

## Punitive populism and far right in the Iberian space

### *Populismo punitivo y extrema derecha en el espacio ibérico*

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#### **Abstract**

*The entry of extreme right-wing populist formations into the institutions of Spain and Portugal represents a qualitative change in their political systems. One relevant issue is the electoral use of the strategy of punitive populism, a tool already used extensively by other more veteran formations within this ideological family in Europe. The question addressed in this text is to what extent they have used this strategy, and whether they have made any particular modulation of it in their electoral manifestos in force during the elections for entry into the parliamentary chambers of each of the Iberian countries.*

#### **Keywords**

*Far right, punitive populism, Europe, Iberian Peninsula.*

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### **Resumen**

La entrada de formaciones de extrema derecha populista en las instituciones de España y Portugal supone un cambio cualitativo de sus sistemas políticos. Una cuestión relevante es el uso electoralista de la estrategia del populismo punitivo, una herramienta ya utilizada de manera extensiva por otras formaciones más veteranas dentro de esa familia ideológica. La cuestión que aborda este texto es en qué grado han utilizado esta estrategia y si han realizado alguna modulación particular de la misma dentro de sus manifiestos electorales vigentes durante los comicios de entrada en las cámaras parlamentarias de cada uno de los países ibéricos.

### **Palabras clave**

Extrema derecha, populismo punitivo, Europa, Península Ibérica.

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## **Introduction and state of the art**

On October 6, 2019, the end of Iberian exceptionalism was consummated (Simón, 2005). That is, the absence of far-right parties within the legislative chambers of Portugal and Spain, in contrast to what has become common in European countries since the late 1990s. *Chega!* obtains parliamentary representation in Portugal. In April of that same year, *Vox*, in Spain, had already entered the Lower House. In addition, in November it would obtain an increase in electoral support, allowing its entry into the Senate while increasing its presence in Congress. In that year 2019, two groups of the far right-wing populist (hereinafter FRP), experienced a qualitative leap, supported by new forms and strategies, both in communication and discourse, as well as in projects. Within this strategy, the presence of punitive populism is an outstanding element, due to the salience within the programs and public demonstrations of the aforementioned formations.

The objective of this text is to see to what extent these EDP formations have used the discourse of punitive populism within their campaigns and in what coordinates they have expressed it. This is relevant given that this type of practice has become common within formations of this nature (Hough,

2008; Stojarová, 2018). Similarly, it is pertinent insofar as the aforementioned formations enjoy institutional representation and public visibility that, to a certain extent, allows them to put issues on the political agenda.

As a necessary element, to achieve the proposed objective, it is appropriate to present each of the formations and the context in which they carry out their activity. In this way to, later, develop the concept of punitive populism and its fundamental constituent elements. For this purpose, FRP Iberian formations are briefly described.

Starting with the Spanish party, Vox, was born in 2013 as a split to the right of the ruling party at that time, the conservative Popular Party (hereinafter PP). Although in the first elections in which they participated, they obtained testimonial results, several factors throughout 2019 helped them making a qualitative leap. On the one hand, the impacts of the Great Recession (Nikolaus, 2010) in Spain and the measures of the Troika<sup>1</sup> caused unrest in broad sectors of the population across the entire ideological spectrum, although on the right side they took longer to manifest themselves politically and electorally. On the other hand, the ruling party faced triple wear and tear: that of carrying out government tasks in an adverse socioeconomic scenario, the crisis of the declaration of independence of Catalonia, and the cases of corruption that plague the formation. This partisan weathering, parallel to that of the leader of the formation and head of government, Mariano Rajoy, allowed Vox access to the fishing ground of voters previously monopolized by the PP.

For its part, the case of Chega! presents similarities, insofar as it was also born as a split from the hegemonic party of the Portuguese right the PSD<sup>2</sup>. The Portuguese case is relevant because the formation was established in April 2019 and in October of that same year it already obtained representation in the national legislative chamber. The appearance of the Portuguese FRP formation has similar reasons to the Spanish one. Portugal has also been a country punished by the Great Recession of 2008, having to receive an explicit rescue in 2011, during the PSD government. This caused a

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1 The three bodies are known by this name: European Commission, European Central Bank, and International Monetary Fund. These, together, function as a decision-making group for the bailout policies of the member countries of the European Union, especially after the sovereign debt crises generated by the impact of the Great Recession in the region.

2 Acronym for the Social Democratic Party. It should be noted that the party is located, despite what the name indicates, in the ideological spectrum of the center-right.

high level of wear and tear for the Executive, over the following years, due to the high social costs of the measures imposed by the access to the financial rescue.

