MA Thesis: Religion, Conflict and Globalization

The holy digital battleground: a Multimodal Content Analysis of Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism on Twitter and Instagram

Master of Arts Thesis Religion, Conflict & Globalization – University of Groningen

Pol Campos Martínez

S6115160

30-06-2025

Supervisor: Dr. Manoela Carpenedo

Second supervisor: Dr. Kim Knibbe

Thanks to my parents, for making one of the greatest sacrifices of their lives; to my friends and classmates for encouraging me to keep the ambition to learn; and to Dr. Manoela Carpenedo for guiding me through this long process.

Abstract

Religion is often perceived to be in decline, particularly across Europe. Yet far-right political parties increasingly draw on religious themes in their discourse. These actors actively use social media to spread their messages, which are often infused with nativist, racist, and Islamophobic ideas. This master's thesis aims to analyze the Christian Nationalist sentiment in Spain in the online environment, with particular attention to its communication strategies and main themes. Through a multimodal content analysis of 116 posts -57 on Instagram and 59 on Twitter-, the thesis reveals how the movement mobilizes medieval narratives such as the *Reconquista*, portraying Islam as an enduring millennial enemy. All these discourses are propagated through communicative strategies such as humor or historicism, maintaining a connection with the misogynist and anti-feminist movement known as the Manosphere. Lastly, while this phenomenon shares features with White Christian Nationalism, being articulated similarly, it adopts elements exclusive to its local context.

Key words: Christian Nationalism, Reconquista, Spain, Social Media, Manosphere

Table of contents

1. Introduction 5

2. Literature Review 7

2.1. Deprivatization of Religion 7

2.2. Nationalism, Christian identity, and politics of nostalgia 7

2.2. Christian Europe on the move 9

2.3. "Thank God for Donald Trump": White Christian Nationalism 10

2.4. Reconquista, Nationalism, and Catholicism: The Case of Spain 12

2.5. Digital Religion: Setting the Stage 14

3. Materials and Methods 16

3.1. Data Sampling 17

4. Analysis of the results 20

4.1. Medieval narratives in the Spanish digital context 23

4.2. The eternal Other: digital battle against the Muslim enemy 31

4. 2.1. Enemies, Battles, and Cosmic Wars 37

4.3. Christian Nationalist use of the Manosphere visual rhetoric 40

4.3.1. God Spanish Warriors: construction of masculinities 45

4.4. A Comparative Analysis of White Christian Nationalism and Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism 49

4.4.1. Localizing Christian Nationalism: The Spanish Case 51

5. Discussion and Conclusion 57

6. Reference list 61

7. Appendix 70

1. Introduction

On December 9th, in the aftermath of the fall of Bashar al-Assad's Syrian regime, social media platforms were flooded with reactions ranging from support for the rebel forces and celebrations of this historic event, to, conversely, Islamophobic comments labelling these same rebels as barbaric. Among these interactions, incendiary accounts emerged with the intent to create polarization and foster radicalization. Notably, the profile @RadioGenoa on Twitter (currently X) posted numerous tweets advocating for the deportation of Syrian refugees in Europe. Given the political and informational chaos at the time, messages circulated as such: "The Christmas markets in Germany are invaded by Syrian Islamists. They demonstrate where Christianity is celebrated" (December 9, 2024, @RadioGenoa). This account, with 1.1 million followers, posts daily, often containing Islamophobic, incendiary, homophobic, transphobic, and anti-progressive rhetoric.

This thesis analyses the current Christian Nationalist sentiment on social media, specifically on Twitter and Instagram, by examining its main themes, symbols, communication strategies, and identified enemies. Christian Nationalism is understood as a cultural framework that promotes an identity-based and exclusionary vision of Christianity (Smith and Adler, 2022), through a series of myths and narratives that seek to intertwine religion and civic life (Whitehead and Perry, 2020). To narrow the scope of the research, I have chosen to focus on the Spanish case, which possesses unique features such as the instrumentalization of medieval narratives, specifically through the *Reconquista*, a seven-century conflict between Muslims and Christians. In addition, this movement includes the revival of national heroes, divine figures, and the mythification of battles. These elements unfold under the long shadow of Franco's *National Catholicism* and the nostalgia around it.

To conduct this study, I will employ a Multimodal Qualitative Content Analysis of 116 posts (59 on Twitter and 57 on Instagram) to identify recurring patterns that define this movement on social media. I am particularly interested in how user interactions, whether anonymous or public, contribute to shaping and reinforcing these narratives, weaponizing them against their perceived enemies. This study aims to answer (RQ1) how Christian Nationalist sentiment in Spain is manifested on social media (Twitter and Instagram), focusing on its main themes and elements.

Building on the main research question, I intend to explore (RQ2) what communication strategies are being deployed, and (RQ3) and in what ways does this discourse construct and reinforce the division between “us” (nationalist, Christian, Spanish) and “them” (Muslims, LGBTQ+, government). It is also relevant to observe (RQ4) how this movement relates to other contemporary ones, specifically White Christian Nationalism.

This study lies at the intersection of two academic fields: media studies and religious studies. While the expansion of research on American White Christian Nationalism (WCN) and the so-called alt-right and their behavior on social media cannot be ignored, it is essential to highlight that the literature in the current context of Spain is limited. However, the existing scholarship has primarily focused on the revival of Spanish medieval myths by sectors of the extreme right, as well as on Francoist National Catholicism in the 20th century, the legacy of which is revisited in this thesis. After conducting an extensive literature review, I have identified a gap that positions this master's thesis as both urgent and valuable. In this vein, I aim to contribute to the understanding of Christian Nationalist discourse in Spain, particularly within social media platforms, an area that remains unexplored.

Despite this topic not receiving significant academic attention, my main objective is to demonstrate the existence of what I conceptualize as Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism (SCCN) on social media. The focus of this research does not lie on the reach of the phenomenon, but rather on the narratives it employs, its symbols, its communication strategies, and the enemies around which this identity is constructed. Thus, this thesis seeks to play a role in understanding how an increasing number of young people, particularly men, are aligning themselves against gender policies, scientific discourse, and migration, while embracing conspiracy theories and nostalgic visions of a "better past" (Botto and Gottzén, 2024).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Deprivatization of Religion

The past few years have been marked by a shift in the global religious landscape. Today, while it is true that Europe remains the most secularized region in the world, the situation is more complex (Griera et al., 2021). Thus, a paradoxical situation is emerging: despite declining religiosity rates, the Catholic Church is gaining presence in the public sphere (Béraud, 2017). Religion is infiltrating café conversations, parliaments, and the media, which grant it significant weight due to its connection to certain social issues (Titus Hjelm, 2014). Bryan Turner (1991) critiques the idea of equating the visibility of religion in public life with its cultural dominance as "it cannot be assumed that beliefs and practices which are publicly available necessarily have significant effects in the upkeep of crucial social processes and social arrangements" (p. 55).

With the arrival of the new century, global *desecularization* has emerged with Western Europe as the exception (Berger, 1999). Casanova (1994) is positioned as one of the critical voices against the secularization thesis, proposing the concept of the *deprivatization* of religion, which refers to the liberation of religion from the private sphere and its impact on public debates, social movements, and politics. This context of deprivatization is essential for understanding the prominence of Christian nationalism. This literature review first examines existing scholarship on nationalism and its intersection with religion. It then turns to how religion and conservative or far-right ideologies are linked in contemporary Europe. Furthermore, the review seeks to lay the foundations for understanding the dynamics of Christian nationalism, focusing specifically on the American and Spanish cases. Lastly, it explores how religion, religious extremism, and the internet are interrelated.

2.2. Nationalism, Christian identity, and politics of nostalgia

Rogers Brubaker (2012), in *Nationalism and Religion: Four Approaches*, examines the intersection of nationalism and religion, distinguishing four perspectives regarding this field: (1) treating religion and nationalism as analogous phenomena; (2) using religion to explain particular characteristics of nationalism; (3) conceiving religion as an integral part of nationalism, with

mutual influence; and (4) considering religious nationalism as an independent type of nationalism. It is this last approach that I will focus on. However, before doing so, it is necessary to first conceptualize nationalism itself to better illustrate this dynamic.

