rare. Ventura often inappropriately generalizes entire groups of people, namely Roma and Muslim immigrants. I finished my arguments by referring that Ventura's discourses seem to lead towards a will to maintain the status quo, feeding from already hegemonic discourses, with no intention of emancipation of the analysed oppressed groups.

Keywords: Far-right, Critical Discourse Analysis, Legal World, *Chega*

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## Chapter 1 – Introduction

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It can't and it won't be the Constitutional court preventing *Chega* from becoming a party. It would be unacceptable in our democratic life that there is a court, whatever court that is, that prevents us from being a party, with this extraordinary force that we have (Text 1<sup>1</sup>)

This quote was said by the leader of the Portuguese far-right party (*Chega*), André Ventura, in one of the first statements available in the party's YouTube channel, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 (Text 1). The example shows how Ventura's discourse interlaces with the legal world in a way that undermines the Court's power and authority as to create tension between the party and the "system" or "elite" that the politician often refers to (see chapter 4 – Analysis and Results for a more detailed analysis of this quote).

With the rise of far-right parties in Europe in the last decades, and the particularly rapid growth of this Portuguese far-right party in Portugal, I want to focus on *Chega*'s discourses around stigmatized groups and the use of the legal world. As a politically concerned and conscious Portuguese citizen, I want to shed an academic light on this phenomenon through the analysis of Ventura's discourses.

This thesis utilizes Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Fairclough, British linguistics professor, is considered one of the founders of CDA within sociolinguistics. This framework for discourse analysis is not just a method but also intends to be a theoretical framework (Fairclough 2013, 234). Thus, this thesis utilizes the theoretical framework and concepts developed by Fairclough, specifically related to power, hegemony, and ideology. It also utilizes the concept of subtext, within an intersectional perspective (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012). Through this methodological frame, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the role of the legal world in the selected material and, additionally, to understand how certain groups of people in society are represented in his discourses.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1 for the complete list of the Texts included in this thesis

In what follows, I present the thesis' research questions, context and background relevant to the topic and the relevance of the thesis to socio-legal research. Chapter 2 condenses recent and relevant literature related to the topic, focusing on the themes of political discourse analysis, gender, race, ethnicity and far-right movements, the Portuguese context regarding racism and discrimination and the links between politics and law. Chapter 3 focuses on the chosen methods and theoretical framework. Finally, chapter 4 presents the analysis and results, and Chapter 5 the conclusion.

### **Aim and Research Questions**

This thesis aims to analyse the discourses of *Chega*, specifically through statements and speeches of the party leader, André Ventura. The aim is twofold: firstly, this thesis aims to understand how Ventura utilizes the legal system and vocabulary in his discourse and secondly, how his discourses stigmatize certain groups of people and reproduce certain stigmas, especially according to gender and race. This thesis also intends to contribute to filling a gap in the literature related to the use of the legal world and vocabulary within the political world, as mentioned in chapter 2.

Additionally, this thesis has a secondary social and political purpose, beyond the academic. As a politically conscious Portuguese citizen, and as a young woman, issues that endanger the freedom and equality of all groups of people in Portugal concern me. Seeing the rise of the far-right in Portugal, in conjunction with the same trend in the rest of Europe, has influenced the choice of this thesis' topic. I would like to understand this development further, with an academic point of view, as to hopefully contribute to societal well-being in a broader sense. This purpose could be especially significant for feminist and antiracist movements within and outside academia.

Taking into consideration the aim of this thesis, and the main themes explored in the next section, including the gap in knowledge, the following research questions will guide my analysis:

1. What part does the legal system and legal vocabulary take in *Chega*'s leader, Ventura's discourse and how are these used to support the party's political goals?
2. How does Ventura represent women and racialized groups in Portugal and how do those representations relate to the law?

### **A note on terminology**

This thesis includes a few terms that require caution when defining. Firstly, when referring to far-right parties, it is meant to be a broad categorization that includes extreme-right, dissident-right groups, hate groups, populist right and radical right (Marchi 2020b; L. Ferber 2005). This facilitates the search for past research by including a broader scope of studies of political parties. The next section also clarifies the type of far-right characteristics that are descriptive of the political party under study here and the lack of consensus within the academic community.

Another set of terms that call for clarification are stigmatization and stigma. Erving Goffman (2009), Canadian sociologist and anthropologist, conducted extensive work on the relevance of these concepts to social research, particularly to sociology and matters of deviance. The author describes stigma as a process through which a person is reduced in other people's minds to a "tainted, discounted one" (Goffman 2009, 3). Additionally, he differentiates three types of stigmas: (1) physical deformities; (2) perceived character of weak will, dishonesty or other, related to a specific condition of the person, such as mental disorder, homosexuality, etc.; (3) and lastly, stigmas related to race, nation and religion that are typically passed down through lineages (Goffman 2009, 4).

Goffman's (2009) perspective on stigma is intimately linked to identity as the cause of that discreditation. However, Frost (2011, 824-825), British social psychology professor, provides a more social constructivist perspective, where the source of the stigma shifts from the body and identity of the stigmatized to the social realm. It is, therefore, something perpetuated by those in power positions. This thesis adopts an understanding closer to this last one, where stigma and the process of creating that stigma—stigmatization—is a result of societal power imbalances.



Additionally, I want to clarify what I mean when I refer to legal world. I use it as an umbrella term that is meant to indicate the realm of the social world that is related to the legal system. Within the context of this thesis, legal world refers to the use of legal technical language or references to any term or situation that relates to the legal system—for example, references to court cases or to certain crimes.

### **Political structure in Portugal**

This section intends to give an overview of the political structure in Portugal to give the reader an understanding of what elections usually take place and how the State, Government and Parliament functions, as the material under analysis refers to these structures often.

The State of Portugal is divided between four sovereign bodies: the President, the Assembly of the Republic, the Government, and the Courts (Constituição Da República Portuguesa 1976). The President is the head of State, represents the republic and ensures the independence, unity, and the proper functioning of democratic institutions. The Assembly of the Republic is the national Parliament and is constituted by all the elected deputies from political parties. The Parliament approves laws and oversees the Government's actions and administration. The Government is the executive power that has political, legislative, and administrative functions. The Prime-Minister is head of Government, and it is usually the leader of the most voted political party, but it is nominated by the President after holding hearings from all the parties ("A Democracia Portuguesa" 2022). The President is elected for a mandate of five years, and the Parliament and the Government for four years (Constituição Da República Portuguesa 1976).

The last Presidential elections were held in January 24, 2021, and the last two legislative elections were held in January 30, 2022 and October 6, 2019 (Comissão Nacional de Eleições 2022). *Chega* ran for both legislative elections, gaining representation in 2019 through only one deputy—André Ventura. Less than two years later, Ventura ran for President in the elections of 2021, with the support of his party. In these elections, as in the case of most Presidential elections, most parties do not choose their president to run in the elections, but rather usually

support another party member. The most recent election, the legislative elections of 2022, resulted in 12 deputies representing *Chega* in Parliament.

### **History of *Chega***

In this section, a summary of the history of the party and its leader is presented as to give context to the thesis.

*Chega* (literally translated to “Enough”) was created after its current president, André Ventura, decided to leave the central-right party (PSD – *Partido Social Democrata*, translated to Social Democrat Party) in October 2018. This new project was accepted as a political party by the Constitutional Court in March 2019. The leader, André Ventura, born in 1983 in Lisbon, was involved in the Social Democratic Youth that belongs to PSD, since he was 17. He has a Law degree and a PhD in the field of penal law. In 2017, he was head of the electoral list for the municipality election, under the coalition PSD-CDS-PPM, but he was subsequently shamed by the public eye and media outlets for racist discourses during his campaign (Marchi 2020b). Drawing from his discontent with PSD, which was shared with fellow members of this central-right party, André Ventura mobilized enough support to create *Chega*.

Since then, the party has been growing and gaining significant public support. In the legislative elections of 2019, they gained the first seat in parliament, with 66 442 votes (1.3%). Last year, in the presidential elections, André Ventura accumulated 496 770 votes (11.9%), ending in third place (Lopes 2022). For this year’s legislative elections, which were called for due to the rejection of the early budget, *Chega* accumulated 410 979 votes (7.2%) that granted them 12 seats in parliament (Ministério da Administração Interna 2022).

There is no substantial literature to be found related to this party, which could be due to its recent origins. Nonetheless, Marchi (2020a) published a book where he explores the origins of the party, the background of its leader and tries to define the party in political ideology. This book, although one of the first in its subject, has been criticized by various authors for underestimating the extremist, racist, homophobic, and anti-democratic views (Gomes Silva 2020; Santana 2021; Kumar

2021). The main argument against Marchi is that he incorrectly defines the party as belonging to the radical right and not extreme right. According to him, the radical right parties accept the rules of the game, i.e., want radical change within the system, without overthrowing it. Extreme right parties usually want that same change but through means outside the system (Gomes Silva 2020). According to the critiques, *Chega* should be understood as extreme right since it aims at starting a new republic (Gomes Silva 2020; Santana 2021; Kumar 2021). Kumar (2021) goes further into critiquing the book, by pointing out several analytical and methodological flaws, especially that Marchi (2020a) only considered the official discourses of the party, and not the discourses or motivations that might be behind it. This critical account concludes that Marchi (2020a) is wrong in his categorization not because of being extremist or radical, but rather because, as the author argues, *Chega* does not align itself in a new right nor anti-system ideology—the party invokes some aspects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century fascist regime (Diário de Notícias 2021b) and seeks to maintain the status quo.

Santana (2021) labels the party as populist, nativist, and authoritarian, through the categorizations of Cas Mudde (2007, in Santana 2021). Similarly, Fonseca Mendes (2020) argues that *Chega* is a populist party since the leader was one of the five most used themes in their social media. This author argues that this indicator is a sign that the party builds a narrative around the party leader, that instrumentalizes his personal characteristics, opinions, and background to gain sympathy from the public. Furthermore, Ferreira Dias (2020, 53) explores the way in which André Ventura, in similarity to Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, has become a “phenomenon”, in the way they are perceived as “charismatic leaders” and messiahs. Santana (2021) further explains the historical conditions that have contributed for *Chega*’s success, as well as the beneficial characteristics of André Ventura, such as his experiences as a football commentator on TV that gave him positive visibility or his social media presence that gave him more exposure.

### **Critical incidents in time**

In this section, I have condensed important, crucial events—critical incidents in time—that have happened in the time span of the selected material, as to give further context to the analysis. These incidents were selected according to my own knowledge and lived experience as a Portuguese citizen, while also in consideration to the literature about the party (Marchi 2020b) and based on the topics that Ventura addresses in the selected texts.

These incidents might be helpful to keep in mind as context for the topics in André Ventura’s discourses, but also as context to how it might impact them. In my opinion, they serve to paint a picture of the situations that have surrounded this political party, and the stances taken by them. See Figure 1 for a graphical representation of these incidents and the electoral moments in a timeline.

- (A) In January 2020 (Público 2021), Ventura asks parliamentary representative Joacine Katar Moreira to go back to her country of origin (referring to Guiné Bissau), after she proposed a bill for the decolonization of the Portuguese culture (Marchi 2020b, 212);
- (B) In May 2020 (TSF 2020), after a specific episode of a Roma community refusing to get tested for Covid-19, Ventura proposes the general lockdown of the neighbourhood, combined with the aim to denounce an alleged persistent imperviousness of the State of Law. This was considered by many a racist proposition, including by National League footballer Ricardo Quaresma, of Roma origins, which attracted a lot of media and social media attention (Marchi 2020b, 212);
- (C) One member of the party, Rui Roque, submitted for voting at a National Convention of the party, in July 2020, a motion that would require women to remove their ovaries when opting for abortion. Five months later, the party suspended his membership to the party (Observador 2021b).
- (D) In the summer of 2020, Ventura appeals for the counter-mobilization against the antiracist protests that were happening in solidarity with the murder of George Floyd in the USA (Marchi 2020b, 212-213).