Thus, in 2015, the PSD candidate and head of government, Pedro Passos Coelho, led the most voted list, but he was not able to renew as Prime Minister, yielding to the government Antonio Costa of the Socialist Party. This fact caused a leadership crisis within the PSD, something that strongly affected this formation, given the weight of the leader and the charismatic character they usually have (Magone, 1998). In 2017 André Ventura, at that time the PSD candidate in the local elections, made some controversial statements about the Roma population (Martíns Carvalho, 2017). The allusions to minorities and the hardening of the penal code will be constant once he left the PSD and founded Chega!

It should be noted that this FRP training inherited the original model of its parent formation, because the weight of the leader is crucial. Partly because he is the only deputy represented, for the moment, in the Assembly of the Republic.

The discourses focused on punitive populism root the context of social unrest (Berman, 2019), in the case of the Iberian countries, have suffered a strong impact on their social and economic fabric with the Great Recession, followed by the euro crisis, and still suffer from its aftermath. The deconstruction of European social states within the hyper-globalized economic integration model (Rodrik, 2012) caused the expansion of social inequalities (Piketty, 2015). This process, both locally and globally, has led to a manifest dissatisfaction with globalization (Stiglitz, 2003).

The Great Recession of 2008 implied, for the countries of the European Union, the discovery of the limitations of the model in a unique way (Stiglitz, 2016; Chari et al., 2020). The deficiencies of the model put pressure on the peripheral economies of the area (such as the Iberian nations) to make an adjustment through internal devaluation (Rísquez, 2016). That is, by not being able to apply a monetary devaluation, people are devalued, more specifically wage income as a mechanism to gain competitiveness in national markets by promoting exports. It should be noted that both Spain and Portugal already had low salary levels compared to the European average. This, in turn, motivated social mobilizations of protest, together with an impoverishment and precariousness of living conditions, along with an increase in the situation of risk of poverty and social exclusion (Tejero-Pérez, 2017).

Likewise, this context will be severely aggravated by the health emergency of COVID-19, the Iberian countries are particularly fragile given their exposure to the global situation (which affects the flow of tourists) and the dependence of European markets in the commercial field. In the case of Spain, a substantial part of its economy depends on tourist activity, practically non-existent since the beginning of the pandemic (Picazo & Gil-Pareja, 2020). This situation has materialized in a growing job and economic insecurity causing the expansion of social groups within the dynamics of the excluding modernity. Both in the global context, as in the Old Continent, with the expansion of the category of the working poor (Marx, 2020). In addition, it is found that the increases in socioeconomic inequalities, the deficient network of the welfare state and the lack of job opportunities have caused a rebound in certain crimes related to property, especially robbery and theft.

These types of events, magnified by the media, form currents of opinion around insecurity and fear of victimization. This constitutes a context where, although within low crime rates, a climate of insecurity is generated for the so-called insiders.<sup>3</sup> In both countries, a framework has been solidifying, where a growing population becomes more and more excluded and with few opportunities for improvement, in front of them, strata of included or integrated, the population fear being victimized, that is, the fear of being victims of some kind of crime. It is in contexts of this type where discourses such as punitive populism function more effectively, as a promise or balm of recovery of law and order, through a hardened and expanded penal code, through the effect of typifying new crimes, or the aggravation of existing ones.

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3 The insider/outsider dynamic (Carrabine et al., 2014, p. 346) is used in criminology as a line of distinction of the “we/them” type. In the context of this text, the English nomenclature and the same distinction are adopted. Distinguishing between insiders and outsiders refers to the criterion of normalized socialization and respect for both social and legal norms. In this way, it is understood that the insider citizen is inserted in society, integrated into it, and carries out an activity within the channels considered normal, with respect to both formal and informal norms. In addition, he maintains normal what is considered normal behavior within the social group of belonging. Instead, the outsider would be the person who, voluntarily or not, finds himself on the margins of society, not fully respecting the set of social and formal norms. Whether due to ignorance, incapacity, or of his own free will. In this way, it is possible to distinguish those people who are in a situation of social exclusion due to socioeconomic reasons (such as the lack of opportunities) and wish to normalize/integrate. On the other hand, there are those who voluntarily exclude themselves and may, in cases, be part of violent or criminal subcultures.