Gellner (1983) defines nationalism as "a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (p.1). Hobsbawm (1992), while agreeing with Gellner's ideas, adds that nationalisms are modern inventions, not eternal or natural entities but historically constructed responses to political ends. Anderson (1990) expands on these views, proposing the concept of *Imagined Communities* to provide a deeper perspective on nationalism. Nationalism is *imagined* because the members of any nation, even the smallest, will never know all their fellow members, will not meet or interact with them, yet in their minds, there exists an image of communion that unites them. Furthermore, nationalism is imagined as a *community*, where "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1990, p.7). In other words, the members of these imagined communities are willing to die for these ideas, which transcend their individual existence.

Using Friedland's (2002) concept of nationalism, Brubaker (2012) delves into how religious nationalism infiltrates the "state, territory, and culture primarily by focusing on family, gender, and sexuality" (p. 18). To put it differently, religious nationalism is not simply a form of nationalism imbued with religious imagery but one in which religion is its backbone, the very reason for its existence, its core. Brubaker (2012) states that this operates in countries such as the U.S., India, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, and Pakistan. The nationalisms found in Europe today are different. According to Brubaker (2017), these are shifting toward a form of *civilizationism*, a concept that I will explore further in the next section. That is, as Europe becomes more secular, Christianity rises in importance, embedding itself as an identity symbol of European civilization, which is inevitably positioned in opposition to Islam.

The historical narratives and repertoire of symbols, such as Christianity within "European civilization", that shape a nation are based on a discourse about identity, solidarity, and unity (Spillman, 1997). This rhetoric is defined by memorable events, specific historical moments, whose antecedents or historiographical accuracy are not relevant (Billig, 1995). Nostalgia plays a

fundamental role in the resurgence of these events and their incorporation into far-right discourse, constructing a longing for a lost past that contrasts with the present (Smith and Campbell, 2017). Elgenius and Rydgren (2022) examine the politics of nostalgia, which are used "by political parties and movements on the right and left and fill similar functions, that is, making references to the past suitable for serving the political present" (p. 1235).

Davis (1979) defines nostalgia as a reaction characterized by the idealization of the past in response to anxiety or uncertainty. The very etymology of the word hints at its depth: νόστος (*nóstos*, "returning home") + ἄλγος (*álgos*, "pain"). Elgenius and Rydgren (2017) discuss how the idea of the Golden Age, that glorious past with its heroes and mythological figures of a given nation, is mobilized as a sentiment of defense against perceived threats. Levinger and Lyttle (2001) link this nostalgia to the Christian discursive construction of fall and redemption.

2.2. Christian Europe on the move

In recent times, the "myth of Christian Europe" has been (re)popularized, especially among the more conservative or illiberal political sectors (Wolkenstein, 2023). Conservative leaders and parties such as Viktor Orbán or Matteo Salvini do not necessarily follow the values promoted by the Church but do use Christian symbols as markers of national identity (Roy, 2019). A similar phenomenon occurs in the United States with Donald Trump, who, despite not representing or acting according to the ideal norms of Christianity, is supported by Christian nationalists for backing the interests of the Church (Whitehead et. al 2020). Rogers Brubaker (2017) goes beyond the mere appropriation of religious symbols, arguing that in the West, conservative sectors approach Christianity not as a religion but as a civilizational identity diametrically opposed to Islam.

The concept of *civilizationism* is key to understanding the new visibility of religion, referring to how certain far-right sectors perceive European national identity as inseparable from Christianity. This is a secular, politicized Christianity that coexists with other symbols not necessarily religious, such as gender equality or LGBTQ+ rights, as an immunological response to the Islamic "other" (Brubaker, 2017). The legacy of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1994) is undeniable among the most Islamophobic sectors that adopt Christianity as an inherent Western identity. The division between the Muslim "other," inevitably cast as the villain, and the Western

"us," whose identity is rooted in Rome, Christianity, and progress, manifests in the narratives pushed by politicians like Pim Fortuyn. This Dutch political figure, who called himself "the Samuel Huntington of Dutch politics," was a pioneer in defending the European Christian culture in opposition to Islam (Brubaker, 2017). Despite assumptions about low levels of religiosity, religion is gaining prominence alongside the rise of the far right (Schwörer and Romero-Vidal, 2020). Similar to Brubaker, Forlenza (2018) identifies how Christianity is increasingly present in political discourse as a weapon for defending European civilization. Others describe this phenomenon as a hijacking of religion (Arato and Cohen, 2017).

Marine Le Pen's position within Le Front National is paradoxical and illustrates the complexity of religion's return to public discourse. On the one hand, she defends French *laïcité* as a weapon against Islam, yet she simultaneously advocates for the preservation of European Christian values, two seemingly antithetical concepts (Morieson, 2021). Le Pen is not an isolated case; in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders (PVV) follows a similar discourse, grouping LGBTQ+, women, and Christians as communities that must be defended from Islam (Howard, 2017). Salvini and Lega Nord, however, take a different approach, opposing same-sex marriage while openly flaunting Christianity both in public statements and on social media (Evolvi, 2023). Whether through the defense of Christian values or through the stigmatization and criticism of Islam, the instrumentalization of religion is a core strategy among major far-right groups in Europe (Marchetti et al., 2022).

Currently, there is limited literature on contemporary Christian Nationalist movements in Europe, particularly in the Spanish context. The existing literature conceptualizes this phenomenon differently, often studying nationalism as an entity influenced by Christian values and symbols rather than as a structured movement.

2.3. "Thank God for Donald Trump": White Christian Nationalism

The assault on the U.S. Capitol in Washington on January 6, 2021, left behind images of wooden crosses, gallows, Confederate flags, and Christian banners. More than four years later, on February 27, 2025, the first Cabinet Meeting of his second term began with the prayer of one of its members, who said: "Thank God for Donald Trump" (White House, 2025). These symbols correspond to the ideology known as White Christian Nationalism (WCN) (Gorski and Perry,

2022). Various research studies have been produced on this movement; however, the most relevant works include *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States by Whitehead and Perry (*2020), a book that analyses Christian Nationalism in the United States, from which emerges the idea that the country must be a Christian nation. Another significant work is *The Flag and the Cross: White Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy* by Gorski and Perry (2022), which explores the violent, radicalized, oppressive, supremacist, and exclusionary nature of this ideology.

WCN is rooted in the belief that America's founding fathers established the nation on Christian and biblical principles, with the country and its people chosen by God (Perry and Schieffer, 2023). However, it is crucial to distinguish WCN from Christianity itself, as the former is not solely representative of religion but also incorporates nativist, white supremacist, and heteronormative ideas while advocating divine sanction and military authoritarianism (Whitehead and Perry, 2020). Perry and Schieffer (2023) trace the roots of this movement to what they call the "Spirit of 1690," the moment when race, religion, and nationalism fused. Various European diasporas, with their subsequent Christian denominations, arrived in New England, but the Puritans were particularly instrumental in shaping American exceptionalist sentiment (Madsen, 1998).

Similarly to the Israelites of the Old Testament, these new Puritan settlers perceived themselves as the "Chosen People," with New England being the new Promised Land (Perry and Schieffer, 2023). Biblical influences were also crucial in justifying the expansion of slavery in the 18th century (Goldenberg, 2009), particularly through the Curse of Ham, according to which Noah condemned his son Ham to slavery for eternity, marking him and all his descendants forever (Genesis 9:20-27). This narrative laid the foundation for a legacy of racial oppression, segregation, and white supremacy (Whitford, 2017). Other biblical references can be found in the sermon of the Puritan John Winthrop (1630), who, using Matthew 5:14, referred to the Massachusetts Bay Colony as follows: “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us” (Winthrop, 2020, p. 9).