- (E) After the last incident, numerous media reports accused the party of having known right-wing extremists as their top leaders, of having the support of the evangelic lobby and of supporting a network of businesses with a dubious reputation (Marchi 2020b, 213).
- (F) On 2 November 2020, for the autonomous legislative elections, *Chega* enters a coalition with other right-wing parties to form government: PSD, CDS, PPM and IL (RTP Notícias 2020)
- (G) Ventura's decision to run for the presidential elections in January 2021, which gave him ample presence in news media outlets (Marchi 2020b, 214).
- (H) In February 2021, the party submits in the Parliament a proposition to change the Nationality Law, so that if someone with double nationality offends the history and symbols of Portugal or commits serious crimes can lose their Portuguese nationality. André Ventura named, symbolically, this bill "The Mamadou Ba law", referring to an afro-descendant activist that the leader argues had made hate speeches against the Portuguese community and offended the national history and symbols (Observador 2021a).
- (I) In 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 Ventura and *Chega* are convicted for offenses to the honor of a Black family in Portugal, after calling them bandits in a debate with the President, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, aired in National TV. He was sentenced to a fine and to apologize for the statements, to which he said he would never do (Diário de Notícias 2021a).

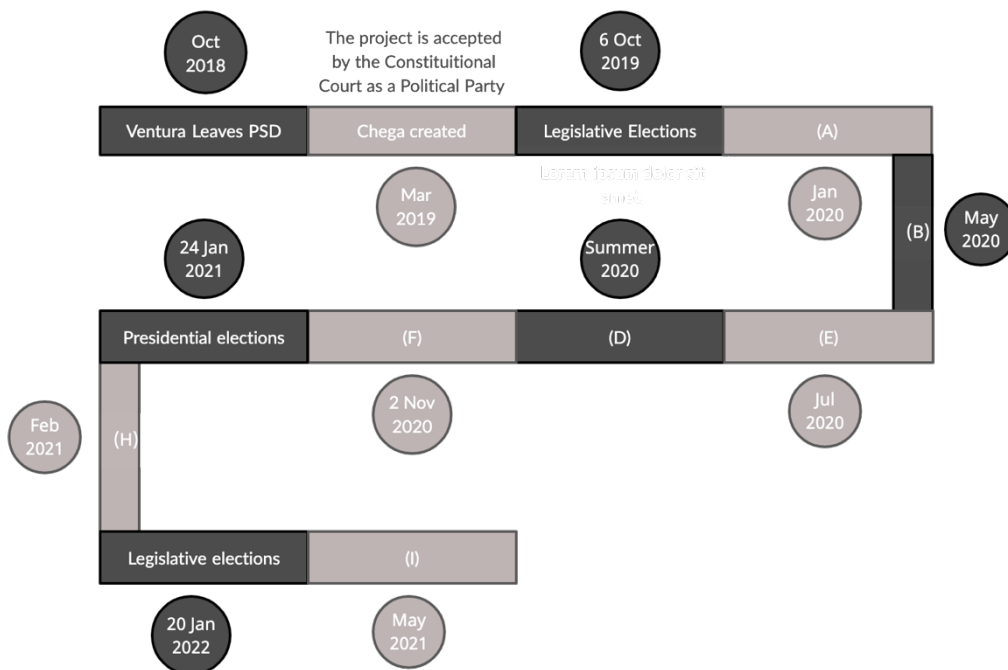


Figure 1: Timeline of critical incidents in time and elections

### Relevance to socio-legal research

Political parties undoubtedly shape the legal world since politics and Law are intimately connected. For example, Landau (2018) explains how populist parties can make use of constitutional change to deconstruct the regime in power and to consolidate its own power through that. Law has an authoritarian legitimacy that might be taken advantage of by politicians to further legitimize their discourses and appeal to the voters. However, little research has been done to understand how political parties make use of the legal world in their discourses.

In the broadest sense, this thesis fits into and builds on the Critical Legal Studies tradition, as it intends to expose the ways in which law, through politics, can reflect and expand already existing inequalities. As a point of departure, it is acknowledged that power relations and struggles are at the centre of this study since law and politics are intimately linked to the production and reproduction of social inequalities. The theoretical approach reflects this standpoint, that can be contextualized within the tradition of Critical Legal Studies. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to other critical approaches such as Critical Race Theory and

Feminist Legal Studies, as it intends to uncover racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination within Ventura's discourses. These three approaches overlap in the critical standpoint that they adopt, as well as in the centrality given to the question of power and domination, which will be of focus in this thesis (Banakar and Travers 2014, 91-94).

## Chapter 2 – Previous research

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This section is dedicated to exploring important themes in previous research that are relevant for the scope of this thesis. This is a literature review that aims to paint a broad picture of the main conclusions in recent research within the topics chosen. Therefore, the role of this chapter is to highlight the relevant subjects in research while mapping the latest trends and gaps in research.

### **Politics and Law**

The field of Politics and Law is indeed vast. There is a long tradition of empirical research and theoretical development about the ways politics and law can intersect and influence each other. As exposed in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, there is a great number of interdisciplinary studies, whose empirical focus ranges from analysis of jurisprudence and philosophy of law, constitutional law and political order, judicial politics, law and society and comparative and international law and courts (Whittington, Kelemen, and Caldeira 2011).

The relationship between politics and law is clear and multifaceted. However, there is a lack of focus on how politicians or parties make use of the legal world to further their arguments. It is clear that politicians and political parties have the power to influence law, and their actions, in most contexts, are regulated through laws.

As such, the use and understanding of “legal jargon” is to be expected in political official discourse, as it is usually mandatory in most official, formal contexts (van Dijk 1997, 24). However, the question of how they utilize the legal world, the legal vocabulary, and its inherent legitimacy, to advance their positions, remains unanswered, as far as my search for sources detected. Therefore, this study will contribute to the exploration and filling of this gap in knowledge.



### *Political Discourse Analysis*

This thesis intends to be part of a broader research field that focuses on the (critical) discursive analysis of political content. Within this theme, there has been a diverse and significant amount of research (see for example, Bayram 2010; Horváth 2009; Bhatia 2006; Pansardi and Battezzorre 2018; Charteris-Black 2014). Some of the research within this theme is specifically aimed at developing a framework for analysis of political discourse (Jardim Pinto 2005; Charteris-Black 2014; Kampf 2015). Other relevant publications utilize different methods, such as CDA, systematic qualitative content analysis and quantitative analysis, onto specific political discourses, including former and current state leaders (Bayram 2010; Horváth 2009), press conferences (Bhatia 2006) and leaders of international institutions (Pansardi and Battezzorre 2018). This thesis aims at building on this research field, by focusing on the political discourses of a Portuguese far-right party.

The main theme that seems to connect all these pieces of research is the centrality of the issues of power. As Juraj Horváth (2009, 45) claims in their opening words “politics is a struggle for power”, where language plays a central role since no political action is made without the use of language. Aditi Bhatia (2006) identifies three major themes from their critical discourse analysis of a press conference with Chinese president Zemin and USA president George W. Bush: (1) positivity, (2) influence and power, (3) and evasion. The author further claims that these strategies are used by the leaders to create hidden implications in their statements, to be understood by their targeted audiences. In this context, evasion, power, and positivity function as a way to control how their messages are perceived, while maintaining diplomacy and ambiguity. The way these techniques are displayed in Ventura’s discourses might happen in very different ways, or might not even happen at all, since he is the leader of a political party and not a national leader. The lack of need to avoid scandals or to be diplomatic might lead him to utilize different strategies, that could be even the opposite of the ones described above.

Persuasion is, on the contrary, a relevant strategy for any political actor, national leader or not (Bayram 2010). One of the major challenges of politicians is to convince the public of the legitimacy of their claims, making persuasion a crucial tool in a politician's discourse. Within the study of persuasion, two different techniques are highlighted: presupposition and implicature, which are present in Fairclough's framework for CDA, especially through the tools of *evaluation* and *assumptions* (See chapter 3 for detailed explanation). Presupposition refers to the use of pre-assumptions that are taken for granted, regardless of the claims made, which can make it more difficult for the listener to reject these claims. Implicature refers to the process within which the listener infers something that has not been explicitly claimed by the speaker. These are two examples of the types of techniques that political actors might utilize to persuade the listener into agreement. The issue of persuasion once again leads to the issue of power—"power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behaviour and often control their values" (Bayram 2010, 28), the ability to persuade and convince the public of one's opinion is the main way to accumulate power and support.

While there has been substantial academic focus on developing a methodological framework for analysis of political discourses specifically, Political Discourse Analysis seems to be more often utilized to analyse nation leaders, or political party leaders who hold most of the political power. Thus, this thesis will adopt a Critical Discourse Analysis, building on a broader research tradition of the use of language as a mechanism of power and influence.

### **Gender, ethnicity, race, and far-right movements**

As explained in chapter 1, this thesis aims at uncovering the ways in which Ventura's discourse contributes to further stigmatize certain groups—women and racialized groups. I chose to give particular focus to Roma communities, as they are often discriminated against in Portugal, and often talked about in the political sphere. Therefore, this section intends to give a basic understanding of how gender, ethnicity, race, and far-right ideologies are connected in recent research trends.

### *Ethnicity and immigration*

Far-right movements and ideologies in research are often tied to marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups of people. In the case of Roma communities in Hungary, for example, there is a clear impact of contemporary far-right movements. There is a strong history of cultural trauma in this context, that is a result of systemic exclusion as well as specific acts of extreme violence, such as the Roma Holocaust. This exclusion is often accompanied with the idea that Roma Hungarians are “second-class” citizens, that are not willing to be part of Hungarian culture, even though they themselves consistently ask to be able to have equal rights and opportunities as their roots are Hungarian (Roland Ferkovics, Kai Schafft, and Katalin Németh 2017). This struggle and will to be recognized as full citizens are part of a broader movement highlighted in previous literature—ethnic nationalism. Anthony H. Richmond (1984, 4) defines it as “the struggle for recognition, higher economic and social status, and political power by minorities which had been exposed to the assimilatory pressures of industrialization”. Thus, ethnic nationalism is intimately linked to the rise of the post-industrial economy and with ideological wars of various kinds. Comparably, in the French setting, the lack of representation of ethnic minorities (since the French consensus is that class representation is the only needed measure of equality), has had significant impact on minorities that have seen their issues neglected and underrepresented in the State (Vincent Tiberj and Laure Michon 2013). Thus, this struggle to be recognised and represented in the political sphere is an important lever to diminish power imbalances across ethnicities.

In the Danish context, a decreasing trend of legal framework protecting immigrant’s access to socio-cultural-economic rights has also been linked to the rise of right-wing, anti-immigration populism, especially through the “work first” discourse. This argumentation, simply put, states that immigrant’s rights should only be accessible once they are inserted into the traditional labour market. Conversely, some policies have changed for the better when it comes to the inclusion of immigrants, namely within education, empowerment, and labour market policy (Andersen, Elm Larsen, and Hornemann Møller 2009).

The role of media is also a pressing subject in recent research. Regarding anti-immigration positions in politics, Hagelund and Kjeldsen's (2021) research focuses on the media representations of these issues and argues for the existence of conspicuous estrangement and inconspicuous estrangement of immigration critics and the move from the first to the second can be a sign of legitimation of these arguments and the mainstreaming of far-right parties. Conspicuous estrangement refers to the blatant demonizing and ridiculing, for example by being labelled racist, fascist or Nazi. Inconspicuous estrangement refers to subtle hints of illegitimacy or alienation, mostly used when referring to an individual's opinion. However, the authors argue that this soft oppression of anti-immigration discourses in the media will not lead to harsher forms of oppression, and it is rather contributing to their normalization and mainstreaming.

### ***Gender and far-right trends***

When it comes to gender, there is an extensive field of research linking gendered oppression and far-right populism, although, as pointed by Miller-Idriss (2020) there is a need for a more intersectional approach to this issue. Additionally, the growing number of women in far-right political parties and by the opposition of the far-right to pro-gender norms in favour of traditional gender roles, motivates the production of research in this field (Fangen and Skjelsbæk 2020).

This relevance can be noted in three ways (Blee 2020). Firstly, at a micro level, the experiences of men and women within far-right movements are different, and we are recently seeing a shift in composition of far-right party leaders, with more women taking up these roles, as is the case of Marine Le Pen in France. She has been the president of far-right party *Front National* since 2011. At the meso level, far-right groups and parties operate in gendered ways, usually adopting a military-like or masculinist stance and a gendered discourse—powerful masculinity and vulnerable, family oriented-femininity. Finally, at a macro level, these gendered messages affect the wider societal level, through the mainstreaming and acceptance of this gendered ideology.