## **Towards a characterization of punitive populism**

The birth of punitive populism appears in the 1980s, within the Anglo-Saxon sphere, linked to security and public order policies. It connects with a neoconservative or “actuarial” approach (McLaughlin & Muncie, 2011) of security policies that are based on some fundamental pillars. On the one hand, the hypothesis that the increase in penalties generates a deterrent effect on potential offenders. On the other, the idea that reinforced penalties, in turn, strengthen the majority moral consensus. In addition, the application of this type of measure results in an increase in electoral support. Implicit in all this reasoning is the dynamic between insiders versus outsiders (Carrabine, et al., 2014). Ultimately, this policy model seeks to unite the community of fully integrated people vis-à-vis groups that are considered to be on the margins of society, in situations of exclusion or self-exclusion. As David Garland (2005, p. 300) indicates, it is about constructing the image of a “dangerous other” and pointing them out as guilty or potentially guilty of the committed crimes, facilitating consensus for the increase in penalties. Consequently, insiders’ sense of security is increased. It is, therefore, a policy model linked to the “Conservative Revolution” (Herrendorf, 1988; Huguet, 2005) and to the traditional parties in that area of the ideological spectrum.

Thus, from the 1980s onwards, the crime management model based on welfare was displaced in order to enter the warfare paradigm (Larrauri, 2018, p. 213), the objective of reintegration is substituted for the punishment and innocuolization of the offender. Thus, in the field of criminal policies, the objectives of reintegration of criminals are abandoned as the norm within this type of public policy, becoming the exception. In addition, the search for the structural causes of criminal activities is postponed; be these marginalization, social exclusion, dysfunctional socialization, etc. It starts from understanding that the individual is a purely rational agent and that we are all criminals, if we have the opportunity, according to the paradigm of “broken windows” (McLaughlin & Muncie, 2011, p. 542). Therefore, crime emerges due to insufficient surveillance and social control, therefore police actions must be intensified and criminal codes hardened. The approach is based on understanding that there is a security deficit (in terms of public order) and it must be resolved decisively.

In this way, conservative proposals in terms of security are inhibited in the search for root causes of crime, adopting a preferably curative approach

and postponing preventive measures. The offender is seen as a rational actor who limits himself to taking advantage of opportunities, consequently the solutions are not in the origins and dysfunctions of socialization, social exclusion, or the lack of opportunities, but in concrete measures that favor the deterrent of the criminal course of action. On the one hand, reinforce the rules, specifically with intimidating penalties in relation to the seriousness of the crime committed, so that the benefits of committing a criminal act are not direct, obvious, and advantageous. In addition to promoting measures that make it difficult to do it, with the aim that perpetrating the crime is deeply uneconomical within a cost-benefit balance.

As a result of this change in security policies, the penal code has become one more weapon in the struggles in the political arena. A growing instrumentalization of the penal code and security policies is seen as an asset for maximizing the vote in societies where social cohesion is lost and fear of victimization grows. In this way, we end up with a context where almost all political formations present their criminal policy project with different typifications for the crimes that they consider to be the most relevant, or that generate the greatest “moral panic” (Cohen, 2002) within their potential voters. Thus, a punitive populism finally takes hold on the supply side, which tries to capture the voters who demand greater security.

This trend, in principle linked to conservative political options, has spread throughout the spectrum of party systems, catching on particularly strongly among those on the extreme right (Liang, 2007). In addition, it should be noted (Mudde, 2019) that the ideology of law and order is framed within a strongly authoritarian context within the far-right movements. More specifically, since the beginning of the 21st century, but especially after the beginning of the economic crisis of 2008, an “ideology of law and order” has been established in the Old Continent, adapted, at first, by the political parties. traditional left and right (Díez-Ripollés, 2004). The aforementioned parties adopt an alarmist rhetoric with a populist matrix.

In this context, citizen security becomes, in Spain and Portugal, an electoral interest, having in principle a marginal importance, which, then, increases over time. Among the main causes pointed out by the Spanish parties at the beginning of the century are: the reduction of police resources and the lack of investments in the security field. Within this conjuncture, some of the elements inherent to punitive populism develop, such as expressive penalties and symbolic criminal legislation (Arrieta-Ruiz, 2018). Part of the tenden-

cy to generate an emotional criminal model, often linked to a disorderly and hasty modification of criminal offenses. This is motivated by the pressure of public opinion at the time in the face of some particularly sensitive current cases, involving a strong emotional component (García-Pablos, 2014). These currents of opinion press towards a repressive legislative change as a mechanism of electoral attraction. In this way, another foundational element of punitive populism appears: the return of the victim (Larrauri, 2018). Faced with the criminological proposals that start from the Enlightenment, the populist model recovers the protagonism of the victim who has to be compensated.

It is understood that the victim must be restored, feel redressed of the crime suffered, through an exemplary penalty to the offender. This penalty must not only be harsh but also stigmatizing since it must also represent redress for the community in which it took place and function as an element of collective cohesion.