One of the core themes of WCN is the *Founding Myth*: the belief that the United States was founded on Christian principles and must always remain a Christian nation (Seidel, 2019). It is essential to reiterate that these myths are not exclusive to WCN; rather, they form part of its

ideological foundation. In other words, these myths are shared by a significant portion of the American population, but it is specifically WCN that instrumentalizes them, using them as tools to legitimize exclusion, supremacy, or even violence. However, the Founding Myth is just that: a myth. A myth that draws from various sources (Seidel, 2019)

2.4. Reconquista, Nationalism, and Catholicism: The Case of Spain

The Spanish political context is marked by a multiplicity of nationalisms, ranging from conservative Spanish nationalism to regional ones such as Catalan and Basque (Muro and Quiroga, 2005). However, the literature on a contemporary Christian Nationalist movement in Spain is limited and mainly focuses on the relationship between Catholicism and the far-right, particularly through Santiago Abascal's party, Vox, and its references to the *Reconquista* (García Sanjuán, 2020**)**. Additionally, there is extensive scholarship on Francoist National Catholicism and the construction of a Spanish nationalism rooted in medieval myths, which played a significant role in the 20th century (Botti, 1992; Pérez-Algote, 2003).

The term *La Reconquista* is a complex and ambiguous concept that has been subject to significant criticism (Fitz, 2009). Although commonly referred to as the medieval struggle between Christians and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula, its theoretical construction is relatively modern, emerging in the 19th century and solidifying in the 20th. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1982) argued that the Muslim invasion gave rise to the unified concept of Spain by linking it to the restoration of Catholic worship, making this one of the foundational myths of Spanish nationalism (Sánchez-Albornoz, 1956). The *Reconquista*, as a term, was invented long after the historical events it refers to, and it has been used as a political weapon in subsequent ideological conflicts (Fitz, 2009).

According to Saloma (2008), this political use of the medieval conflict between Christians and Muslims has gone through four defined stages:

1. The first, from the 16th to the 18th century, when the conflict was used as a propaganda tool to justify the Crown's position in the world.
2. The second, during the 19th century, when the concept of *Reconquista* as we know it today was created, serving to construct Spanish national identity.

3. The third, during the Civil War and Francoism, when the discourse of the *Reconquista* or "crusades" was channeled through National Catholicism.

Algote (2003) offers a review of Spanish National Catholicism, tracing its origins to the Middle Ages and its consolidation under Francoism. Drawing on Callahan (1989), Algote (2003) identifies several elements that illustrate the cultural, religious, and political interrelation in Spain: "*Reconquista*, Inquisition, evangelization of Indigenous peoples in the New World, 16th-century mysticism and spirituality, virulent anti-clericalism of the 19th and 20th centuries, the definition of the 1936–1939 Civil War in terms of a Crusade by the Catholic hierarchy" (p. 207). Characterized by the effective and indivisible union of Church and State, National Catholicism is considered a state-led project aimed at configuring a political, social, and moral order through Catholic integralism (Díaz Salazar, 2009).

Similar to what is conceptualized in the 21st century as religious fundamentalism, National Catholicism positioned itself as a "political religion" intended to serve as the country's moral axis (Díaz Salazar, 2009). This included the Church's infiltration into people's daily lives and its goal to "save Christian civilization from the ruins of Marxism" (p. 12). The shadow of this political-religious ideology remains present in contemporary Spain. Although the country has undergone a transition towards secularism, reactionary discourse continues to uphold the ideals of National Catholicism, particularly defending the role of religion in historical events such as the Crusades, the *Reconquista*, the unification of the Catholic Monarchs, and the nostalgia for the periods when Catholicism was influential (Riquelme, 2022).

Ultimately, the influence of Catholicism cannot be dismissed, as it has played a central role throughout Spanish history since the territorial and religious unification under the Catholic Kings (Algote, 2003). Following centuries of evolution of the Catholic tradition within the country, it assumes a key position in the articulation of the idea of Spanish nationalism. Drawing on Menéndez Pelayo (1978), Catholicism is acquired as an indivisible foundation of what it means to be Spanish. Sola (2009) further emphasizes that the Spanish nation, for Menéndez Pelayo, "is constructed as the fruit of a historical continuity, that of Catholic orthodoxy. Nothing and no one who departed from this orthodoxy could be considered 'Spanish'" (p. 111).

2.5. Digital Religion: Setting the Stage

Once the existing literature on the intersection of religion and nationalism has been reviewed, it is necessary to turn our attention to the manifestation of these topics on social media. The supposed global resurgence of religion, impacting elections such as Donald Trump's victories in 2017 and 2024, as well as that of Modi (2024), cannot be understood without considering the influence of global digital media (Tsuria & Yadlin-Segal, 2021). The study of the relationship between religion and the digital world has evolved over the years. In the 1990s, what is commonly referred to as *cyber-religion* was born, presenting the internet as a reality completely detached from the physical world, where entirely different religious activities took place (Brasher, 2001).

Helland (2005) later introduced a more nuanced typology: *religion online* refers to groups that use the internet to enhance offline religious practices, while *online religion* refers to practices that occur exclusively in the online environment. The 2010s marked the emergence of *Digital Religion Studies*, primarily led by Heidi Campbell. Although the field has expanded in recent years, further studies are necessary for its consolidation. Digital Religion not only examines how religious practices are expressed and enacted online but also explores how digital media and online spaces shape, and are shaped, by religious practices and discourses (Campbell and Bellar, 2022). These digital spaces are essential for understanding how religious identities are negotiated daily through experiences, posts, and comments shared by individuals of diverse faiths (Campbell and Evolvi, 2020).

Tsuria and Yadlin-Segal (2021) define digital religion as "a process where religious groups and individuals adopt, and adapt to, digital technologies depending on their values and possibilities" (p.13). Siuda (2021) points to the need to relate digital religion to current religious trends such as the individualization and commodification of religion, in which individuals select religious elements that personally satisfy them. Novak et al. (2022) describe a double dynamic present on the internet: on one hand, it is perceived as a space of diverse opinions and encounters between people of different worldviews; on the other, drawing on Eli Pariser's (2011) concept of the *filter bubble*, it is also a space where content is increasingly personalized through algorithms based on users' past digital behavior (likes, screen time, accounts followed), reinforcing users' existing preferences.

How do these filter bubbles operate concerning religious beliefs, and why is it relevant for this study? These algorithms can reinforce specific interpretations of a given religious belief, hinder interreligious exchange, or foster ideas of superiority or purity over other religions or denominations within the same faith (Zhang, 2025). A concept closely linked to filter bubbles is that of *echo chambers*, which refers to the environment where users are surrounded by opinions that mirror their own, reinforcing and potentially radicalizing those views (Cinelli et. al, 2021). Levy and Razin (2019) point to the segregation of different social groups caused by these echo chambers, highlighting religious segregation in particular: "To sustain religious beliefs, individuals should be guarded from observing behaviors and outcomes that do not agree with their belief system" (p.9). Christian Nationalism, being a totalitarian, nativist, racist ideology, which incorporates religion as an identity element (Perry and Scheifer, 2022), has the potential to enter these Filter Bubbles, thus creating reaffirmation of its users in their perceived superiority over other religions.

The literature on the presence of religion in the digital sphere is fundamental for understanding how movements such as White Christian Nationalism and the Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism remain relevant on social media. Tebaldi and Gaddini (2024), in their study on how capitalism, conservatism, and Christianity are taken as identity symbols by certain youth sectors in the U.S, conceptualize these online discourses as part of a "political struggle" with strong religious implications. In the Spanish context, the bulk of existing literature focuses on how the far-right political party Vox has used social media as a platform to generate hatred against Islam, drawing on medievalist references, the *Reconquista*, and the Crusades (Moreno, 2024; Méndez Santos, 2020; Oleaque Moreno et al., 2021). Alternatively, social media platforms have become spaces where *digital nationalism* is forged, which is a form of nationalism characterized by hate speech and fueled by the features and affordances of social media (Miheij and Jiménez-Martínez, 2021).

3. Materials and Methods

The study of Christian Nationalism in Spain on social media is complex and requires a rigorous and precise methodology. I have decided to implement a multimodal approach through Content Analysis, which is defined as a method for analyzing verbal, visual, or written messages (Cole, 1988). It is a research technique where the message forms the basis for making inferences and conclusions about a specific topic (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). Berelson (1952) defines Content Analysis as a technique for describing the manifest content objectively and systematically. Krippendorff (1980) focuses on the replicability of this methodology, highlighting that, with fixed characteristics and coherent analysis bases, results should be consistent regardless of the researcher.