The role of women in far-right political parties is still very dependent on context, and research is still developing around this issue. Particular concern is given to how misogyny could play a role in far-right politics in the future—will it be maintained and reinforced or, on the contrary, will it be shed in an effort to tap into more mainstream populations? (Blee 2020, 426) Recently, in the legislative elections of 2022, *Chega* has gained 12 seats in parliament, where one of them will be occupied by a woman who claims to not be feminist, while supporting feminist views in her discourse (Martins 2022).

Nonetheless, there is solid research on sexism that can be found in far-right discourses, which can be divided into two types: (1) benevolent—references to masculinity and man as the strongest, heterosexual family dynamics and role of the man as protector of women; and (2) hostile—objectifying and controlling women and their bodies (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020, 437). Further, this component of hostile sexism is argued to be crucial to nationalist ideology, where there is a clear goal to control female sexuality and reproduction, as a way of controlling, in turn, national identity (Yuval Davis 1997, in Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020, 436). These traces of hostile sexism linked to nationalist ideology were also identified in the American context, following the 9/11 attacks. The president's discourses feature a construction of the American nation built on references to gendered narratives of the hero, mainly, the working man and the passive helpless woman-victim (Shepherd 2006).

Similarly, in the Spanish context the mobilization of gender during Vox's electoral breakthrough in 2018, was intimately linked to a nativist, authoritarian and masculinist character of the campaign. These were pushed through the frame of the Spanish Reconquest (*Reconquista*) since 2015, that reminisce to the dictatorship era of Spain. Further, the party made use of an anti-gender discourse, i.e., “mobilization against gender and sexual equality”, intimately linked to the global anti-gender movement. The latter, combined with the localizing effect of the former allowed the party to make use of gender to leverage in the 2018 elections (Cabezas 2022, 323).

In the Swedish context of the Swedish Democrats political party that can be contextualized into a broader European movement towards the rise of the far-right, Mulinari and Neergaard (2014) argue that cultural racism and anti-feminism are interconnected, in a way that this understanding of gender equality is weaponized against other cultures, specifically Muslims. Another significant finding in their study was the idea of a “caring racism” (54), where the discourses against immigration and other cultures were framed within a discourse of caring, not only for the Swedish people but also for the migrants themselves.

The role of the nativist discourse was also noted at a wider European scale, and particularly in the context of France and The Netherlands. The far-right parties in this context while claiming to defend gender equality and LGBT rights, oppose it to multiculturalism, with the goal to defend national citizens, in a nativist perspective. Thus, often gender and LGBT issues are utilized as the divide between the nation and the dangers of immigrant cultures, particularly Islamic. Additionally, there is a noticeable invisibility of certain identities, such as non-heterosexual women, bisexuality, and transgender people, within the parties’ agendas (Martinha Ramalho 2020). This reveals the heteronormative nature of their claimed feminist agenda, that is often instrumentalized to consolidate a “superiority” in relation to Muslim countries and immigrants (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020).

How important gender can be within a far-right movement or party is of course dependent on its context and history. Blee (2020) reminds us that the focus in far-right research should not be on establishing if gender matters, but rather how it matters and how its importance may differ. In turn, in L. Ferber’s (2005) book exploring gender and race oppression, it is argued that in extreme-right parties and movements, race is more important than gender. However, the focus, as the previous author mentioned, should be in determining how these issues reveal themselves and are treated by far-right movements, and not necessarily how much they matter. In any case, these reflections demonstrate once again the need for an intersectional perspective on this field of research, that can comprehend the nuances of the intersection and existence of several identities within a context.

## **Portuguese context**

Having analysed the recent trends in research of far-right and their impact on minorities, it is important to take a more detailed look into the Portuguese context. In Portugal, only recently has there been a rise of a populist far-right in its political structure, which does not follow the European trend of a stable perception on migration over the last 16 years. The Portuguese case might fit into what Messing and Ságvári (2021) labelled as a rapid change in attitudes, given specific contexts and times.

Regarding attitudes towards and perceptions of racism, in the Portuguese context, there seems to be a general feeling among the population of a non-existent racism, one that is different from other countries' racism. Until the 80s Portuguese society was fairly homogeneous ethnically, with small exceptions of Roma and Cape-Verdean communities. It was from the 80s onwards that Portugal saw a significant increase in the immigrant population. João Filipe Marques (2004) argues that, in this context, racism stems from the Portuguese colonial past and the changes that these waves of immigration made in society. There is in Portugal a long history of colonization, and as defended by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Portuguese sociologist and professor, colonialism has not disappeared with the 20th century, but has rather taken a different form of domination (de Sousa Santos 2018). He identifies three major forms of domination in today's society: patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism, where the last one has reconfigured how the first two operate in society. In the words of the author: "European liberalism, even while proclaiming the universal freedom and equality of all human beings, retained the privilege of defining which living beings really count as fully human" (de Sousa Santos 2021, 17)

Through the interviews made in his study, Marques (2004) concludes that the major victims of racism in Portugal are Roma and African (or afro-descendent) communities. Roma communities are usually discriminated when trying to access the job market, accommodation, leisure places and public institutions, whilst African immigrants and afro-descendants are more usually target of racist violence,

with the author highlighting the common expression “go back to your country”, as an example.

Furthermore, there seems to be, in the Portuguese context, a dissociation between colonial and racist ideologies and political orientation, which is not the case in other countries (Marta Araújo 2008). One possible explanation could be that no political party is openly defending racist ideologies and that no political party, left or right, takes consistent anti-racist action (Vala, Brito, and Lopes 1999). It seems that the creation and popularization of *Chega* has led to these observations no longer being true. Therefore, it is of interest to study how this party’s discourse aligns itself with a racist ideology in the current political climate.

### **Contribution to research**

This chapter summarizes the main conclusions and trends in recent research concerning far-right studies and law, namely the tradition of political discourse analysis, gender and ethnicity in far-right studies, representation of minorities and racism in Portugal and the relationship between politics and law.

A gap in previous knowledge was identified, concerning how politicians and political parties make use of the legal world and legal language in their discourses. Therefore, this thesis will have a special focus on identifying how Ventura utilizes the legal world and language to further legitimize his discourse and how it contributes to the reproduction of stigmas and stereotypes of marginalized groups.



## Chapter 3 – Methodological Considerations

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According to Fairclough (2013, 234), Critical Discourse Analysis should be considered a method and a theoretical framework. The way methods are applied within CDA is also dependent on the theoretical construction of the object of research. Thus, this chapter reflects on both aspects of the methodological process—theory and method.

### **Theory and concepts**

This section is meant to explain the theoretical bases through which I, as the researcher and citizen, make sense of the social world (Abend 2013). Thus, it is also meant to further explore how the research problem sketched in the first chapter of the thesis is relevant and why I chose to approach it in the way I did.

Firstly, this thesis aligns itself with critical theory, and more specifically the tradition of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) and the present chapter will, therefore, begin with an explanation of the theoretical foundations of Critical Theory and CLS, moving on to the specific theoretical concepts that were fundamental to understand the research problem at hand and that are at the centre of CDA.

### **Critical Theory**

Critical theory is used as a broad term within philosophy and social sciences, that is usually defined by the goal to liberate or emancipate human beings from domination and oppression, which is why many theories within this tradition have developed in conjunction with social movements. Some examples are feminist theory, critical race theory and post-colonial theory (Bohman 2021).

Fairclough (2001, 125) makes this connection between CDA and critical theory very clear:

CDA is a form of critical social science, which is envisaged as social science geared to illuminating the problems which people are confronted with by particular forms of social life, and to contributing resources which people may be able to draw upon in tackling and overcoming these problems

### *Critical Legal Studies*

Critical legal theory boils down to the understanding that law is connected to the social world and that the law favours those in power. As interpreted by CLS, law can be used by those historically and socially advantaged to maintain the status quo and instrumentalize it to oppress disadvantaged groups in society. Brazilian philosopher and social theorist, Roberto Mangabeira Unger (1983, 564), frames the movement of CLS within leftist movements in the modern legal world. Additionally, he defines two major points with which the CLS movement has concerned itself: the critique of formalism and objectivism and the “purely instrumental use of legal practice and legal doctrine to advance leftist aims” (567). Thus, this tradition critiques the belief that legal justification does not involve any type of reasoning besides legal reasoning—critique of formalism—while also critiquing the idea that the legal system expresses an underlying scheme of democracy and the market—critique of objectivism (Pannier 1987). These critiques of formalism and objectivism inevitable lead to the understanding that the legal world and legal practice are also subject and affected by hegemonic struggles and hierarchical powers (672). This understanding of law is crucial in this thesis as it departs from the standpoint that the legal world can be utilized in the political sphere as displays of power or to advance certain ideologies.

Another prominent theorist within CLS is Robert W. Gordon, legal historian, and professor from the USA. According to Gordon (1986, 335), CLS’s work is in harmony with neo-Marxist sociology of law since it concerns itself with questions of hegemony and legitimation. Further in this chapter, I lay down Fairclough’s conceptualisation of hegemony, ideology, and power.

### **Fairclough’s Social Theory of Discourse**

To understand why the political discourse under study in this thesis is relevant to the study of broader sociological phenomena, in the following I present CDA’s framework and its underpinnings. For Fairclough (2001, 121-122), CDA is a theory and method that should engage with other social theories and methods in a

transdisciplinary way, giving way for the shaping of new boundaries and developments.

Critical Discourse Analysis, especially the analytical framework developed by Norman Fairclough, involves a certain theoretical understanding of discourse, ideology, and power. CDA adopts a realist social ontology, meaning that it sees social reality as being constructed by both concrete social events and abstract social structures (Sayer 2000, cited in Fairclough 2013, 74). Further, this framework assumes the crucial part that semiosis has in social processes. Semiosis is defined by Fairclough (2001, 122) as “all forms of meaning making – visual, images, body language, as well as language”.

Fairclough’s (2013, 167-168) framework of CDA implies an attempt to further develop the transdisciplinary relationship of linguistics and social theory. According to Fairclough (2013, 167-168), linguistics has, for a long time, failed to bridge this connection, instead focusing on the technical aspect of language.

The increasing interest of social theory in language is explained by Fairclough (2013, 168) through the growing role of language in modern social life as opposed to pre-modern social life. The modern social world implies a somewhat big role of globalisation, where social relations have expanded through time and space while simultaneously being compressed in the sense that an action can have global consequences faster and easier, removing the central role of the local context (169). These aspects of modern and late-modern society make it particularly interesting to develop a sociolinguistic theory.

### ***Language, discourse, ideology, power, and hegemony***

Discourse is to be understood as more than just language. It is linked to social relation and processes. And this is a dialectical relationship, where discourse is shaped by social structures and events, but it also contributes to shaping the latter. Furthermore, discourse and language are, in turn, also connected to ideology— “one aspect of this imbrication in the social which is inherent to the notion of discourse is that language is a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology” (Fairclough 2013, 59).

Fairclough (2013, 25-26) introduces the concept of ideology as central to Critical Discourse Analysis and as intimately connect to social class as the main driver of power relations in modern societies, in conjunction with other social divisions, such as ethnicity, culture, gender, etc. To explore ideologies in discourse it is necessary to study the context around the production of that discourse, the social institutions and social formations in which ideologies are generated (Fairclough 2013, 42; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 75). We can find ideology, in a text, through meaning, i.e., lexical meanings, presuppositions, implicatures, metaphors and coherence. All of these elements in texts build on its ideological background. However, Fairclough warns that the form of the text can also be ideologically relevant, in which the way a sentence is formulated can embody ideological understanding of the subject and the content (60). Ultimately, ideology materialises as accepted or automatised truths in the social world (62).

Fairclough (2013, 56-58) also theorizes the relationship between language and ideology. Ideology is a social event, that is not produced through language, but through interaction. Thus, it cannot be identified solely by interpretation of text, since text and language are open to a multitude of interpretations, even though they are shaped and influenced by ideology as part of the larger social structure.