In this way, a flight from guarantees criminal law towards a punitive escalation within a populist rhetoric as a productive electoral strategy is consummated. In Garland's (2005) opinion, this type of approach involves approaching the crime phenomenon solely from the symptoms but discarding the unraveling of the causes. Thus, building a model of quantitative containment, but not of qualitative resolution. That is, a preventive approach that operates on the causes. The mechanism for dealing with crime is the increase in police activity and the increase in criminal regressiveness, with the effects of classification and full compliance at the fore. The objective: to create a strong crime deterrent effect among outsiders (the other dangerous ones) and with the uncritical acquiescence of the insider.

In this way, a synchronous authoritarian cycle with the dismantling of the Welfare State takes place in Europe, culminating in the replacement of the welfare-preventive State by a residual-punitive State. This model aims to end crime in its most common and annoying expressions through strategies of police and judicial repression. However, it ignores other types, more socially damaging in the long term, with greater social damage and a high cost for the legitimacy of the political system. They are the criminal types linked to political and corporate corruption, tax crimes, or influence peddling, in short, those known as white-collar (Cuervo-García, 2019) usually perpetrated by social elites.

Both in the programs and in government practice, this punitive populism tends to abuse increasingly long prison sentences as a neutralizing element

of crime. This mechanism, together with the police presence, seeks to generate a feeling of protection and security. All this within a scenario of solidarity with the victims, emotional protagonists of the crime. This implies a change in the very conception of the State, for the insider citizen is not an entity that threatens individual freedom, but an ally that defends him from the risks of an unstructured society. The State ends up becoming the companion and protector that avoids the victimization of integrated citizens, of those who occupy the right place in society.

In this way, punitive populism ends up crystallizing, not only in a discourse and policies linked to it, but also in an ideology of citizen security. It is, in short, a comprehensive strategy that brings together political discourse, public policies, and a way of understanding social phenomena related to security and crime. This paradigm implies, in a necessary way, the instrumentalization of the penal code as a tool that facilitates obtaining political and electoral advantages. Thus, the abandonment of said code is consummated as a mechanism for the resolution of social conflicts concerning the security of the citizen community. This is a factor that implies the risk of erosion of liberal principles typical of representative liberal systems or polyarchies (Mounk, 2019), or, at least, the emptying of their original content.

Criminal Law becomes a subordinate element of political pressure, becoming a mere technical instrument, with low costs, which allows to show an appearance of state efficiency. It allows to manufacture tranquility and calm the expectations of the population in relation to certain crimes, closely linked to common criminality. Thus, punitive populism ends up constituting, in the realm of events, not a model that facilitates objective security but rather seeks to create a subjective sense of security within a substantial part of the electorate.

It can be concluded that during the 21st century, issues related to citizen security and crime have been appropriated by FRP parties in Europe. This has occurred in such a way that it has ended up being one of the preferred themes or “clichés” (Davies & Jackson, 2008, p. 95) of this type of formation, along with the more classic ones such as immigration, identity, or the sovereignty. Especially relating immigration to “law and order” issues. All of the above motivates that its adoption and adaptation of punitive populism materializes in a discourse focused on the creation of repressive penal systems that are particularly burdensome for non-nationals.

Finally, a summary of the fundamental elements of punitive populism can be made in a table like the one below. In it, the key items of this type of political strategy are made explicit.

**Table 1**  
**Constitutive elements of punitive populism**

Expressive penalty
Protagonism of the victim
Incapacitation of the offender
Aggravated and stigmatizing penalties
Electoralism
Fear of victimization
Criminalization of the “dangerous other”
Situational prevention (emphasis on police action and obstacles to crime)
Instrumentalization of the Penal Code (criminalization effect)

Source: Own elaboration based on Garland (2005), Carrabine et al. (2014) and Larrauri (2018).

The table above, in addition to a summary of the main elements that constitute the punitive populism model, will serve as a contrast parameter with the measures contemplated in the electoral manifestos of the two Iberian FRP parties. Once the presentation of the topic has been made, justifying its relevance, and after having described the situation where the object of study is registered and having defined the general theoretical framework, the methodological framework of the research is presented.

## **Materials and method**

As fundamental material, that is, as an object of study, the analysis of the electoral manifestos of the studied formations has been chosen, assuming the paradigm of documentary analysis (Valles, 1999). More specifically, those that were in force in the entry elections in the legislative chambers of their respective countries. Thus, it will be possible to compare the simila-

rities and divergences that, with respect to the adoption of the discourse of punitive populism, both cases present at the time of making the qualitative leap towards institutional representation.

In relation to the concrete method, given the nature of the object, a content analysis has been chosen that encompasses a quantification of the items in both manifestos as an evaluation of their content (Díaz-Herrera, 2018). The logic is framed within a sequence of three stages. First, a quantification of the independent thematic blocks, then a reorganization of them according to the criterion of similarity. Some general similarities and differences can be inferred from this first stage. This moment has the functionality of describing the general context where these manifestos are inserted.