This thesis employs Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) to examine data collection in more detail and depth (Forman and Damnschroder, 2007). The qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration of the meaning and interpretation of the study's themes, combining message analysis with its contextual relationship (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Moving away from the rigid relationship between objectivity and Content Analysis, QCA leans towards a subjective interpretation of data through systematic classification via coding (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Serafini and Reid (2023) introduce multimodality to QCA, proposing an approach that moves away from traditional procedures and can avoid purely textual analysis, giving priority to other semiotic modes such as the visual or the auditory. This study adopts this method, as it analyses posts that include both graphic and textual elements.

In the research design, five major issues proposed by Bengtsson (2016) must be considered: the aim, the sample and unit of analysis, the choice of data collection method, the choice of analysis method, and the practical implications. The primary aim of this analysis is to examine how Christian nationalist narratives in Spain are articulated through social media, as well as to explore the themes they contain, their link to the construction of national identity, and their intention to promote hate speech against various groups. Downe-Wamboldt (1992), in her discussion on the relationship between research aims and Content Analysis, highlights how the aim defines the structure of the study and sets its boundaries.

This methodology, however, has certain limitations that cannot be overlooked. One of these is the bias involved in distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant parts of the analysis (Schreier, 2012), leading, this analysis to prioritize elements such as the communicative strategies of the posts over, for example, the choice of music, or the socio-political intention. The method has also been criticized for being basic and superficial as an analytical tool, due to its lack of depth and scientific rigor (Graneheim et al., 2017). For this reason, it is said that research results are always provisional, a fact that is not necessarily negative, as they can be further developed through revision and critique, adding more depth to the investigation (Mayring, 2019).

Furthermore, this method has been argued to rely exclusively on an inductive path (Fazeli et al., 2023), which can affect both the analysis and the creation of categories, resulting in excessive subjectivity. Moreover, the construction of this analytical tool, while allowing some flexibility in its design, has required an intensive and time-consuming effort, especially in the coding process, which was done manually, due to its complexity (Cho and Lee, 2014). Awareness of this last limitation led to caution in the initial decision to select 120 total posts for analysis, which ultimately became 116 due to social media's internal regulations.

3.1. Data Sampling

This analysis corpus is based on the purposive sampling technique, "widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources" (Palinkas et al., 2015, p. 534)**.** Applied to social media studies, this technique allows the researcher to select hashtags, posts, and users relevant to their objectives (Kozinets, 2020). In this case, the corpus includes 116 posts, 57 on Instagram and 59 on Twitter. The posts selected, regardless of the platform, must have over 300 likes and have been published within two years of the first search (from 11/01/2023 to the present), coinciding with the transition of Twitter's ownership, which, from April 2023, changed its name to X. The majority of the videos are in Spanish, while videos in English will also be considered. Moreover, the types of posts analyzed include videos or images, both on Instagram and on Twitter. The decision to analyze visual content or content combining text with visuals on both platforms is based on two reasons: the convenience of obtaining similar data to allow a more homogeneous and systematic analysis, and the absence of purely text-based posts in this context.

The design and possibilities of the two social networks where the units of analysis are located are different. The *affordances* of social networks is a concept used to refer to the specific characteristics, whether material (buttons, app design, like buttons, menus, etc.) or immaterial (visibility, replicability, interactivity, shareability), that determine how a social network is used (Butcher & Helmond, 2018). The affordances of Twitter and Instagram differ; while the former has a high level of interactivity and hypertextuality, the latter has moderate levels in these categories (Hase et al., 2022). It is important to note that Instagram is a social network focused on audiovisual content, while Twitter allows both textual and audiovisual content. Studies also show an increase in hate speech linked to the far right since the change in Twitter's ownership (Keane, 2024), which adds to the pre-existing polarization, political use, and argumentative use of this network (Murthy, 2024). Instagram, on the other hand, is more focused on personal identity creation and the construction of a "self-centered visual imagery," which plays a crucial role in the use of political communication (Ekman & Widholm, 2017).

To build this sample, I employed the *Walk Through Method*, applied by Cervi and Divon (2023) in their study on the Memetic Performances of Palestinian Resistance on TikTok. This method enables the researcher to engage with the application while simultaneously becoming familiar with its digital environment as part of the research process (Light et. al, 2018). On Instagram, the Hashtags used for data collection include #reconquista, #CristoRey, #ImperioEspañol, #EspañaCatólica, #Catolicismo, and #Cristianismo. I manually navigated through each of these hashtags, selecting videos that could help meet the study's objectives. Several researchers conceptualize this data collection process in digital environments as an ethnographic path, a digital ethnography in which digital phenomena in their respective environments (apps, forums, or the internet) form the basis of data collection (Pink, 2021; Sumiala & Tikka, 2020). Similarly, for X, I used the app's advanced search feature, which allows filtering by keywords, dates, and number of likes, with the minimum being 300 likes and keywords such as "Reconquista, Don Pelayo, National Catolicismo, Franco AND Dios, Imperio Español, Cristo Rey, Cristianismo AND España, España AND Dios".

Following Serafini and Reid (2023) multimodal approach to Content Analysis, I developed an Analytical Template or Coding Sheet, which consisted of eight analytical categories created based on my research questions and inspired by other academic articles (Cervi et al., 2021; Cervi

and Divon, 2023). These categories include: Theme, Type of Video, Symbols, Identified Enemies, Communication Strategies, Hashtags, Type of Profile, and Language. The coding was carried out inductively, first by analyzing the videos in a non-systematic manner and identifying patterns, and second by creating codes based on the observed trends and applying them to analyze every category (See codebook in the Appendix). This inductive approach is characterized by searching for patterns and underlying meanings constructed between the lines of a text (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

4. Analysis of the results

The analysis of these videos has allowed me to identify five main themes within the "themes" category of this multimodal Content Analysis. Specifically, there is a predominance of posts about the *Reconquista* (63), followed by posts about the contemporary *Christian nationalist movement* (24), about *Francoism and God* (11), about the *Empire and God* (8), and about the *Crusades* (7). In accordance with the explanation provided in the methodology section, this coding has been carried out inductively and with attention to the temporal dimension of the content. In this vein, posts that refer to current events, such as religious demonstrations or marches, have been categorized under the theme of *Contemporary Christian Movement*. Although other topics or narratives may influence these posts, I chose to focus on the temporal dimension of their content. Alternatively, posts themed around the *Reconquista, Crusades, Francoism, or Empire and God* are situated within a narrative rooted in a specific historical period.

Regarding the genre or type of video, we identified several formats. From the analysis, I inferred the following publication types:

- Art pieces with text (27)
- Humor memes/meme culture (27)
- Epic edits (14)
- Current images (25)
- Reused audiovisual material (9)
- AI-generated images or videos (5)
- Produced video (2)
- Other (5)

Examining the format of the posts, the *humor memes* often adopt very distinctive visual characteristics, such as embedded text within the image and the use of doodles or caricatures of stereotyped characters. This type of content frequently takes the POV (Point of View) format. Academic literature has explored the use of humor memes as a strategy of the far right, employed as a tool for "othering" (Svatoňová, 2023; Hakokõngäs et al., 2020). Additionally, *epic edits* are essentially videos that feature fast-paced editing synchronized with epic or trending music and

may or may not include voiceovers. This type of post falls within the realm of the *vernacular creativity* that characterizes the new digital environment and is defined as practices carried out by non-professional users who employ shared cultural symbols, templates, or practices to mix and produce content (Burgess, 2007). This is not exclusive to epic edits but applies to all post types analyzed in this study.

Regarding *art pieces*, there is the use of paintings, sculptures, and monuments as iconographic support in posts with informative or propagandistic intentions. In these, the artwork itself is not the central focus, but rather the explanation that accompanies it. An explanation not about the art pieces per se, but about the historical moment or figure it represents. In this study, more posts featuring artwork were found on Twitter than on Instagram. The most frequently used painting was *The Surrender of Granada* by Francisco Pradilla (1882), which depicts the handover of the keys to Granada by King Boabdil to Isabel I and Fernando II of Aragon in 1492, a moment that marks the culmination of the Reconquista and becomes a symbol representing the unification of Spain (Simonet, 1896). Furthermore, depictions of El Cid and Don Pelayo, in both paintings and sculptures, also held a certain prominence.