Question of power, according to Fairclough (2013, 94-95) are intimately related to the concept of hegemony, and to understand questions of power and ideology that are important for each of the three-level analysis, the author relies on hegemony. The hegemonic struggle limits the possible combinations of genres and discourses, i.e., interdiscursivity. The more stable the hegemonic struggle is on a given area of the social world, the less possibilities and creativity for interdiscursivity. The definition of hegemony provided by the author is as follows: “hegemony is the power over society as a whole of one of the fundamental economically defined classes in alliance (as a bloc) with other social forces but it is never achieved more than partially and temporarily” (Fairclough 2013, 61). Thus, hegemony is about power over society and over other classes, and Fairclough frames it within the sphere of politics, economics, and ideology. Hegemony does not happen in definitive terms but is rather always changing and unstable and does

not correlate directly to domination— “is about constructing alliances, and integrating” (61).

Thus, the concept of hegemony is crucial to incorporate in the social analysis level, by understanding what is the part that the discursive practices take in the construction and shifting of power relations, which is an aspect of hegemonic struggle (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 76).

### **The concept of subtext**

The concept of gender subtext, as developed by Smith (1987, 1989, 1990), is often used to highlight and identify how organizations and societies can reproduce gender inequality without explicitly referring to it. This was further utilized by various authors, of which I will be focusing on Benschop and Doorewaard (2012), that have sketched the next steps researchers should take when focusing on gender subtext and linked it to the intersectional framework.

This theorizing of gender subtext can also be applied to other types of subtexts, relevant to the scope of this thesis, such as racial, ethnic or class subtext. In order to take the notion of gender subtext and apply it to the complex world of social practice it is necessary to take into account the intersection of inequalities and identities (Benschop and Doorewaard 2012, 229-233). Thus, I argue that combining this understanding of subtext with an intersectional perspective is crucial to this research, that intends to focus on not only gender but also ethnicity.

Therefore, I intend to have an intersectional perspective as my point of departure as a researcher, as it is necessary to better understand the nuances of the marginalization of certain groups and the power relations visible in the discourses. Intersectionality was first developed by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989; 1991), and can be shortly defined as an analytical tool and theoretical understanding that highlights how different identities/intersections relate and mutually influence each other. This concept is usually present in research related to discrimination, as a way to make visible how different types of discrimination, e.g., racial, ethnic, gendered, classist, can create a specific set of experiences of discrimination in the individual (Collins and Bilge 2020). For the context of this thesis, a lot of different stigmas will be in

focus, and as such I intend to keep in mind throughout the analysis that the discrimination or stigma that certain groups of people face is very particular and dependent on their specific intersections of identity. Thus, the conclusions on this thesis should always be contextualized to the specific characteristics of these groups and their social and historical setting.

## **Method**

As mentioned, this thesis utilized Fairclough's framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, which implies not just independent reflections on theory and method, but a holistic approach. The research object within CDA should focus on a social wrong, as CDA is a branch of critical studies (Fairclough 2013, 234–35). In this case, the social wrong identified is the increasing stigmatization and discrimination that minorities have faced due to the rise of the far-right. Thus, I have focused on how a particular party, *Chega*, contributes to this phenomenon. This is the first step to take when reflecting on methodology, according to Fairclough. This section presents components of methodology related to the choice of methods and material for analysis.

## **Qualitative approach**

The type of methods that one chooses for his or her research should be decided according to the aim, research questions and purpose of the study. It should be appropriate and aligned with the researcher's ontological and epistemological point of departure (Mason 2018, 22). Given that the aim of this research is to uncover power relations and the role of the legal world within Ventura's discourses, it was undoubtedly important to utilize qualitative methods. Quantitative methods, while being able to give more generalizable results, do not allow for the nuanced perspective that I aimed at having in this research.

Moreover, a qualitative approach is more aligned with the ontological and epistemological stances of the type phenomena this study aims at understanding, which is discourses and social and cultural processes, through a critical

epistemological stance (Mason 2018, 8). It is my understanding that Ventura's discourses are developed within a framework of larger social and historical processes and power relations. The aim of this thesis is to understand how the party stigmatizes certain groups of people, especially according to gender and race, through their discourses, which has an impact on the power struggles in question.

### **Reliability, validity, and objectivity**

In qualitative researching a lot of questions of reliability, generalizability, and validity are usually risen (Mason 2018, 34–35).

Validity is concerned with the harmony between what the research sets out to study and what it actually studies (Mason 2018, 35). In the case of my thesis, utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis, as it is discussed below, assures some consistency between the aim, research questions and the results yielded, since this critical approach is mainly concerned with uncovering power relations in discourse. Concerning generalizability, i.e., if the study can make wider claims beyond the context of the research (Mason 2018, 35), the aim of this research is somewhat narrow and specific to the political party and its leader. However, some claims might be generalizable to the broader context of far-right parties, as far as it aligns with previous research, and it maintains close relationship with the theoretical framework. Even so, the results yielded should always be taken into consideration within its social, cultural, geographic, and political context. Finally, reliability refers to the accuracy of one's methods and techniques, a concept is usually put into practice in quantitative studies through standardization (Mason 2018, 35). Inclusively, some authors, such as Yonge and Stewin (1988), even defend those terms such as validity and reliability should not be applied in qualitative research. (Franklin, Cody, and Ballan 2001, 355).

Fairclough (2013, 14-15) highlights that within textual and discourse analysis objectivity is impossible since there is always some degree of bias and subjectivity from the analyst. However, reflecting on what could contribute to these biases is a good starting point to build transparency in social research. As per my position as a researcher, there is also some considerations to keep in mind when reading this

thesis. My background is somewhat privileged, as a middle-class white woman, so there are themes in this thesis that fall outside my realm of personal experience, and thus I might be an outsider. My perspective is only one of many valid perspectives on reality, and I do not wish to make general claims in this thesis, but I do wish to shed light into the possible ways the discourses in analysis perpetuate certain stigmas. Furthermore, as a politically conscious Portuguese citizen, I have my own political views and opinions, which I understand could interfere in the way I interpret certain political views that contrast so much with mine. I intend to keep that in mind of the reader for added transparency, but I also intend to minimize that interference through theoretically backed and informed reflections and conclusions. Thus, throughout the process of analysis I will maintain this reflexive point of view.

### **Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis**

Since the aim of this study is to analyse discourses, the methods that can yield the most appropriate results should be within textual/discourse analysis. Additionally, as stated previously, power relations are at the centre of the thesis, as the goal is to obtain a critical perspective on the research themes. Thus, the most appropriate method for analysing data within this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Particularly, the methodology developed by Fairclough (2013; 2001; 2003; 1992).

Jan Blommaert and Chris Bulcaen (2000) summarize Fairclough's work as a three-dimensional model for CDA that focuses not only on a methodological approach, but also in theorizing social theory of discourse as processes of hegemony and changes in hegemony. According to Fairclough (2013), there are three basic properties of CDA to keep in mind: it is relational (focuses on social relations and not individuals), dialectical (referring to relations between objects, such as power and discourse, that are different but not independent from one another) and transdisciplinary (CDA draws from different fields to analyse these dialectical relations).



Additionally, Fairclough (2013, 59) theorizes discourse as composed by three elements, which inspire the analytical approach—social practice, discursive practice, and text. A more in-depth reflection on these theoretical insights can be found earlier in this chapter. In this section I focus on the analytical aspects of CDA, as a three-level model of analysis.

Fairclough's (2013; 2001; 2003; 1992) model of CDA, with three different levels of analysis—internal aspects of the text, discursive practice, and social analysis—will hopefully highlight how the textual elements (re)produce the power imbalances that affect the previously mentioned groups. This relationship between the text and power struggles is regulated through the influence of the broader social, historical, and political context. The next sections will go into further detail on the three dimensions mentioned here and how they will be utilized in the analysis.

#### ***First dimension: text analysis***

The first dimension refers to the text, which can be in writing, speech, image, or a mixture. In this first step, the analysis focuses on the internal aspects of the text, such as vocabulary, grammar, and structure, which is mainly a linguistic approach. These internal aspects of the text give a degree of insight into the speaker/writer and how they might position themselves within the public/community (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 69).

Within this level, it is first important to identify the genre—which in this case is political discourse—and structure of the text at hand, and adapt the analysis accordingly (Fairclough 2003, 67). In this linguistic approach special focus should be given to vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, and textual structures, with the goal of understanding the content, the relations produced in it and the type of subjects that are within it (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 83).

Additionally, there are three major tools for this linguistic approach: *modality*, *evaluation* (Fairclough 2003, 164-190) and *transitivity* (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 83–84). *Modality* refers to the degree to which the author of the text agrees with the claims they are making. Fairclough (2003, 165) connects modality to the

level of commitment people make to the statements, questions, demands, and offers that they make.

Usually, modality is identifiable through modal verbs—can, will, may, must, would, should—however, Fairclough (2003, 168-171) highlights that in some cases modality can be transmitted without use of these markers, but also through others, such as modal adverbs (e.g., “certainly”), participial adjectives (e.g., “required”) and mental process clauses (e.g., “I think”). In summary, modality allows for an understanding of the attitudes of the author of the text/speaker towards what is being said, i.e., their degree of certainty, doubt, possibility, etc. As illustrated by Fairclough (2003, 165), stating that “something is” has a higher level of certainty than stating “something might be” or “could be”.

*Evaluation*, alike modality is related to how the authors commit to what they are saying, but in this case as the level of desirability or goodness (Fairclough 2003, 164). When evaluating the author makes explicit or implicit commitments to certain values (171).

*Transitivity*, on the other hand, refers to the grammatical ways in which events are connected or disconnected to the subjects and objects. For example, utilizing the passive form is a way to omit the agent and remove their agency. These choices reflect a certain ideological understanding of the author of the text (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 83). This tool will be particularly helpful when analysing the themes related to the minority groups selected. Understanding how Ventura relates to the agents/subjects (minorities) can give an insight into how he perceives them, their role in society and their agency. This also seems to be particularly relevant when analysing gender/racial/ethnic subtexts.

### ***Second dimension: discursive analysis***

The second dimension refers to discursive practice, which mainly refers to the context of the production of the text, such as the way of production, the setting, and how it is consumed (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 81). For this level of analysis, it is important to explore the influences of other texts in the subject of analysis. The more external influences are detected, the higher the

intertextuality, which Fairclough (2003, 40) also links to the concept of assumptions. According to the author, the existence of intertextuality implies the existence of assumption, i.e., implicit elements in the text. The content of a text exists in a given background of assumptions—of what the listener knows and what can be transmitted without actually being said. A major difference between intertextuality and assumption is that the first allows for the increase in different perspectives, by bringing other texts into the discourse, and the second, by assuming a common ground, reduces chances for disagreement (Fairclough 2003, 41). A high level of intertextuality does not mean, however, that there is more space for societal change. It indicates which discourses are being used and reused, and what type of narrative is being perpetuated or, alternatively, criticized. Thus, the discourses that a certain text draws from are also influenced by power that a certain discourse holds in the hegemonic struggle. Societal change cannot happen when the same discourses are integrated in the same ways (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 74).

In the context of this thesis, it is important to explore the types of implicit knowledge that Ventura takes for granted, according to the audience he is speaking to. For example, in a speech given to supporters of his party the things left unsaid/implicit can differ greatly from those in a speech given to the general public, that might not be as open to his ideas and ideology. Similarly, as in the role of transitivity as an implicit process, so does the role of assumptions can be connected to the concept of gender/racial/ethnic subtexts. Everything that is taken for granted or transmitted implicitly by the speaker/author when referring to particular groups of people can be framed within the concept of subtext.

As one of the aims of this thesis is to determine the role of the legal world within the discourses of Ventura, it is important to reflect, especially in relation to this level of analysis, on what is and what is not the legal world, to be able to distinguish when Ventura is utilizing the legal world and vocabulary in his discourses. Naturally, different areas of the social world are related and intertwined. The legal world is intimately connected to the cultural world, and possibly even to the religious world. The analysis of Ventura's argumentation will be done with this

in mind—that there will be several social factors influencing his discourse, with the legal world being one of them.

### *Third dimension: social analysis*

Finally, the last dimension refers to social practice, which analyses the broader context of the text, within society, such as ideological components and socio-political context of production (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). Fairclough (2003, 25) defines social practices as “articulations of different types of social elements which are associated with particular areas of social life” and “they articulate discourse (hence language) together with other non-discoursal social elements”. Further, social practices—e.g., social fields, institutions, and organizations—function as mediums between abstract social structures and concrete social events (Fairclough 2013, 232). Thus, a purely linguistic and discursive approach is not enough to carry out this level of analysis that is focused on non-discursive elements (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 86).