The second step is the reordering into a homogeneous thematic block of the proposals of each of the manifestos, related to punitive populism. This step implies being able to discriminate those proposals that unequivocally belong to the relevant field of analysis, facilitating their comparison and relative weight.

Thus, in the third stage, a standardized comparison can be made in quantitative terms, being able to establish the weight, in relation to the rest of the proposals. In addition, the comparison in qualitative terms is facilitated by alluding to its statements and contents.

The final objective is to answer the main question: have the Iberian FRP formations used, or not, a proposal format typical of punitive populism. If so, the question remains as to whether they have made their own adaptation to their context or have remained in merely generic manifestations and proposals.

## **Analysis and results**

As indicated in the previous section, the results are organized in a descriptive way by bringing together the main thematic axes for the manifestos of each of the political forces. In the case of Spanish Vox, we obtain following table. In it, the weight indicates the percentage of proposals with respect to the total of those contained within the manifest.

**Table 2**  
**Vox electoral manifesto**

100 measures for Living Spain		
Block Name	Weight	Main content
Spain, unity and sovereignty	10.0 %	National unity and re-centralization
Electoral law and transparency	3.0 %	Elections and corruption
Immigration	9.0 %	Limit arrival, make it difficult to stay, and facilitate the expulsion of immigrants
Defense, security and borders	11.0 %	Increased investment and reinforcement of the border. Islamism as a problem
Economy and resources	21.0 %	Reduction of public spending and tax reform
Health	5.0 %	Re-centralization. Non-universality for immigrants
Education and culture	10.0 %	Promotion of Spanish values. Homogeneity of educational programs. School check and Parental PIN
Life and family	7.0 %	Pro-life. Antifeminism
Freedoms and Justice	14.0 %	Anti-terrorism. Hardening of the PC (Penal Code).
Europe and international	5.0 %	Euro-scepticism. Recovery of national sovereignty

Source: Own elaboration based on Vox (2019).

In a merely descriptive framework, we can appreciate the strong presence of immigration, on the one hand, as an almost transversal theme that is typical of Spanish formation. Almost a quarter of the proposals are within the economy (21%), which is explained by the socio-economic crisis that the country has been going through since 2008. Most of the measures are part of neoliberal orthodoxy policies, aimed at creating a residual welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1996). Likewise, it should be noted that the presence of anti-terrorist measures and in defense of national unity and re-centralization. In particular, for the subject matter of this study, measures such as 87 stand out, which explicitly alludes to the disappeared terrorist group ETA. As in 84 and 85, in which it explicitly indicates the victims of said violent organization, they must be honored, keep their memory and dignity. This originates from the founding of the party by victims of terrorism from the aforementioned organization. In addition, its leader Santiago Abascal was

threatened by the terrorist organization in the past. Likewise, said group had as its ultimate goal the independence of the Basque territories, which is a challenge to national unity, a supreme value for the formation of FRP. This explains the emphasis in the first block on the unity of the State and the policies of re-centralization. All of this goes in parallel with the criminalization and outright condemnation of any separatist path, in accordance with what was stated in point 2 “Illegalization of parties, associations or NGOs that pursue the destruction of the territorial unity of the Nation and its sovereignty” (Vox, 2019, p. 1).

Finally, a final part of little weight stands out (5.0%) but where sovereignty is manifested vis-à-vis community institutions and a link with the groups of states most critical of the integration process. With regard to the Portuguese formation *Chega!*, their manifesto bears the name of “70 measures to rebuild Portugal.”<sup>4</sup>

**Table 3**  
**Electoral manifesto *Chega!***

70 steps to rebuild Portugal		
Block Name	Weight	Main content
National identity and family	14.5 %	Portugal's position in the world, traditional family, anti-feminism
Education	5.7 %	Scholarships, teacher mobility, parental authorization for certain school contents
Justice	17.1 %	Hardening of the PC. Investment in police forces
Security	7.1 %	Unification of police forces, improvement of the defense of maritime borders
Economy	22.8 %	Deregulation, privatization, tax reforms
Health	11.5 %	Not universality. New services. Geriatric residences
RR.II. and immigration	12.8 %	Immigration pact rejection. Euroscepticism. Limit arrival, hinder permanence, facilitate the expulsion of immigrants
Environment	8.5 %	Forest conservation. Hunting. Energy sufficiency

Source: Own elaboration from *Chega!* (2019).