In the context of this analysis, *current images* are those that contain footage recorded in the present day, typically showing demonstrations, marches, religious ceremonies, or the commemoration of dates that are historically significant to the Christian Nationalist movement. Examples include footage of the Legionnaire March and the singing of El Novio de la Muerte (Death's boyfriend), a song associated with a military group crucial during the Civil War and Francoism, with strong Christian roots[1]. Equally significant are posts defending the Valle de los Caidos (Valley of the Fallen), the biggest symbol of National Catholicism, in response to the government's decision to reinterpret the function and meaning of the monument. Another key example includes the protests in Ferraz Street, in Madrid, where both the Parroquia del Inmaculado Corazón de María and PSOE headquarters are located. There, religious leaders publicly recited the rosary for months as a form of protest against the government.

[1] The Legion is a century-old military corps founded by the soldier Millán Astray in 1920, during the Rif War prior to the Spanish Civil War. It has played a significant military role since the civil war, later participating in missions in Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. See more in, (Togores 2016)

While the vast majority of posts use audiovisual or visual material from other sources, such as paintings, very short clips from films, or historical footage, there is a category of posts that includes *Reused material,* consisting of entire scenes from movies, television series, video games or documentaries. It is important to distinguish between the two: in the former, these materials are part of a broader mix and make up only a small fraction of the post, whereas in the latter, this material constitutes the main focus of the post. Finally, we identified 5 posts that are entirely *generated by artificial intelligence*, including both the images and the voice.

Regarding the profile of the users, the sample consists of 73 users, as in some cases, more than one post was selected from the same account. Based on this, I have classified the accounts according to user typology: (1) 20.55% of the accounts are focused on *defending Western-Spanish tradition.* Their content typically ranges from the promotion of hypermasculinity and the defense of Christian values to an emphasis on aestheticization and militarism. (2) Accounting for 19.17% are *meme accounts*, which stand out for content related to medievalism or that generally have a reactionary, traditionalist, and male-oriented tone. (3) With 13.70%, are accounts focused on *religious defense*, including national-Christian groups, Catholic or Orthodox profiles, or religious figures such as priests. (4) Another notable group is *political militants*, who make up 12.33%, including far-right organizations such as the Spanish far-right party, Vox, or movements close to fascism like Núcleo Nacional or Movimiento Nacional[2]. This group also includes figures such as Vox leader Santiago Abascal and Frente Obrero's leader Roberto Vaquero[3]. (5) It is also observed 10.95% of *far-right activists*, who defend reactionary and traditional ideas on a personal basis, through the publication of varied content such as fake news, propaganda, or memes. (6) Additionally, history-themed accounts represent 10.95% of the sample. More marginal categories include (7) pro-Franco accounts (4.10%), (8) pro-Israel accounts (2.73%), (9) military content accounts (2.73%), and (10) others (2.73%).

[2] Núcleo Nacional is an ultra far-right movement, currently under investigation for hate crimes, having called for the unification of ultra groups to actively act against migration (El País, April 1, 2025). Movimiento Nacional is a pro-Francoist group that uses the name of the only legal party during the dictatorship.

[3] Frente Obrero is a revolutionary and patriotic political party that advocates for the defense of workers rights while attacking migration and what they refer to as the scourge of gender ideology (Frente Obrero, 2025)

Following the completion of this study, this thesis identifies four key areas for deeper exploration through the analysis of the Christian Nationalist movement on Instagram and Twitter. First, the mobilization of medieval narratives in contemporary contexts and their connection to SCCN; second, the use of this discourse as a weapon against various groups, particularly Muslims, and the communicative strategies employed in this digital warfare; third, the role of the Christian nationalist movement in shaping masculine identities, and its intersection with other movements such as the manosphere; and last, a comparative analysis between WCN and SCCN.

4.1. Medieval narratives in the Spanish digital context

The medieval era has become a surprising player in political discourse, serving either as a source of identity formation or as an ideological weapon deployed through various media. This phenomenon is reflected in this thesis, firstly through the mobilization of the *Reconquista* narrative, which had already played a role in shaping national identity during the 19th and 20th centuries, and secondly through references to events such as the Crusades.

This master's thesis focuses on *the Reconquista* as a formative element of a Catholic, patriotic, and exclusionary identity. The term *La Reconquista* was "constructed" in the 19th century, with the rise of nationalism. The idea of Spanish nationality began to be forged from myths and stories of the past. The Spanish Constitution of 1812 declared that sovereignty resided in the Nation and established Catholicism as the only and perpetual religion of this Spanish Nation (García Sanjuan, 2020). Cuevas (2020) points out that the idea of *Reconquista* stems from how historians and politicians infused the nation-state with content, shaping a common identity that had to be rooted in a shared past. *Reconquista* and medieval history were not linked until the 18th century, and it was not until the following century that Modesto Lafuente (1850) gave the term a clear ideological and political charge.

Saloma (2011) explains how the term was first used by Lafuente in response to French historians who claimed Spain lacked a national history "written according to new scientific criteria" (p. 211). Thus, Lafuente (1850) used the term for the first time to describe the "gigantic effort" represented by the Christian recovery from the Moors. Lafuente was followed by various historians who consolidated the term's place in Spanish historiography, within scholarly circles, popular literature, local histories, and universities (Saloma, 2011). At this point, *La Reconquista*

became “Christian and national” (Lafuente, 1850, p. 444). Over time, this construction of Spanish nationalism led to the emergence of National Catholicism, which reached its peak during Francoism (García Sanjuan, 2020). One of the main architects of the identity-based Catholicism and the idea of a Spanish nation was Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, who wrote about the mission of Spain:

> “Spain, evangelizer of half the world; Spain, hammer of heretics, light of Trent, sword of Rome, cradle of Saint Ignatius (...); that is our greatness and our unity; we have no other” (Menéndez Pelayo, 1978, p. 658).

Nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism coexisted with a widespread perception of Spain’s decline, a decline that, according to various scholars and political figures, sought to be counteracted through the revival of historical feats (Saloma 2011). Spanish reactionaries, on the other hand, viewed Spain as the quintessential Catholic nation, “the champion of Catholicism against heresy” (Fuente, 1873, as cited in Dominguez, 2021, p.10), and as the cradle of Catholic unity (Lafuente, 1850). These reactionary authors strongly opposed the Spanish Constitution of 1876, which decreed religious tolerance:

> “The pursuit of this religious unity” was “the ideal of the hosts of Pelayo,” “of the Christians in the time of El Cid,” “of the Spaniards in the days of Isabel,” and, more generally, of the entire “phalanx of heroes” who, in “eight centuries of tireless struggle,” “reconquered the land and restored the nation,” cleansing the “patriotic soil of Arabs,” from “the Rock of Covadonga to the walls of Granada,” and bequeathing to their descendants the “ideal of unity of worship.” (Martorell & Fivaller, 1876, pp. 972–985 as cited in Domínguez, 2021, p. 20)

Medievalism brings together diverse themes, such as the embrace of chivalry, historically associated with purity and instrumentalized by Nazism or the KKK, the inseparable link between the Middle Ages and authority, or the perception of this historical period as the Age of Faith, or the Christian Middle Ages, that is, a time of Christian splendor (Emery and Utz, 2014). This analysis reveals these characteristics, showing how figures such as El Cid or Don Pelayo symbolize this sense of chivalric purity. Don Pelayo was a warrior born at the end of the 7th century and is part of the Spanish nationalist imaginary for being the most celebrated figure of the battle of Covadonga in 718 AD, which ended in Christian victory (Saloma 2008). Meanwhile, El Cid,

besides being portrayed as a hero of the Reconquista, has been a figure of controversy in Spanish historiography. Vila (2015) explains that El Cid was a political-military figure from the 11th century, who has been the subject of inspiration for poems and songs, as well as being a central figure in 19th century literature and subsequently used repeatedly by the propaganda organ of Francoism.