Since this level requires an examination of non-discursive elements, i.e., elements that go beyond the text, it is necessary to complement it with social theory. In the research problem highlighted in this thesis, the non-discursive elements of the social practice will be analysed not only through the theoretical framework of power, ideology and hegemony as developed by Fairclough, but also through an intersectional approach, specifically utilizing the concept of gender, racial, and ethnic subtexts. In one of Fairclough’s (2013, 421-422) articles on political discourse analysis, the author operationalises the concept of *recontextualization* to highlight how other social and institutional discourses are incorporated into the political discourse, and recontextualized to serve a purpose.

This last step on the analytical framework provides the possibility to reflect on how the discourses under analysis are framed in the broader social world—does it contribute to maintaining the status quo or to social change? What consequences does it have on the political, ideological, and social sphere and their power relations (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 86–87)?

### **Selection of material**

The sample drawn for any research should be appropriate to generate sufficient data in line with the aim and research questions (Mason 2018, 55). For this thesis, the type of sample desired was a set of statements from Ventura that could yield relevant data to understand the party's discourses around marginalized groups and the use of the legal world. As such, it was important to collect interviews and statements where his point of view was at the centre, i.e., including debates was not ideal as the dynamics of a conversation between opposing or different political views would require the analysis of the other perspective. Therefore, the sample focused on already existing material that could be found on the internet, for example in various YouTube channels, such as those of the party but also of other media channels, e.g., radio and TV stations.

The number of videos, speeches, and statements to include was not predetermined. The goal was to collect a relevant range of information through strategic sampling (Mason 2018, 58), by including interviews from different TV and radio stations and speeches made to different audiences, i.e., in the context of his own party but also to the wider public. Additionally, for the selection I took into consideration the themes that Ventura was addressing, for example, videos where Ventura addresses themes related to the marginalized groups and to the critical incidents that were identified in chapter 1 were prioritized.

I transcribed 8 videos (see Annex 1 for the list of videos selected). The texts were then divided into two groups according to the targeted audience. Texts 1, 5, 7 and 8 are catered towards the party's own audience, i.e., supporters and militants of the party, since they were published in their social media channels, or they were speeches of celebration made after elections. The remaining texts (Texts 2, 3, 4 and 6) are catered towards a broader audience that might also include non-supporters and other party's supporters. These are interviews made in radio stations or speeches held in the Parliament.

### **Strategy for analysis**

After transcribing the selected material, it was coded and thematized for better analysis and discussion, according to the theoretical concepts chosen and the themes identified in previous research (Chapter 2). The content was then transcribed, analysed, and coded in Portuguese, with the translation being made by me for the results and discussion.

### **Ethical considerations**

This thesis did not concern itself with the creation of its own data, as such there are no ethical considerations to be made in the realm of the potential risks for the participants, informed consent, or coercion. However, special attention must be given to epistemological ethics (Mason 2018, 86). This thesis departed from the epistemological understanding that the objects of research, discourses, language, social and cultural processes, can be appropriately researched through an interpretivist and critical approach, both of which are suitably delivered by utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis. Therefore, the design of this thesis also took into consideration the methods and perspectives that could yield relevant answers to the questions proposed.

Moreover, as stated in the section “aim and research questions”, this piece of research also intends to have a social and political purpose, beyond the academic. Hence, there is an ethical issue at hand, since the results and context of this thesis could be used to advance the interests of certain political groups and movements (Mason 2018, 89). To try to tackle this issue, not just the research design but also the claims and results that were made, were contextualized within a greater tradition of research and with the support of the theoretical framework.

Finally, the content I have analysed is in Portuguese. The videos selected were fully transcribed in Portuguese and the thematical analysis was conducted in Portuguese. Then, the relevant excerpts of the text were translated by me, and the three-level analysis was conducted in English.

## Chapter 4 – Analysis and Results

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### Introductory remarks

I have identified nine major themes present in Ventura's discourse and relevant to the scope of this thesis. Identifying and utilizing these themes contribute to a more organized and focused analysis of the content. The themes are women, Roma, immigration, racism, legal world, religion, power of the party, antisystem, us vs. them. The first four themes are related to the second research question. The category legal world is related to the first research question. The theme religion was included after the first approach to the text since there were a few references to Ventura's Christian beliefs in connection to other themes. The last three themes refer to more general approaches of Ventura to certain topics of discussion, but that are present throughout his speeches and interviews (with variable degree of presence depending on the context and audience). These themes reflect the party's ideology and positioning towards the rest of the political, legal, and social world. Thus, they are crucial to understand Ventura's and the party's attitudes towards the legal world and the minority groups mentioned in the first research question and aim. What follows is a brief analysis of the identified themes.

In the speeches that are catered to Ventura's own party supporters and militants, the theme that is most frequently present is the power of the party, especially when compared to the texts for a broader audience that have significantly less references to this theme. There are several references to the importance of the party and the increasing number of supporters as a sign of their strength. This is often related to the antisystem and us vs. them theme. There is a constant opposition between Ventura or the party and an abstract elite, that is not clearly defined. In this opposition, Ventura and *Chega* are often painted as the underdogs, fighting for justice and reform for the ideal Portuguese citizen. This construction of the ideal Portuguese ("the good Portuguese") is, in turn, made in opposition to the image of the "bad" immigrant and the Roma community. The following quotes exemplify how these constructed identities are discursively built by Ventura:

[talking towards the recently elected President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa] wishing that he has a second mandate with dignity, with respect for Portugal, *for the Portuguese, for the good Portuguese*<sup>2</sup> (Text 5)

The most *mediocre* left, more glued to the minorities that have explored Portugal and more glued to those who have destroyed Portugal (Text 5)

Throwing into the faces of *the Portuguese* to make them believe that subsidy dependency, and self-imposed marginality can be a solution *for Portugal* (Text 4)

There are some that are permanently derided for working, and others *live off other's work* (Text 4)

The first quote, taken from Text 5, is one of a few examples where Ventura refers to “the good Portuguese”, as the model citizen that the State should support. There is a subtext here, a racial/ethnic and class subtext, where the party has constructed an idealized version of a “good” citizen, in opposition to what a “bad” citizen looks like. The quotes above are some of the instances where Ventura refers to the “bad” citizens, usually implicitly referring to the Roma community or immigrants/refugees. In the last three quotes, he does not refer directly to Roma, however, the narrative of subsidy dependency, of self-imposed marginality and living off other’s work, is one used repeatedly when Ventura refers to the Roma community. Therefore, while constructing this image of the “good” vs. “bad” Portuguese citizens, Ventura contributes to an opposition between the elites that protect the “bad” citizens, and the underdogs—the “oppressed” militants, and supporters of the party. Some examples follow of this antisystem and us vs. them narrative, while often alluding to the power and strength of the party:

This *fight* that we will make and that never another party was able to make the way we are making it. It is the result of an accumulated frustration of the Portuguese in the past 46 years. It is the result of too much socialism (Text 7)

That’s why so many fake news are made about us. Because *they want to destroy us* because they are afraid of us, but that fear has to be our strength too (Text 7)

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<sup>2</sup> All italics in the citations are made by me to illustrate the analysis.



Will we be attacked? We will. Will we be hunt down? A lot of us eventually will. Will we suffer and pay with our integrity and our freedom? Probably yes. But we were put here and now to see this mission through (Text 7)

The theme Women is the one with less representation, in all selected material and is completely absent from the texts directed to his own audience. The theme is only present when Ventura is directly asked about issues that affect women predominantly (abortion and domestic violence). The only other instance where this theme is present is when, in a 2021 interview (Text 6) he mentions that the new presidency of the party would focus more on youths and women, which is in line with Blee's (2020) argument explain that more women are taking up space in leadership roles in far-right parties (See chapter 2)

In the texts directed to a broader audience, references and topics related to the legal world are more prevalent, especially because in Text 6 a big portion of the interview was focused on a legal court case that the party and Ventura were involved in. The themes of Roma and religion are also more present in this second group of texts, which are analysed in detail in further sections of this chapter.

### **First level: Textual analysis**

The first level of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is the textual analysis. This level concerns itself with more technical linguistic aspects of the selected texts. For this thesis I have chosen to focus firstly more generally on grammar and vocabulary as an indicative of Ventura's position and attitudes towards the subjects of his speeches. The next sections of the textual analysis—modality, evaluation, and transitivity—focus on the three major tools identified in chapter 3, under the section "Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis" (Fairclough 2003, 164-190; Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 83–84).

#### ***Vocabulary and use of legal language***

The vocabulary used by Ventura is generally very simple, i.e., vocabulary that can be understood by the general public without referring to technical legal

language, even when referring to the legal world and legal events. The most technical legal vocabulary is used in the beginning section of a 2021 interview with *Observador*, a Portuguese electronic newspaper (Text 6), as a way of demonstrating superiority towards the interviewers. Prior to these statements, Ventura was asked about a civil court case in which he and the party were sentenced to publicly apologize for calling a family of afro-descendants from an unprivileged neighborhood bandits.

Besides being *technically very badly reasoned* and being *substantially incomprehensible*, note that there is a part of the decision that says I have to abstain from today into the future, forever, which is curious *in a system that does not admit life sentences*, but to that we will go in a more legal discussion (Text 6)

We'll go to that. *I have a legal perspective on this*. It's not just a perspective of the common citizen (Text 6)

You're not a *jurist*, you probably don't know what I'm talking about (Text 6)

Ventura repeatedly insisted that he would not oblige to the sentence given. When the interviewers asked him why he would not oblige and what he would do if he lost the appeal, Ventura stated:

If I lose the appeal? *I essentially have to respond to my consciousness* and the Court will take a decision, if I don't apologize, what will be the consequence? I.e., a fine or a sentence of another nature and I will be here to suffer the consequences (Text 6)

The Portuguese people will then say what they think about this. Now I can't, a court can't force me to say that a bandit is not a bandit (Text 6)

The day that I can't say this in my country, *we no longer live in a democracy*, we live in a state like Venezuela, so... (Text 6)

His statements related to this court case, are not only relevant in terms of vocabulary and use of language but also in relation to the assumptions and implications that Ventura makes within them. Firstly, he implies that court decisions are only deemed respectable if they align with his consciousness and his judgement. Secondly, that the judgement of the Portuguese people is more

important than the judgement of the court, implying that the courts are no longer the voice of the people, as stated in the Portuguese Constitution: “The Courts are the sovereign body with competency to administrate justice in name of the people” (Constituição Da República Portuguesa 1976, art. 202 § 1). Lastly, as indicated through the last quotation, Ventura utilizes the example of non-democratic or impoverished and corrupted countries to catastrophize the situation in Portugal.

### ***Hyperbole and Irony***

I have identified two figures of speech that are common in Ventura’s discourse: hyperbole, and irony. Irony is usually used by Ventura to ridicule and mock other points of view, to belittle them or to deflect the conversation to another topic. For example, in Text 6, Ventura was repeatedly asked about hanging ropes that were put at the doors of the Constitutional Court in a *Chega* manifestation. Ventura defended himself saying that the ropes were not put there by the party, even though the party published photos of them in their social media channels. When confronted further about the possibility of the party being illegalized, he said:

(...) There is a party under threat of illegalisation, and you are asking me about ropes at the doors of the Constitutional Court, *when we are in a democracy that should be asking how is a party being illegalised*, that’s what you should be asking (Text 6)

This example shows how he made use of an ironic tone to, presumably, ridicule the interviewer’s questions and doubts about the hanging ropes, that were interpreted to be a threat to the Constitutional Court judges. With this he deflected the conversation towards the topic of illegalisation of the party, while hinting that democracy is at risk if a party is illegalised, which also a hyperbole, i.e., an exaggeration.

Hyperbole is usually associated with a catastrophic tone in his speech, for example when he compared Portugal with impoverished or undemocratic countries such as Venezuela and North Korea. In this quote Ventura was referring to the court case mentioned in the previous section, where he and the party were convicted of

racism. He was asked why he would not follow the court's decision to apologize to the family, to which he answered:

The day that I can't say this in my country, *we no longer live in a democracy*, we live in a state like Venezuela (Text 6)

The next example is once again a response to the Constitutional Court's ongoing process to determine if the party should be illegalized or not, and it shows a great inconsistency within Ventura's statements. In this case he invokes the rule of law to support his view that the party should not be illegalized. However, as seen the quotation mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, "It would be unacceptable in our democratic life that there is a court, whatever court that is, that prevents us from being a party" (Text 1), the principle of rule of law is ignored when he argues for the acceptance of the party by the Constitutional Court.