4 We proceed to translate from Portuguese (original language) for the rest of the text.

Although with a different structure, the Portuguese manifesto presents very similar contents. It is worth highlighting the practically similar magnitude of the section on economic measures (22.8%) that respond to an approach close to “market fundamentalism” (Stiglitz, 2016) and that configure a residual type Welfare State model as in the previous case. In fact, in the Portuguese proposal the stigmatizing nature of recourse to state provision is present, as stated in proposal 44:

In compliance with the fundamental principle of subsidiarity, the entity “State” will be merely supplementary and/or complementary in the provision of services and the supply of products, and only after having exhausted all the private alternatives, the social alternatives, mutualists, or cooperatives for the provision of these services have been exhausted. (Chega !, 2019, p. 6)

Stigmatization would be materialized in proposal 46, since the perception of unemployment benefits is conditioned to the performance of community work, without specifying the nature of it. This proposal contravenes the logic of benefits of this type of rights, within passive labor policies, since it is conditioned to make a labor consideration.

An element of comparison that reveals similarities is the weight of economic issues, given that both countries suffered a severe crisis after the Great Recession. In the differences, it is appreciated, in the case of Spain, those that emerge from a structural element of its political system. That is, the center-periphery cleavage, absolutely absent in Portugal. The decentralized and multilevel nature of Spain, due to its internal diversity, implies that there are territories with their own personality. These, constitutionally recognized as historical nationalities, are viewed with hostility from a centralist political perspective that the Spanish FRP supports. In addition, the center-periphery conflict materializes in some parties that question the unity of the State (or, at least the distribution of political power within it), threatening the integrity of the State. However, this cleavage is also manifested in other phenomena such as the independence terrorism of ETA or the process of independence in Catalonia. Faced with this reality, Vox reacts within the criminalization of this type of process, together with a demand for national unity and state re-centralization. After a first contextual comparison, the standardization of the items of each corresponding manifesto with the dimensions that make up punitive populism is approached. To do this, an aggregated table is shown, first, indicating its weight on the total and the number corresponding to each

proposal. It should be noted that in the Spanish case, proposals regarding terrorism have not been integrated since it is a purely endogenous element of the Spanish case, completely absent in the Portuguese case.

**Table 4**  
**Punitive populism block**

Formation	Relative weight	Related proposals
Vox	19.0 %	11,15,16,17,18,19,23,24,25,26,30,31,32,86,89,90,91,92,94
Chega	18.5 %	19,20,21,22,23,24,25,30,31,57,58,59,61

Source: Own elaboration

A first notable element results from the greater dispersion of the items within the Vox program compared to that of Chega!. As well as representing a larger total volume. Anticipating what will be seen in the following table, one cause lies in the greater impact of terrorism in the country, both that of a separatist nature and that linked to Islamic fundamentalism. In any case, the weight with respect to the total of the manifesto is very similar, 19% for the Spanish formation and 18.5% for the Portuguese. The difference can be explained in some of the results that will be expressed in table 5. In it, as in the following, the proposals are organized in relation to the dimensions that make up punitive populism.

When appreciating the content of the proposal of the Spanish FRP formation with the nine dimensions of punitive populism, it is appreciated that they are present in their entirety. In the first place, proposal 89 should be highlighted, since its wording motivates its presence in two dimensions simultaneously. This is justified in that the wording affects both the presence of the victim as a leading element in the judicial process and, in a singular way, in the sentence. The latter links him deeply to the idea of an expressive penalty, essentially in terms of compensating and granting satisfaction to the victim. From a quantitative point of view, the item of criminalization stands out. This implies the idea of identifying a “dangerous other” as an antagonist or image of the outsider is the focus of the risks of victimization for the insiders. For the case that is analyzed, it is completely fixated with the figure of the immigrant, notably that of the Islamic creed. This is due both to the recent history of the country and to the migratory pressures to which the

southern Spanish border has been exposed. The foregoing is linked to the dimension of situational prevention, which has two proposals that involve the control and reinforcement of external borders.

**Table 5**  
**Vox detailed punitive populism block**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Related proposals</b>
Expressive penalty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 89 * voice of the victim in the execution of the sentence</li> <li>• 91 judicial sovereignty not protected by European bodies</li> </ul>
Victim protagonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 89* voice of the victim, present in all judicial phases</li> </ul>
Inocuidad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 rigor of life imprisonment</li> </ul>
Aggravated sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 92 removal of prison privileges</li> </ul>
Electoralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 persecution of peddling mafia</li> </ul>
Temor a la victimización	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86 promulgation of anti-occupation law, anti usury, legitimate defense</li> </ul>
Criminalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 deportation of illegal immigrants</li> <li>• 15 deportation of immigrants with serious crimes or recidivism</li> <li>• 19 removal of rooting for the regulation of illegal immigrants</li> <li>• 23 ban on jihadist mosques</li> <li>• 24 persecution of Islamic fundamentalism</li> <li>• 25 prohibition of Islam in Education</li> <li>• 31 Publication of nationality and origin of offenders</li> </ul>
Situational prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 26 reinforcement of borders (border wall, endowment to FCSE)</li> <li>• 33 denunciation of the Schengen Area</li> </ul>
PC instrumentalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 review of the criminal offense against human trafficking activity</li> <li>• 30 introduction of the crimes against authority</li> <li>• 94 criminalization of public squandering</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration

In this sense, it should be noted that the scope of construction of that “dangerous other” centered on the almost exclusive criminalization of the immigrant has an electoral nuance, related to the migratory crises that occur on the Spanish borders and that serve as a constant source for political conflict and social scaremongering. In the dimension of expressive penalty, in addition to the role of the victim in the sentence, it is appreciated that of avoiding the protection of criminals before international institutions. This judicial sovereignty is claimed for particularly sensitive crimes such as terrorism, rape, or murder (Vox, 2019). Likewise, in the area of annulment of

the offender, rigor is chosen in the fulfillment of the penalties, especially for serious crimes, contemplating life imprisonment. For its part, the dimension of aggravated penalties has as its most related item proposal 92, as it affects the elimination of prison privileges, this measure, it should be noted, would be applied to those convicted of terrorism and illegal immigrants.

With regard to electoralism, this is concentrated in the measures against street vendors, which, being a problem of little social salience, had a presence on the media agenda of the moment. In addition, it serves to reinforce the criminalization of the immigrant as an element of risk and necessarily associate it with criminal activities.

In relation to the fear of being victimized, proposal 86 refers to the regulation of areas that generate social unrest. This is present in the case of the occupation of houses, and those that have an effect on situations of defenselessness such as usury or in particular the possibility of resistance or defense. These are measures that strongly appeal to the feeling of security of the insider population within the general collective of citizens.

Regarding the dimension of criminalization, it has two different elements. One, which implies an association of the immigrant with an irregular situation and therefore his relationship with the role of a criminal. The other is the association of professing the Muslim creed with radical and ultimately terrorist activities. The item related to proposal 31 has the purpose of directly associating the foreigner with the offender in an almost categorical manner.

Finally, the instrumentalization of the Penal Code focuses on three items. The first focused on proposal 16, which aims to aggravate the sentence for human trafficking, and is indirectly linked to the entry of people in an irregular situation. Another is the one that refers to 30, with the definition of the crime against authority to protect public officials in the exercise of their functions. Lastly, to introduce “public waste” as a crime, this measure could fit into electoralist measures, given that corruption is a problem felt as relevant by Spanish citizens. In addition, it should not be forgotten that the parent party from which Vox spun off was immersed in legal proceedings for corruption at that time.

Table 6 shows the results for the case of Chega! A noteworthy element is that within the literality of his proposals there is no protagonism of the victim as such. Although the word appears three times throughout the manifesto, it does not fit within the coordinates with which it is understood within

punitive populism. In spite of everything, the program of the Portuguese party covers (in full) eight of the nine constitutive dimensions of punitive populism. Furthermore, the remarkable parallels with respect to its Spanish counterpart are noteworthy.

**Table 6**  
**'Chega!' Detailed punitive populism block**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Related proposals</b>
Expressive penalty	• 19 * chemical castration as a cumulative penalty
Victim protagonism	
Inocuidación	• 20 effective prison
Aggravated sentences	• 23 elimination of prison benefits • 24 institution of prison work.
Electoralism	• 25 seizures of criminal assets to finance police forces
Fear of victimization	• 31 regulation of legitimate defense
Criminalization	• 22 publication of nationality and origin of offenders • 58 deportation of irregular immigrants • 59 immigrant in an illegal situation within the country will not be able to regularize 61 loss of nationality for immigrants when committing a crime
Situational prevention	• 30 provision of means for the surveillance and control of territorial waters • 57 rethinking border policy in the EU
PC instrumentalization	• 19 * chemical castration, aggressor registration • 21 introduction of life imprisonment for serious crimes

Source: Own elaboration

In relation to the expressive penalty, one of the notable items is chemical castration for those convicted of crimes of a sexual nature, which also appears as a cumulative penalty. This type of crime unleashes a strong emotional current and is particularly sensitive to public opinion. Regarding the innocuation of offenders, the most associated item is the one that advocates full compliance with the penalties for the crimes of rape. This is linked to the following dimension, where two items stand out, on the one hand, the removal of prison benefits and, on the other, the establishment of prison work as a mechanism for the inmate to finance his stay in prison.