The following examination of the analysis includes solely the interpretation of 63 *Reconquista*-themed posts. The union between Medievalism and Christianity is notable throughout the study, as 54,3% of posts contain religious references. Among these medieval religious references, three stand out in particular: Santiago Matamoros, Saint Helena, and general religious vocabulary. The figure of Santiago Matamoros is crucial for understanding the connection between nationalism, the *Reconquista,* and Christianity. It corresponds to Santiago the Apostle, who, according to tradition, appeared to the Christian Army during Clavijo's battle in 844 AD (Damas 2010). His image during the battle, riding a white horse and carrying a flag of the same color, cements his bellicose status, which will recur in later episodes of the *Reconquista* (Gallardo, 2005). As for Saint Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, tradition attributes to her being responsible for finding the *Vera Curz* -the true Cross- of Christ in Jerusalem and has a link to the Reconquista, specifically for the construction of a hermitage in her name after the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, commemorating the victory of the cross (Quesada, 2014).

Elliot (2017), drawing on Anderson's *imagined communities*, highlights the theme of *imagined continuity* as a recurring element in medievalism, referring to the assumption that nationalism and identity have their origins in antiquity. One that serves as the genesis of the nation's ethnography. This imagined continuity is used to justify a division between "us" and "them." Posts on Instagram and Twitter follow this logic of enduring battle lines across time, suggesting that the Christians who fought Muslims for centuries are the direct ancestors of contemporary Spaniards, while Muslims are equated with present-day Maghrebi migrants. Consider, for example, the meme in *Figure 1*: the image is split into two. At the top, a caricature of a weary man smoking a cigarette is superimposed over a map showing the percentage of Muslim population in Europe, alongside the phrase: "Europe is lost." Below, there is a drawing of a medieval knight next to a map of the *Reconquista*, with the caption: "Spain was Muslim for 700 years. Nothing is lost." This meme shows how imagined continuity and the creation of ethno-

religious identity manifest on social media, through a conversation between two people who are part of the same community despite living in different periods and having vastly different social, political, and historical contexts.

Figure 1: *Reconquista meme using visual rhetoric from incel culture*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

Among the *Reconquista*-related content, 68.3% includes references to battles or historical events involving military participation. The main events cited are the *Battle of Covadonga*, the *Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa*, and *the Capture of Granada*. The conception of the Battle of Covadonga has undergone significant changes in historiography. It refers to one of the earliest episodes of the conflict between Christians and Muslims, specifically it was a battle between the Visigoths and the Mauritanians, led by the figure of Don Pelayo, a warrior who, between 714 and 718, triumphed over the enemy forces (Saloma, 2005). The battle was narrated during the Middle Ages as an event that combined military prowess with elements of divinity, such as the apparition of the Holy Cross and the Virgin (Saloma, 2008). Las Navas de Tolosa refers to the battle near the village of Santa Elena (Jaen, Andalusia) in 1212, which acquired the character of a crusade due to the support of Pope Innocent III. It resulted in a victory for the Castilian army, which was described by the then Archbishop of Toledo as the 'army of the Lord' (Fitz, 2014). The battle is considered the decisive battle of the conflict, marking the beginning of the end of the conflict, and was influential in the gestation of Spanish nationalism in the 19th century and in Francoism (Fitz,

2005). Finally, the *capture of Granada* is considered the closing episode of the *Reconquista*, with the Catholic kings as protagonists, in which, after decades of war, sultan Boabdil handed over the keys to the city.

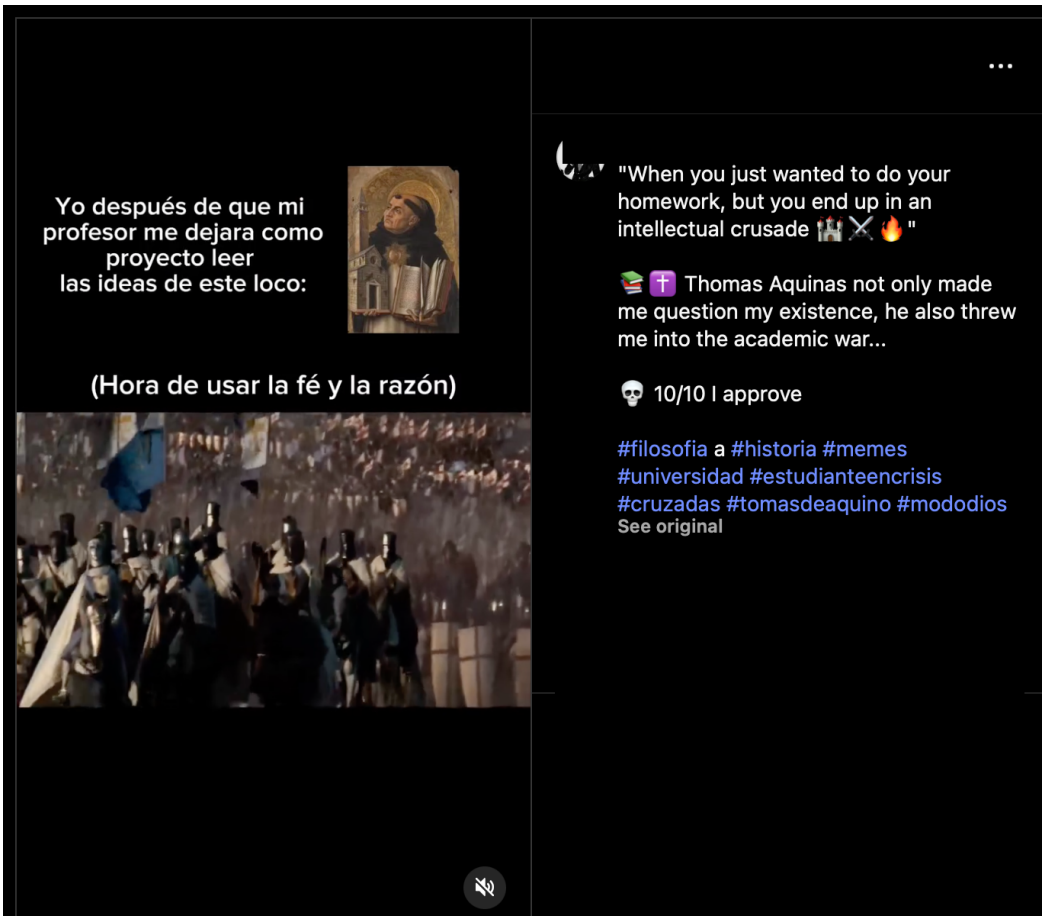
These battles and episodes are represented multimodally:

1. Through text, in an informative manner, especially on Twitter and to a lesser extent on Instagram.
2. Through audio and video, using film footage, edited paintings, and music, with a voice-over narrating over the images.
3. Through audiovisual content not directly related to the battles, but which uses visual analogies to convey certain situations. One example is the use of a wrestling match to represent the Battle of Covadonga.

Alternatively, 61.9% of the posts include references to heroes or prominent figures from this historical period. These include Don Pelayo, the Catholic Monarchs, Santiago Matamoros, Saint Helena, and El Cid. Regarding Christian references, 52.4% contain either an explicit or implicit mention of the defense of Christianity. From this, it can be inferred that nostalgia for the Middle Ages and the *Reconquista* does not necessarily equate to a defense of medievalism per se; rather, they can be used as a rhetorical weapon against Islam or as symbolic elements that contribute to shaping national identity (García San Juan, 2020).

It is also important to note that the *Reconquista* is not the only theme identified in the posts that illustrate medievalism. In this vein, two other relevant themes emerge in connection to medievalism and the mobilization of SCCN discourse: the Crusades (7 videos) and the Spanish Empire (8 videos). In the case of the Crusades, the focus is predominantly militaristic, as 5 out of 7 videos include battle symbolism or references to the necessity of warfare. Although prominent historical figures of the Crusades are not explicitly mentioned, some videos reference thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas. Consider *Figure 2*: a POV-style video where the caption reads, “Me after my teacher lets me read the ideas of this lunatic,” followed by a scene from Ridley Scott’s *Kingdom of Heaven (2005)* depicting a Crusades battle. In this thematic line, 5 out of 7 Crusade-related videos also include references to Christianity or European Christian civilization.