This is a democratic state with *rule of law*, this is not Venezuela or North Korea, here we don't illegalize parties (...) I think that none of you want to live in North Korea or Venezuela (Text 6)

Another example of Ventura utilizing hyperboles was identified when he was asked on the party's views on abortion. Instead of addressing the issue of abortion as a woman's health issue, he juxtapositions the issue of abortion with the issue of legalizing euthanasia, as indicators that the legal system and most of the political sphere is more concerned with death than life:

(...) We are being surpassed by countries from the former Soviet Union in matter of support to mothers and maternity and it seems that we are only worried with *abortion and euthanasia* (...) We are not fundamentalists in this matter but there is a moment when we have to say if we're walking towards life or death. *Because I think it's two choices, not to be dramatic*. It's two choices and it looks like the legislation is all made to facilitate more death than life. It's only that that we oppose. Life must be in first place. Life must be our orienting factor. (...) what we think is that the values are all disoriented, they are unstructured. I mean, *death is gaining more ponderation than life*. (Text 2)

This excerpt exemplifies how making the parallel between abortion and euthanasia is used by Ventura to redirect the issue from a women's health perspective to a life and death situation.

### ***Modality***

In terms of modality, Ventura often resorts to modality markers that transmit a very high level of certainty. The quote highlighted in the Introduction chapter is a perfect example, he utilizes the modal verbs “can’t” and “won’t” in the same sentence, to further highlight this certainty, but also through the adjective “unacceptable”. In this quote, Ventura asserts his strong position towards what is being said, i.e., that *Chega* should become a party.

It can’t and it won’t be the Constitutional court preventing *Chega* from becoming a party (Text 1)

Examples like these are present throughout the selected texts, demonstrating that Ventura’s discourses are marked by strong positioning and ideology, that rarely accepts the existence of an alternative solution or opinion. Some of these examples are:

Life must be in first place. Life must be our orienting factor (Text 2)

For the first time in History, we will have the capacity to make them discuss (Text 7)

This fight that we will make and that never another party was able to make the way we are making it. It is the result of an accumulated frustration of the Portuguese in the past 46 years. It is the result of too much socialism (Text 7)

This system too one day will break (Text 7)

Saving Portugal is what we must do in this moment (Text 7)

We will be the opposition in Portugal (Text 8)

These indicators of modality show that Ventura frequently makes strong claims and predictions about the future of the party and the country. These usually contribute to the antisystem and us vs. them narrative (e.g., being the opposition, saving Portugal), in a way that transmits a strong position of the party in the political sphere.

### *Evaluation*

Implicit and explicit considerations of values are also commonly used in Ventura's discourses. As described in section 1 of this chapter, Ventura often refers to an ideal "good" citizen, as opposed to the subsidy-dependent, non-worker "bad" citizen, usually implicitly referring to Roma. For example, in Text 1 Ventura says:

Let's tell them what we are: people of good, working citizens (Text 1)

This evaluation of the party's supporters as the "good" citizens and the rest as the "bad" citizens once again contributes to the us vs. them and antisystem narrative. The supporters and militants of Chega are characterized in opposition to the elites and to the "bad" citizens. In Text 6 there is a clear distancing of Ventura from the elites that, according to him and the party, control the government and the system:

(...) I don't care about the support of the elites, at all. I'm lucky to have had a life path that has never brought me close to the elites (Text 6)

It is curious to notice that he distances himself from the elites, while having had a very traditional political career path, since he first started out as a politician and municipal candidate for PSD, the largest right-wing party in Portugal, and having studied Law in Portugal and a PhD in the University of Cork, in Ireland (Marchi 2020b). This divide between him and the elites is an imaginary or constructed one, which begs the question of in what way is the party antisystem if it claims to go against the elite/ruling power but does not come from a movement of liberation and supports an oppressive ideology that is already predominant in society (patriarchy, classism, etc.).

Another aspect of evaluation that is sometimes used by Ventura is religious values. When referring to his Christian religious values he often does it with the intent to show the superiority of his values and moral, criticizing the lack of religious orientation from the government. For example, when asked about the changes the party intends to make in the school curriculum, Ventura says:

What I want, and what Chega wants is a school that forms citizens, free and authentic in all its multiple dimensions, *religious*, moral, civic. For me it's very hard to see parties that (...) want to end religious education in school.

*All religious education.* I mean, as if the religious dimension also didn't have a human dimension (Text 2)

The school has become a sort of 'values are all relative so we can have one or the other. Right now, we have these and it's these that we have to spread', as if there were no fundamental values. To me there is, but I don't want to impose our matrix. *I think our culture has a Christian matrix*, I don't want to impose to everyone that matrix, but for the love of God, schools are paid with our taxes, they are paid by the public treasury. *I think that our matrix of identity must be that, in matter of education.* (Text 2)

Religious evaluation is also crucial when Ventura refers to immigration issues and international relations:

Our ties with Spain, in our perspective, can reinforce the position of both Portugal and Spain in the EU. It's a kind of strategic reinforcement. *And even, once again, in the defence of our Christian matrix.* Portugal and Spain are the last strongholds of our Christian culture (Text 2)

Ventura also makes use of religious and Christian references to equate his moral goodness to that of Jesus Christ, for example in these excerpts:

I'm using a lot of Jesus Christ's expressions but I'm going to use another one. When someone gives us a slap in the face, we give the other cheek. I'm just like that. I don't act by personal hatred (...) (Text 6)

Look, I'm very Catholic and very Christian, and Jesus Christ said, 'the humiliated will be exalted' (Text 6)

### ***Transitivity***

The last tool for textual analysis that I have selected from Fairclough's CDA is transitivity. As explained in chapter 3, this tool allows for an analysis of the ways in which the author of the text omits the agent in the sentences. By understanding how the agent and their agency are represented in a text, it is possible to draw conclusions on how the author of the text relates to them. Thus, this section will focus on how Ventura refers to the minority groups that are at the aim of this thesis. Firstly, I will take a closer look into how Ventura refers to women and women's issues. When talking about abortion the subject is more often "the process" and "life" than women, women's health, or women's wellbeing.

Today we see that a woman that wants to abort, it seems that the process is accelerated. If she wants to adopt or wants to have children, it is a lengthy process (Text 2)

Life must be in first place. Life must be our orienting factor (Text 2)

Similarly, when addressing the presence of women in the party the subject is the party and not women:

The party should include women in their organs (Text 6)

The explicit references to women in Ventura's discourses are limited, however, in both the situations where they are referred to, there is a tendency to shift the focus away from women into other subjects. This might indicate a distancing from Ventura in relation to women, women's issues and their role in society and the political sphere. More reflections on this are presented in the third level of the analysis, as it relates closely to the patriarchal structure of society.

A similar yet different approach can be found Ventura refers to the Roma community. Often, the grammatical subject is not Roma or the community but rather "subsidy dependency" and "self-imposed marginality":

Throwing into the faces of the Portuguese to make them believe that subsidy dependency, and self-imposed marginality can be a solution for Portugal (Text 4)

When referring to Muslim immigrants, he uses the pronoun "they", putting all Muslim immigrants into the same subject, as exemplified in the next quotation.

They are masses of people that want to indoctrinate Europe, they want to convert others to their faith and their model of life (Text 2)

When referring to Muslim migrants in such a generalized and reductive way, Ventura is contributing to the stigma that all Muslim migrants are religious extremists, and that the issue of migration is one of a fight between ideological orientations. This becomes clearer if taken into consideration alongside with the distinction between "good immigration" and "bad immigration", as discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus, Ventura makes use of stigmas already present in



society to create more opposition towards receiving migrants and refugees from certain countries that are not desirable, in his perspective.

As a final note, I would like to draw attention to another instance where he refers to the case of George Floyd in Text 4, in a speech intended to argue that structural racism in Portugal does not exist, and that the solidarity that most political parties expressed towards the issue was hypocritical. In the particular example below, “George Floyd” is the grammatical object in the first part of the compound sentence, and “Santomense” is the subject in the second part. Additionally, the choice of verbs is also indicative of how Ventura perceives the murders of these two men so differently. While George Floyd’s murder is presented as a “death”, the Santomense’s murder in Portugal is referred to as a “killing”:

How can we cry the death of George Floyd in the US and ignore completely a Santomense that was killed right next to us in Seixal? (Text 4)

This example, I argue, shows that there is a biased approach to these situations. Additionally, there is another inconsistency here, since he takes a case of racism in Portugal that led to the murder of a Santomense citizen, in a speech intended to argue against the existence of racism in Portugal.

The material is short on references to Roma, women, or migrants, which makes it hard to draw a strong conclusion on how the structure of these sentences indicates Ventura’s stance towards these groups. However, taking all of the examples above in conjunction, I argue that there is a tendency to ignore the agency of the referred people or to give agency when inappropriately generalizing a whole group, as in the case of Roma and Muslim immigrants.

### **Second level: Discursive practice**

Turning into the second level of CDA, this section analyses the contexts of the texts, by first focusing on two analytical tools, intertextuality, and assumptions. These tools shed light into the discourses that Ventura draws from, allowing for a further analysis of the interactions between his discourses and other common discourses in society, and especially in far-right ideology. Then, the section moves

into a more detailed exploration of how Ventura utilizes the legal system and legal vocabulary in his discourses.

### *Intertextuality and assumptions*

Regarding intertextuality, and as explored in an earlier section of this chapter, the religious discourse is often present and included in Ventura's discourse. It is often used to justify his points of view and to exalt his morality and sense of goodness, by almost equating himself with religious characters, like Jesus Christ. This finding is congruent with that of Ferreira Dias (2020), i.e., that far-right leaders such as Ventura, or Bolsonaro in Brazil, have developed a messiah-like persona.

Apart from the religious discourse, I have also identified the presence of a nativist and nationalist discourse that is very typical in far-right ideology (Martinha Ramalho 2020). It is possible to identify traces of this discourse when Ventura addresses the topic of immigration:

It is evident that we are all for the coming of new cultures, new people that bring richness to Europe (...) the danger of the reality we have today, especially in southern European countries, is that in some zones we are getting *excessively Islamised* (Text 2)

They are masses of people that want to *indoctrinate Europe*, they want to convert others to their faith and their model of life. That's what we are against, i.e., *nothing against those who come to integrate, to work, to bring richness*, Portugal was also once a country of immigrants (Text 2)

In both examples, the issue of multiculturalism, immigration and nativism is intertwined with the religious discourse that Portugal, and Europe, should maintain a Christian majority. He also implicitly infers, in the second quote, that immigrants from different faiths, specifically Muslims, never have the intention of working, to integrate or to contribute to the country's "richness". This assumption stigmatizes immigrants and Muslim people in general as the "bad" immigrant that should not be accepted into the European culture.

Finally, the populist discourse was also identified in Ventura's speeches and interviews. Populism is a contested term within political science, but it is usually defined by the opposition of the people against the elite in a process of exclusion,

through a partial identification of which people's wills and perspectives are being taken into consideration. Thus, populist discourses usually tie into an anti-democratic point of view with disregard for the division of powers and rule of law (Urbinati 2019).

It's not in the secretary that you make democracy, it's here outside (Text 1)

In the streets, a power was being born, where thousands, millions of people were tired of the system in Portugal (Text 7)

In the first example above, there is an implication that democracy does not exist in the governing institutions, and that it should be made according to the people's will, with the assumption that the people to be heard should only be the party's supporters. In the second quotation above I have identified an assumption made by Ventura that most people in Portugal want a radical change of system, i.e., support that support *Chega's* ideology, exaggerating the power and support of the party.

Furthermore, the populist discourse also intertwines with the nationalist discourse, for example when Ventura states:

When we feel betrayed by our country, we only have one thing to do, keep *fighting* for that country (Text 7)

This is an example of how Ventura urges for popular mobilisation against the system, assuming that most people feel "betrayed" by the country. Similar to the previous example, the references to fight and mobilize in favour of the country is also an attempt to display the party's strength.