The dimension of electoralism focuses, especially, on the item that implies the seizure of illicit assets and the use of that income to finance agents who have been injured or with sequelae during the performance of their duty. As stated textually:

Modify the legislation to allow the classification of assets and values that are accumulated for the State in criminal cases, for the constitution of a permanent fund managed by the representatives of the police force in order to finance those agents who have been physically injured in the fight against crime, or to the direct relatives of said officials. (Chega!, 2019, p. 4)

This measure is incorporated as a mechanism to solve the situations of lack of financing and solvency that the Portuguese police forces are going through.

For the dimension of fear of victimization, the item is similar to the same that appears in the case of Vox, focused on the legalization and regulation of the legitimate defense of people who are in situations of victimization. In the dimension of criminalization, the construction of the dangerous other is generally parallel to the one that has been presented for the Spanish FRP formation. It focuses on the figure of the immigrant, especially in a situation of irregularity, from there to illegality and, therefore, to the status of criminal. In parallel, the dimension of situational prevention involves two items, one focused on the necessary equipment for border surveillance, in this case maritime. On the other, a rethinking of border and immigration policy within the European Union, very close, again, to Vox's approach.

Finally, as elements of instrumentalization of the penal code, there is the classification of chemical castration, which has been previously alluded to. In addition, it highlights the introduction of life imprisonment for particularly serious crimes.

In closing this comparison, it remains to be noted the existence of several very strong parallels between the two proposals. Proposals 90 by Vox and 21 by Chega! are practically identical, claiming life imprisonment for particularly sensitive crimes. On the other hand, proposal 31 of the Spanish formation is identical to 22 of the Portuguese, alluding to the explicitness of the nationality and origin of the offenders in the criminal statistics. The same occurs in the cases of measure 23 of Chega! and Vox 92, which are practically the same, when requesting the removal of prison benefits for terrorists and illegal immigrants, the literal statement is identical. The same is true of proposals 58 (deportation of immigrants) and 59 (prohibition of

regulation) of Chega! which are parallel to those of Vox 14 and 15, for the first, and 20 for the second. All this only points to the deep concordances between the two formations. This is not surprising given the socio-economic similarities of the two neighboring countries and the similar situation they have experienced after the Great Recession.

It is appropriate to end by stating that both parties have put into practice a strategy of punitive populism in light of their electoral manifestos. In both cases, with a marked anti-immigration bias. In the case of the Spanish party, it is even more striking and can be explained by the activity, in the past, of the terrorist group ETA and by the Islamist attacks that it has suffered in its territory. In both cases, the adoption by both formations of a strategy of punitive anti-immigration populism, or if you prefer, of a punitive nativist populism, is confirmed. This type of strategy deserves such a name, since the will to act as defenders of native citizens against delinquency and crime, preferably perpetrated by foreigners, to be precise, illegal immigrants, seems to be latent.

## **Discussion and conclusions**

According to the results presented in the previous section, it only remains to point out that both FRP formations have used the strategy of punitive populism within the electoral manifestos analyzed. In addition, with the particularity that they have not only adopted it, they have also adapted it to the anti-immigration discourse, typical of parties of this nature within Europe.

Punitive nativist populism is present in both formations, being a nexus of union with the rest of the political forces of its ideological sphere in the Old Continent. In this way, both Iberian parties are inserted in the already consolidated traditions of the European far-right parties.

In any case, it should be noted several peculiarities. In the Spanish case, the role of the victim as the protagonist appears as a fully constructed and explicit dimension. One explanation is the long-standing terrorism activity in the country, as well as the Islamist attacks in its most recent history. On the contrary, in the Portuguese case, where this type of phenomenon has not occurred, the role of the victim is ignored, it remains implicit, remaining more like a latent dimension. The insider citizen is conceptualized as a potential victim who must be protected, but the victim's protagonism, as such,

is not claimed. However, in both cases, with the exception of the aforementioned role of the victim, all the constituent dimensions of punitive populism, as a strategy, are present and fully developed. The most striking being the complete model of Vox, since it has present and developed all the items or dimensions that make up punitive populism.

Finally, it should be noted, for both cases, that the crucial element is found in the construction of a “dangerous other” (dimension of criminalization), with an absolute role of the immigrant as the focus of risk. Therefore, the nativist bias expressed in the idea of protecting native insiders from immigrant outsiders is a constant element in the construction and adoption of the strategy of punitive populism. Given the electoral growth of both forces, it does not seem likely that in the future they will abandon this strategy within the proposals for security and public order policies, rather the opposite. This is so given that it is a strategy that, from nativist coordinates, has worked well, regarding elections, in the rest of the European countries and it seems that it presents the same result in the Iberian Peninsula. Therefore, the strategy of nativist punitive populism seems to be consolidated and adapted in FRP formations within the Iberian space.

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