Figure 2: *Reel combining Kingdom of Heaven with the ideas of Thomas Aquinas*



Note: *Screenshot made by the researcher*

As for the Spanish Empire, most posts fall into the "humor/meme" category and feature strong mobilization of Christian symbolism. While the number of videos where the *Spanish Empire* is the main theme is limited, the Empire appears as a contextual, visual, and narrative element in other thematic categories, especially in posts about the *Reconquista* or those concerning *the movement today*. This presence materializes through iconography such as the Cross of Burgundy flag or depictions of battles and conquests from Spain's Golden Age. These symbols are often incorporated, particularly in *epic edits*, alongside visual material of the Spanish medieval period. This illustrates not only the importance of the historical event but also its perceived role as a foundational element that paved the way for the Spanish Empire, demonstrating the previously mentioned *continuity*. The relevance of this symbolism is also apparent in videos of political demonstrations.

Building on Hobsbawm's invention of tradition, Patrick Geary (2002), in *The Myth of Nations*, discusses how the shaping of national identities is not the result of ancient roots, but rather modern constructs that emerge from the selection or even invention of stories from a distant past, with a particular focus on the Middle Ages. The posts in the study link the medieval history of the *Reconquista* with Spanish national identity, connecting the past of territories like Asturias, which at the time was a Visigoth territory, as a direct inheritance of the current Spanish identity. The gestation of national identity goes hand in hand with what is known as the politics of nostalgia:

> "The utilization of nostalgia in political rhetoric has traditionally been thought of as being primarily directed toward ethnic nationalism and references to golden ages and times of grandeur characterized by ethnic homogeneity, cohesion, social order, and state sovereignty" (Elgenius and Rydgren, 2022, p. 1231).

As shown in Menke and Wulf (2021), this thesis identifies an instrumentalization of the past not only by anonymous online profiles, but also by far-right parties such as Vox, and its leader Santiago Abascal, whose historical narrative seeks to portray the *Reconquista* "as a debacle, followed by a continued and glorious centuries-long struggle of the Spaniards against the Muslims, until the definitive reconquest of the national territory" (Ballester, 2021, p. 4). See, for instance, *Figure 3*: an eight-second video featuring the Spanish flag, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Zaragoza in the background, and the voice-over of Santiago Abascal stating, "Europe was saved by the Spanish, in a seven-century *Reconquista*." This demonstrates elements of continuity in the construction of national identity: first, by attributing the medieval conflict to Spain, a country that did not yet exist at the time, and second, by assigning Spaniards the responsibility of honoring their ancestors' past through the defense of their flag."

Figure 3: *Rally video of Santiago Abascal*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

Focusing on nationalism, it is essential to highlight that the projection of the SCCN discourse is structured around an "other," a constructed enemy. This section has explored some of the particularities involved in the mobilization of medieval narratives on Instagram and Twitter and their relation to the creation of Spanish national identity. What follows is an examination of the "other" upon whom these stories are projected, regardless of the temporal framing of the topics.

4.2. The eternal Other: digital battle against the Muslim enemy

In this section, I aim to analyze how *othering* and Islamophobia are articulated within the Spanish social media environment. Furthermore, I will apply Mark Juergensmeyer's theory of *Cosmic War* and examine how the concept of *civilizationism* plays an important role in SCCN. Out of the total number of posts in the sample, 54 portray Muslims as the enemy; 33 do not identify an explicit enemy; 9 refer to the enemies of Spain; 7 to the current government; 3 are directed at the supposed enemies of Christianity; 4 at the LGTBQ+ community; and 5 target other groups including Jews (1), enemies of Catalonia (1), Communism (1), Latin Americans (1) and progressivism (1). It is important to note that some posts may attack more than one enemy at the same time. Moreover, the inductive coding of the *Perceived Enemies* category led to the creation of codes that group multiple enemies. For example, when referring to the "enemies of Spain," this includes mentions of a vague or impersonal "other," such as globalism and the political left, or references to enemies in historical battles without identifying a concrete opponent. This code is based on the Francoist conception of the "enemies of Spain".

61.9% *Reconquista*-themed posts construct the discourse of battles in opposition to an "other," portrayed as the direct ancestor of today's Muslim migrants. Here, the concept of *continuity* applies not only to heroes or the construction of ancestors who share a national identity with the country's current citizens, but also to the enemies around whom this identity is built (Elliot, 2017). This pattern changes in posts with different themes. In those focused on the *Contemporary Christian Nationalist movement* (23), 7 posts present Muslims as their main enemy, 6 do not identify any enemy, 4 refer to the enemies of Spain, 2 to the enemies of Christianity, 2 to the government, 2 to the LGTBQ+ community, and 1 to the United States. Among the 11 posts focused on Francoist nostalgia and its connection to Christianity, none identify Muslims as the enemy. Instead, the perceived enemy is distributed among undefined or unnamed enemies, the government, communism, Freemasonry, the political left, or the enemies of Spain. However, content related to the Crusades and the Spanish Empire does conceive of Muslims as the eternal enemy.

Europe today is experiencing a wave of Islamophobia led by far-right parties such as Marine Le Pen's *Rassemblement National*, Germany's AfD, Salvini's *Lega*, and Giorgia Meloni's

Fratelli d'Italia. In Spain, this space is occupied by *Vox*. An illustrative example of this is *Figure 4*, an Instagram reel that depicts the intersection between far-right nativism, Brubaker's concept of *civilizationism*, and the weaponization of history. The video features the main far-right leaders of Europe during a conference held on February 8, 2025. The reel adopts an "epic edit" format, centered mainly around the *Reconquista*, and features speeches that emphasize the civilizational divide between Christianity and Islam. It includes bellicose symbolism and a communication strategy characterized by a *call to action* to "restore the golden age of Europe," which is portrayed as being based on Christianity.

The video is edited by combining the speeches of these leaders with clips of medieval battles. Focusing on a multimodal level, there is visual and contextual coherence. The caption text reads: "Against those who promote Islamization, the hijab, the burqa, sharia law…*Reconquista!*" (*Vox*, March 20, 2025). Participating leaders include Geert Wilders (Netherlands), André Ventura (Portugal), Afroditi Latinopoulou (Greece), Viktor Orbán (Hungary) and Santiago Abascal (Spain). The discourse articulated in the video revolves around three axes: the defense of Europe, the recovery of the roots of Christian civilization, and the *Reconquista*. Wilders states: "We will not forget, the fervent days of the *Reconquista* were those that changed the course of history. You were the first to push back Islam and restore the Christian heritage in your country." Orbán speaks of building a Christian and conservative Hungary. Salvini emphasizes the need for a Europe with Christian values, while Abascal declares that "Islamism is the antithesis of our civilization," and that Spain has a "Christian heritage that comes from Rome and Greece," urging people to act "without fear of anything or anyone."