### ***The role of the legal world***

In the texts that are directed to the wider public, Ventura draws from discourses of the legal world more frequently than when addressing his own supporters. This, I argue, could be a way to demonstrate more legitimacy towards the public, due to the authoritarian legitimacy inherent to the legal system. Thus, it seems that the context of the speeches and interviews are particularly relevant when analysing this topic.

Within the texts selected that were directed to a broader audience there two types of texts: two speeches in parliament in 2019 and 2020 (Text 3 and 4, respectively) and two interviews in 2019 and 2021 (Text 2 and 6, respectively).

Taking a closer look into Text 3, which refers to the first speech Ventura made in Parliament after being elected in 2019, it constitutes a short intervention around the Government's program for 2020. Ventura is highly critical of the program, utilizing irony and mocking as the main rhetorical strategies:

It's an excellent sign, why not start like this indeed, it's an excellent sign for the Portuguese (Text 2)

And once again we have a program that says it wants a more robust internal security. Imagine, any one of us could say that (Text 2)

Where are the measures to combat the closed precincts in various points of the country, Mr. Prime Minister? (...) No, we are more worried about raising the age for bullfighting, not the age of changing sex, but the age for bullfighting is what we have to raise (Text 2)

In the last example above, Ventura not only utilizes irony but also makes a comparison between the legal age of changing sex and of attending bullfighting. I argue that this comparison, when directed towards the broader public has the intention to shock those who do not necessarily agree with his ideological views. There is an assumption that both these issues are comparable and that being concerned with one means there is no concern with the other. This assumption, that can create shock within the audience, is what allows Ventura's discourses to have less disagreement from a non-critical audience.

Furthermore, within Text 2, the only critical points raised by Ventura that offer an alternative or proposal are related to corruption and economic crimes:

Today is a special day, Mr. Prime Minister, it is the day that a former socialist Prime Minister is being heard in court for corruption. And what does this program bring us about corruption? Absolutely nothing. Will it or will it not bring again the illicit enrichment, redefined naturally, maybe with declarative duties to this hemicycle? Will it or will it not bring the effective proposal of incompatibility between members of government and businesses with enterprises that negotiated with the government and that would embarrass any respected democrat? (Text 2)

Taking into consideration the prevalence of the antisystem and us vs. them theme in Ventura's discourses, this excerpt appears to have that exact subtext. Focusing on these issues after mentioning the case of the former Portuguese Prime Minister that was convicted of corruption, is strategic. It is an indirect accusation that the Prime Minister to whom he directed his words (and that is from the Socialist Party) is being conniving with the corruption cases that have shaken Portugal in the last decade. Thus, this speech, while focusing on elements of the legal world, has an intent to build on the antisystem narrative that the Government, especially a left-wing one, will always be constituted by elites that do not have the people's interest in mind.

In the 2020 speech (Text 4), that was made focusing on the issue of structural racism in Portugal, following the death of George Floyd in the USA, Ventura once again implicitly accuses the State and the other parties that had been vocal about the issue of trying to utilize the issue to ignore cases of corruption:

Structural racism is a ghost that doesn't exist in Portugal. *It is a ghost that they want us to bring into discussion of topics to hide others*, as was the case of Novo Banco, as was the case or various cases of corruption that in the last weeks we came to know. How can we (Text 4)

This example follows the same line as the previous ones. Ventura redirects the discussion to the issues that he can use to build on the antisystem and anti-elite narrative. The speech then turns into an attack on the Roma community in an attempt to argue that the party is not racist or extremist because the issues they raise around Roma are justifiable, and accuses the "installed system" of having a biased attitude towards him and the party:

When Andre Ventura says we need a specific plan for the Roma community, racist but when the mayor of Azambuja from the Socialist Party says the same, Antonio Costa says we need to put the words in their context (...). This is the stigma we created in Portugal. No, it's not *the stigma of the quasi-populisms and of the permanent ghost of extremism and populism that today is everything that the installed system does not like* (Text 4)

He then finishes the speech warning he will say something that “might be considered the most racist sentence said here” (Text 4), to which the president of the Parliament advises him not to say it, but he continues:

Tell me one district, one district, where there are no problems with the Roma community (Text 4)

This speech, Text 4, that started as an intervention about structural racism, developed into an implicit and explicit accusation of the Government being biased and into an argument that the Roma community should be discriminated against. It is possible to notice a major difference between Text 2 and Text 3. While producing the same underlying narrative of antisystem and us vs. them, the latter has a higher degree of explicit accusations and a more confident and inflammatory tone. This could be due to the growing support that the Party had in the span of one year, but also due to the bigger societal tensions that came after the George Floyd case. Utilizing this moment of fracture between left and right-wing supporters to deliver a more inflammatory and accusative speech can be a way for Ventura to gain more support and visibility.

The same growing confidence and higher level of accusations can be seen when comparing Text 2, from 2019, before Ventura was elected for Parliament, and Text 6, from 2021. Text 2 has a more moderate tone overall and more moderate references to the legal system and his opinions on its flaws. However, Text 6 has a much more defensive and inflammatory tone, which is also exacerbated by a slightly more hostile approach from the interviewers. Additionally, the context of Text 6 is different, as the interview mainly revolved around the conviction of him and the party for racism (critical incident (I)). Additionally, and as exposed in the section “Vocabulary and use of legal language”, there is a higher presence of technical language as a way of defending his point of view and asserting superiority towards the interviewers.

From these four examples and the comparisons and differences drawn, I argue that Ventura’s discourse is becoming increasingly more radical with time, while simultaneously making more use of the legal world and language to support his

claims and divert the topics towards those that create more social division. This claim should, however, in future research be further explored through a larger and more diverse sample of speeches and interviews.

Having analysed how Ventura approaches legal themes and how he incorporates them in his discourses directed to a wide audience, it is worth to draw some comparisons into how these strategies change when addressing a supporting audience only.

The first major difference that I have identified is the use of allegations and statements that are not true or that distort reality. For example, in the first quote used in the introduction of this thesis, Ventura states that in a democratic state, a Court cannot prevent *Chega* from becoming a party, however, this is false statement. The Court is a sovereign body that, and the Constitutional Court, according to the Portuguese Constitution, is responsible by determining if a project can become a party, i.e., if the project respects all the legal requirements (Constituição Da República Portuguesa 1976, art. 223 §2). Furthermore, as exposed in the first level of analysis, there is a striking inconsistency when Ventura then refers to the rule of law as an argument for not illegalizing the party. The argument of rule of law is instrumentalized when it is favourable to Ventura and the party and undermined when it is unfavourable.

In another instance, in the acceptance speech after being re-elected as leader of the party (Text 7), Ventura claims that since their support is growing, they will be able to force the Parliament into discussing the issues they want:

The big difference now is that from 30<sup>th</sup> January, every week, every week, if God allows it, *we will have the power to impose what legislative projects will be discussed* (Text 7)

For the first time in history, we will have the capacity to make them discuss (Text 7)

They didn't let us legislate. When we wanted to have bold initiatives, they would block our way or stop it from happening (Text 7)

The fact that a party has more representatives in Parliament does not mean it has more power to put topics into discussion, but rather that they have more power

when voting on them. Ventura makes an implicit accusation here that the Parliament, the system, and the elites, are ignoring their propositions, and that by gaining more seats in Parliament they are fighting that system. The legal claim that more seats equate to more power in proposing laws is simply not true, but it is utilized by Ventura to build on his antisystem and us vs. them argument.

### *Different audiences—different approaches?*

As exposed in the previous section, references to the legal world are significantly more present when approaching a broader audience. However, further conclusions can be drawn from the themes that are more present in the text directed to his supporters: power of the party, antisystem and us vs. them. It is noticeable how much more aggressive and antagonising his discourse is when talking to an audience that shares a common ground of values and ideology.

The tone of his speeches when directed to an audience of supporters and militants of the party is almost epic, in the sense that it transmits an idea that the party's intentions are grandiose and honourable. This tone is transmitted not only through statements of great power of the party, but also through the setting of the speeches. For example, in Text 7, the speech is interleaved by an epic music, playing in the background, which I argue has the purpose of asserting the narrative of the party's noble cause towards the fight against the system and the elites. This sense of nobility of their cause is also transmitted through statements such as:

It is symbolic, because it maybe is giving us a sign of what we actually have to do, in the day of *the rumbles of this legislature* our joy and our strength emerge as an alternative force in Portugal (Text 7)

This *fight* that we will make and that never another party was able to make the way we are making it (Text 7)

When we feel betrayed by our country, we only have one thing to do, keep *fighting* for that country (Text 7)

*Saving Portugal. Saving Portugal* is what we must do in this moment (Text 7)



We assume *the role that History has confided in us*, the role to accept and give back the dignity to this country (Text 8)

From now on there will be someone in Parliament telling the truth, and it won't be 1 in 230, it will be 10 or 12 or 14 (Text 8)

Using particular statements and contextual elements, such as music, Ventura builds on the antisystem and antielite narrative, positioning the party in a noble position, in comparison to other parties, and the system. The fight against the installed system and the elites is a recurrent theme in the speeches aimed at his own audience, and it often alludes to violence, which is justified through this noble and righteous fight. For example, in the speech Ventura made after the presidential elections in 2021 (Text 5), the strength and power of the party is at the centre. Later that year, another speech (Text 7) revolves around the capacity that the party has or will have to overthrow the ruling powers. The next examples I included illustrate the way there are constant references to the power of the power in such a tone that can be interpreted as violent.

(...) [the party] was able to *pierce* the habitual block in Portugal to create an overwhelming antisystem power that doesn't break today nor ends today, but that knows today its *highest moment in History* and his strength for the battles ahead (Text 5) [1]

(...) all those [European] leaders, rejoiced in the enormous *strength* that we transmit, and we showed them that we are at their level in the *fight* against the system in Portugal (Text 5) [2]

Right now, we have in our hands the capacity and the power to make a huge, huge transformation (Text 7) [3]

For the first time in our History, we will have the capacity to force them to discuss. I know a lot of you think that in the end it will be nothing, but believe me, *soft water on hard stone, beats so much that one day pierces*. And this system will one day be pierced (Text 7) [4]

Our *fight* will be big. And I know that our hunger must also be big, as big as the *fight* we will have (Text 7) [5]

All the examples above, in more implicit or explicit ways, call for a response by the people invoking their indignity and disappointment towards the

Government/system. Additionally, there are also references to the nobility of the cause, based on “History”, such as in examples [1] and [4]. In example [4], there is also a resort to a popular saying—soft water on hard stone, so much it beats until it pierces—to make the parallel to their fight against the system. This use of metaphors, which is also present in the use of “hunger” in example [5], is a discursive way of approaching the audience with a certain level of proximity and familiarity.

### **Third level: Social practice**

As the last step in this analysis, this section focuses on elements beyond the textual realm. Thus, this section draws from the theoretical insights explored in chapter 3, to draw conclusions on non-discoursal social elements, while still anchoring on the discursive events. Firstly, I analyse how Ventura’s discourses contribute to the status quo—how they perpetuate hegemonic powers—and the possible consequences on the political, ideological, and social world. Secondly, I move on to a more detailed analysis of issues of sexism and immigration, combining my analysis with the concept of subtext.

#### ***Antisystem, but does it change the status quo?***

As exposed in previous sections, Ventura’s discourse is heavily marked by an antisystem and antielite character, and in the last section of the second level, the violent nature of his discourse was explored. However, in this section I want to reflect on how emancipatory his discourse is. He frequently states that the purpose of the party is to give the people power and to liberate the people from years of suffering under a socialist government:

I am notoriously, profoundly, thankful to the Portuguese people, this people that I know would never fail me or fail this party, because *they have suffered for too long* (Text 8)

It is the result of an accumulated frustration of the Portuguese in the past 46 years. It is the result of too much socialism (Text 7)

However, when taking a closer look into on what powers, within the hegemonic struggle, Ventura's discourses rely on, there is not a real intent to liberate or emancipate oppressed groups. As explored in the second level of this analysis, Ventura's discourses often draw from the religious, nationalist, nativist, and populist discourse. Thus, I argue that while the party is admittedly antisystem it does not go against hegemonic powers, but rather supports them. The next section will explore in more detail how certain social and institutional discourses are integrated into Ventura's discourses and recontextualized to serve the purpose of maintaining the status quo.

### ***Women and gender subtext***

When exploring transitivity in the first level of this analysis, it became clear that Ventura often removes agency from women, when referring to issues that directly affect women's health and well-being. From this I gather that there is a gender subtext that the choices that directly affect women and their health should be taken into consideration first as a political issue. Additionally, taking into consideration the traditional values in education and sexuality—e.g., through the limitation of sex education in school or the patriarchal practice of heteronormativity—that far-right parties, including *Chega*, consistently defend, I argue that Ventura's discourses present a strong gender subtext. Drawing from Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall (2020, 437) categorization of sexism—benevolent and hostile—benevolent sexism is what seems to be more apparent in Ventura's discourses. However, through this closer look on gender subtexts, the sexism present has also a hostile goal, i.e., of objectifying and controlling women and their bodies.

Furthermore, when referring to domestic violence, another issue that has disproportionately affected women, Ventura offers no reflections on the patriarchal system that can manifest into an exacerbated male violence towards women (Walby 1989, 224–25). He does refer a concern towards the suffering of women, particularly in the judicial system (Text 2). However, the lack of awareness or reference to the patriarchal powers that allow for the existence and perpetuation of

domestic violence, indicates that there is no clear or strong will to go against the dominant patriarchal powers in society.

### *Racial and ethnic subtext*

As exposed in the Previous Research chapter, the gender subtext often interlaces with the nationalist, nativist, and authoritarian discourse (Cabezas 2022; Yuval Davis 1997, in Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020, 436). There is no direct mentioning of the “caring racism” that Mulinari and Neergaard (2014, 54) pointed to in their study of cultural racism and anti-feminism in the far-right movement in Sweden. However, Ventura, when defending why Europe should not accept Muslim immigrants, did state

They [Muslims] are masses of people that want to indoctrinate Europe, they want to convert others to their faith and their model of life (Text 2)

I argue that there is a racial subtext here that stands on the idea that Muslim values are not compatible with European values of, for example, gender equality. These claims are often found among far-right ideology and discourses (Agius, Rosamond, and Kinnvall 2020; Martinha Ramalho 2020), and Ventura’s discourses are no exception.

A similar approach to Roma communities was identified, since often times Ventura draws an implicit evaluation of them. As exposed in previous sections, Roma are usually referred to by Ventura with derogatory and generalizing terms, such as “those who have destroyed Portugal” (Text 5) and “subsidy dependency” and “self-imposed marginality” (Text 4). This generalization, links to a broader social climate in Portugal targets Roma communities as the culprit for issues like criminality and low incomes and pensions.

Through the building of these narratives that pinpoint specific groups, such as Muslim immigrants or Roma, as those to blame for issues that frustrate society, Ventura manages to create an easy plan of action. When reducing complex problems in the social sphere to a question of Us—the native Portuguese—vs. Them—the immigrants and Roma—the purpose is to convince the audience,

supporters, and non-supporters, that these issues are as simple as eliminating immigrants and Roma from the equation.

The societal consequences that this discourse can be significant. I argue that Ventura's discourses on issues like the ones explored in this section, lead to the reinforcement of the status quo. In turn, I believe that, by not being sensitive to the hegemonic powers that regulate these narratives, Ventura's discourses do not contribute to ameliorate a climate of social division, which could lead to more oppression, discrimination, and less equality.

## Chapter 5 – Conclusion

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The aim of this thesis was to understand how the *Chega* party stigmatises certain groups of people, namely women, Roma communities, and other racialized groups in Portugal. Additionally, this research aimed at understanding the role of the legal system and vocabulary in Ventura's discourses. Through a three-level Critical Discourse Analysis, grounded on Fairclough (2013), I analysed eight texts, which included speeches and interviews with Ventura.

The first level in this approach revealed important characteristics of Ventura's discourses, at a linguistic level. Firstly, in terms of vocabulary and technical legal language utilized by Ventura, it is mainly somewhat simple and instrumentalized when trying to assert intellectual superiority. Secondly, when examining the assumptions and implications that Ventura makes in his statements about the legal system, I argue that he often implies that the judgement of the courts should not be more important than his own or the people's judgement. While he undermines the authority of Courts in certain situations where it is beneficial for the party, he also invokes the democratic rule of law when it suits them.

I also identified two major figures of speech in Ventura's discourse: hyperbole and irony. The first I argue that is mainly used to catastrophize, i.e., to make a situation look or sound worse than it is, often when comparing Portugal to undemocratic countries, like Venezuela or North Korea. The second, irony, is presumably used to ridicule and mock other's opinions or to shift the focus of a conversation to another topic. In terms of modality, I identified a high level of certainty which I interpret as a strong positioning and ideology of Ventura to the issues presented. I further reflected on implicit and explicit considerations of values, where implicit evaluation is often used to refer to Roma as the "bad" example of a citizen. These evaluations often feed the us vs. them and antisystem discourse. Religious values were also identified as a central evaluation technique. In parallel with the use of technical legal language, Ventura's religious values also serve the

purpose of showing a moral superiority towards the “system” and Government, since Church and State in Portugal are separated.

The last tool in the first level of CDA I utilized was transitivity, which allows to draw conclusions on how Ventura relates to the subjects of his statements. The conclusion was similar for the three groups under analysis—women, Roma, and other racialized groups. Ventura’s statements show a tendency to ignore the agency of these groups or to inappropriately generalize a whole group of people, such as Roma or Muslim immigrants. This conclusion was further developed within the second and third level of analysis, as explained below.

With the second and third level of the analysis, I was able to reflect on the broader textual and societal context, which was key to answering the research questions that guided my approach. Regarding the first research question that guided the analysis—*What part does the legal system and legal vocabulary take in Chega’s leader, Ventura’s discourse and how are these used to support the party’s goals?*—my analysis revealed that the uses of legal technical language are very limited, and mostly used for Ventura to assert superiority towards the interviewer and the audience, as a Law-educated person. I interpret this as being a strategy to gain legitimacy, by drawing on the legal system’s authoritarian legitimacy. Furthermore, when addressing a broader public, Ventura tends to utilize the themes of the legal world to build on the antisystem narrative, in an intent to create division and frustration towards the “elites” that constitute the State. Moreover, I was also able to identify an increasing trend in accusatory and inflammatory statements, which are a sign of an increase of the party’s radical ideology. When addressing an audience of mainly supporters and militants, Ventura’s approach differs to one that is more based on false or distorted statements. More notably, Ventura’s discourses surrounding the legal system are sometimes inconsistent, when the rule of law is invoked when it’s in favour of the party but undermined otherwise. These differences in approaches go beyond the theme of the legal world. Speeches held for a target audience of his own are more provocative and build a narrative of nobility of the party’s cause, i.e., that the party is acting as a saviour of the people, while often alluding to violence and the power they hold over “the system”.

*How does the leader of the party, Ventura, represent women and racialized groups in Portugal, and how do those representations relate to the law?*—the analysis revealed that almost no references to women were present in the material, and that references to Roma communities were extensive but mainly implicit. Despite these references being short or implicit, the transitivity tool allowed me to reflect on how Ventura often disregards the agency of women, and refers to women’s issues, such as abortion, through lenses other than a woman’s wellbeing. This tool further allowed me to conclude that the implicit references to Roma were done through inappropriate generalizing statements of the whole group. The same conclusion may be drawn when looking into the representations of immigrants, mainly Muslim immigrants, in the material. Regarding the second part of the question, in the case of women, the issues referred by Ventura are connected to law in the sense that it implies a change in criminal policy—of abortion and domestic violence—in a way that does not intend to be emancipating. Regarding Roma communities, they are most commonly referred by Ventura as criminals or “bad” citizens, to which most societal problems should be pinned on. A similar approach was identified for immigrants and refugees, particularly from Muslim countries.

Lastly, based on the third level of analysis, I want to reflect on the potential consequences that Ventura’s discourses can have for the groups I have chosen to focus on. First, throughout the analysis it became clear that the antisystem and antielite narrative that Ventura strongly built on, do not involve a change of the status quo. Rather, his discourse draws from hegemonic discourses—such as the religious, nativist, or patriarchal discourse—that indicate no intention of emancipation of oppressed groups. Thus, for the groups I have focused my analysis on—women, Roma, and other racialized groups—Ventura’s discourses can have strong and devastating consequences to their rights and freedom. For women, this could translate into reduced equality and control over their bodies and health, as explored in the issue of abortion. For Roma and other racialized groups, such as Muslim immigrants and Afro-descendants, it could translate into an intensification of a social divide between the “us”—native Portuguese—and “them”—immigrants and Roma, and thus more oppression, more discrimination, and less equal rights.



For the field of socio-legal studies, this thesis contributed to further understand how law can be instrumentalized by political actors in far-right discourses. Through the analysis of Ventura's discourses, I have uncovered the ways in which certain populist right-wing discourses can affect specific groups of people, which is a relevant and popular topic within Critical Legal Studies as well. The conclusions drawn on how Ventura represents these groups demonstrate how law, through politics, can be a reflection and a catalyser for social inequality. For future research it would be valuable to analyse far-right political parties in other contexts as well as expanding the sampling material, which could provide more conclusions on the temporal scope and more particular and solid conclusions on the groups chosen for analysis—women, Roma, immigrants, and afro-descendants.

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## Annex 1 – List of Material

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As explained in chapter 3 the selected material is in video format, thus it was translated for better analysis. The list that follows refers to the texts that resulted from that transcription.

**Text 1** – transcription of one of the first videos published in *Chega's* YouTube channel (ChegaTV). It was published after some parties publicly stated that they did not want to make a coalition with *Chega*.

- Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019
- Length: 1 minute 43 seconds
- Target audience: *Chega* supporters and militants
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEdsj\\_bGAu4&ab\\_channel=CHEGATV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEdsj_bGAu4&ab_channel=CHEGATV)

**Text 2** – interview for the show “*Isto é o povo a falar*” (Translated to, “This is the people talking”), in KuriakosTV YouTube channel. This interview was made before the legislative elections of 2019 as part of a series of interviews with party leaders.

- Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019
- Length: 17 minutes 30 seconds
- Target audience: general public
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj0ekPcGqMg&ab\\_channel=KuriakosTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tj0ekPcGqMg&ab_channel=KuriakosTV)

**Text 3** – first speech in Parliament after being elected in the legislative elections of 2019

- Date: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019
- Length: 3 minutes 56 seconds
- Target audience: general public
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itIT3mGL1R0&ab\\_channel=HEGATV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itIT3mGL1R0&ab_channel=HEGATV)

**Text 4** – Speech held in Parliament in 2020, with main focus on the antiracist movements and protests held after George Floyd’s death in the USA.

- Date: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Length: 6 minutes 58 seconds
- Target audience: general public
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXWjnaRmIVY&t=117s&ab\\_channel=CHEGATV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXWjnaRmIVY&t=117s&ab_channel=CHEGATV)

**Text 5** – Speech held after the presidential elections of 2021, transmitted in national TV.

- Date: 25 January 2021
- Length: 8 minutes 48 seconds
- Target audience: *Chega* supporters and militants
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beg4rZ3X5Zc&ab\\_channel=LittleBits](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=beg4rZ3X5Zc&ab_channel=LittleBits)

**Text 6** – Interview for *Observador* radio station.

- Date: 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- Length: 50 minutes 31 seconds
- Target audience: general public
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HOVr25ih6w&t=12s&ab\\_channel=Observador](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-HOVr25ih6w&t=12s&ab_channel=Observador)

**Text 7** – Acceptance speech after being re-elected as the party leader, in the IV National Congress of the party.

- Date: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021
- Length: 37 minutes 38 seconds
- Target audience: *Chega* supporters and militants
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r8OBcJh3JE&list=PL0\\_bpXj-Wuyt\\_6GsCJFFX17-Wu2DEWRw0&ab\\_channel=CHEGATV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r8OBcJh3JE&list=PL0_bpXj-Wuyt_6GsCJFFX17-Wu2DEWRw0&ab_channel=CHEGATV)



**Text 8** – Speech held and transmitted in national television, after the results of 2022 legislative elections

- Date: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022
- Length: 9 minutes 18 seconds
- Target audience: *Chega* supporters and militants
- Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cueVhZ83JTI&ab\\_channel=D  
ebatesPT](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cueVhZ83JTI&ab_channel=DebatesPT)