Figure 4*: Meeting of European far-right leaders in Madrid*

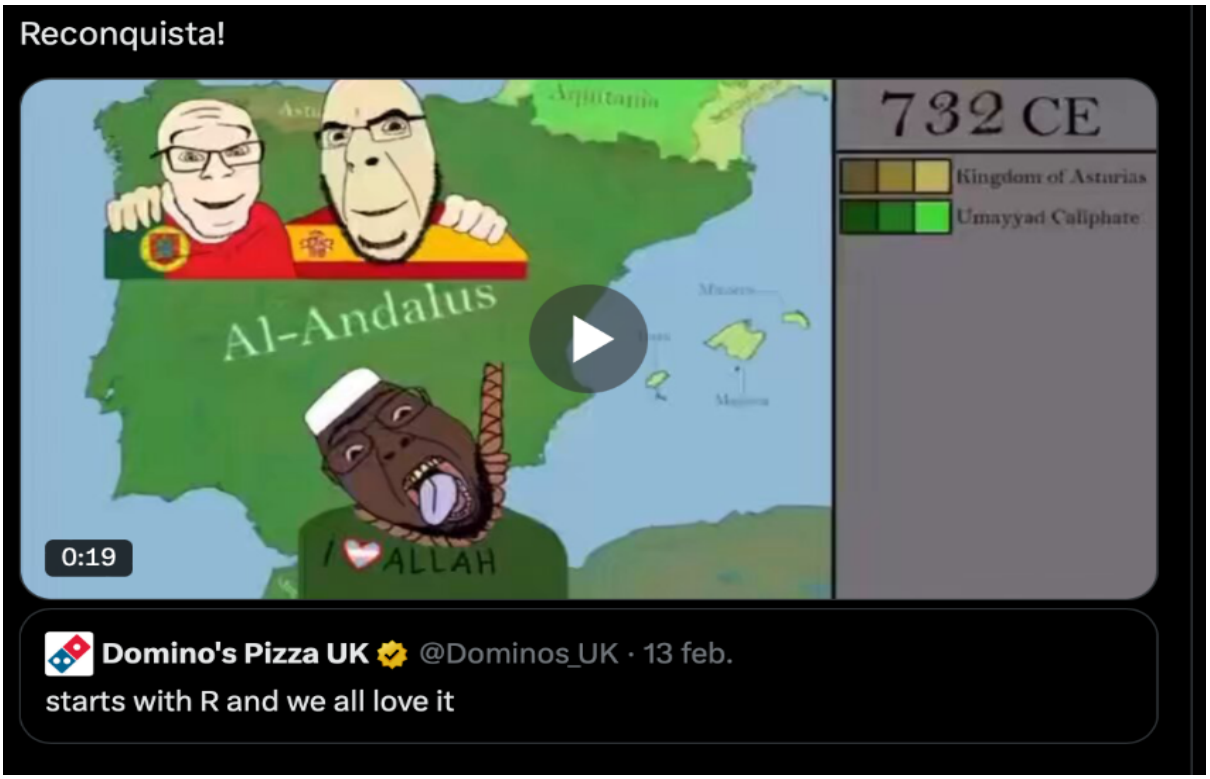
Note: Collage made by the researcher

This specific analysis is crucial to understanding how the legacy of Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis remains relevant in today's far-right discourse. Huntington (1994) argued that the conflict between Western and Islamic civilizations has been ongoing for 1,300 years, pointing to the Crusades as an attempt with "temporary success to bring Christianity and Christian rule to the Holy Land" (p. 31). García Sanjuán (2020) assesses that the *Clash of Civilizations* is a doctrine within which the *Reconquista* narrative can thrive. He highlights how Spanish politicians like José María Aznar, Prime Minister at the time of 9/11 and the 2004 Atocha bombings, and Santiago Abascal have used medieval narratives to frame their fight against jihadism (in Aznar's case) or against Islam more broadly (in Abascal's case). Furthermore, drawing on Andrew Elliott (2017), García Sanjuán (2020) explains that: "the *clash of civilizations* theory is seen to be operating under the surface of much of the medievalist discourse surrounding the War on Terror" (García Sanjuán, 2020 as cited in Elliott, 2017, p. 93).

This Multimodal Content Analysis, however, is not limited solely to political parties or prominent figures within the Spanish European political landscape. Rather, it broadens its focus to the adoption and articulation of Christian nationalist ideas by anonymous profiles, meme accounts, and informational pages. Shifting the attention to which communicative strategies are being employed by these profiles, I have encountered the following findings:

The use of *humor as a weapon* was observed in 16 out of the 53 posts that target Muslims as the enemy. Of these, 4 were found on Twitter and 12 on Instagram. These posts use derogatory language such as *"moros"* and depict Muslims in a caricatured, dehumanizing, and racialized manner, sometimes even shown as hanged (see Figure 5), or represented as physically unattractive (see Figure 6), in contrast to Christians, who are portrayed with sharp jawlines. In the next section, I will analyze the intertextuality between these types of illustrations and those found in manosphere-related content, including shared hashtags and symbolic elements.

Figure 5: *Video that depicts the two sides of the Reconquista, with the Muslims being illustrated in a demeaning, racialized, and violent manner*



Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

Figure 6: *Meme that dehumanizes the "other" (Muslim or dissenter), while nostalgically invoking Don Pelayo*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

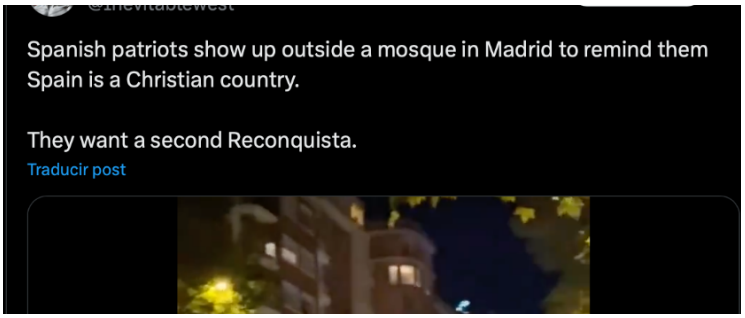
56.67% of these videos employ a *historiographical (medievalist) propaganda* strategy, grounded in nostalgia and presenting Muslims as an eternal enemy. In parallel, 45.28% of the videos make use of *Christian nationalist propaganda*, fusing religion and politics while simultaneously constructing the figure of the "other." In this context, terms like "Christianity," "Catholicism," and "Christian" frequently appear in the same sentence as "Muslim" or "Islam," thus establishing a stark dichotomy between both sides.

There is also evidence of *calls for action* in the posts within this study that depict Muslims as the enemy. Specifically, 22.64% of the posts contain messages, whether through video or text, that incite mobilization. Two types of calls for action have been identified: direct and indirect. In the case of direct calls, there are examples such as the copy of the previously analyzed post (*Figure 4*): "Against those who promote Islamization, the hijab, the burqa, sharia… Reconquista!" Posts that employ a more indirect call for action use messages like those of *Figure 7* and *Figure 8*: "It's never over. In the end, we win. The Reconquista did not fail. If God is for us, who can be against us !? CHRIST IS KING !! SAY IT BACK !!" or "Spanish patriots show up outside a mosque in Madrid to remind them Spain is a Christian country. They want a second Reconquista."

Figure 7: *Meme that employs incel-culture rhetoric alongside a defense of Christianity*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

Figure 8. *Caption from a video intended to misinform about a demonstration in Madrid*



Note. Screenshot made by the researcher

Another communicative strategy found across all the posts targeting Muslims is the construction of a "us vs them" narrative, accompanied by a polarizing intention closely tied to the construction of identity based on ethnic, moral, and religious superiority. 15 out of 53 posts explicitly refer to *Spanish-Christian identity*, such as the tweet from @fascistaasintomatico, which lists the achievements of Spanish civilization, ending with the phrase: *"Always remember who you are, no matter how much despair and ideological garbage they pour over you."* In parallel with this us-versus-them polarization, there is also evidence of the mobilization of militaristic symbolism, especially by employing battle imagery.

Having examined the main strategies and specific features of the posts that identify Muslims as their primary enemies, I now turn my attention to other trends observed within this analytical category. First, when assigning "non-apparent enemy" code, the following is identified: (1) a didactic or explanatory frame is present in 40.7% of the posts; (2) there is a link between Francoist propaganda and the lack of enemy identification, as 5 out of the 11 posts in the sample with themes related to Francoism and God do not identify a common enemy, while the other 6 vary their targets, ranging from the government, the left, communism, or Freemasonry; (3) strategies of Christian nationalist propaganda are present in 50% of the videos; (4) among the 32 posts that do not identify enemies, only one contains a call to action.

As for other enemies, such as the LGBTQ+ community, the government, or enemies of Spain, the small size of the sample makes it difficult to identify patterns in communication strategies. Nevertheless, when analyzing the sample as a whole, I observe a clear predominance of humor as a tool, along with a strong propagandistic intent based on the instrumentalization of history and the fusion of Christianity and nationalism.

4. 2.1. Enemies, Battles, and Cosmic Wars

After identifying the perceived enemies, it is relevant to apply Mark Juergensmeyer's ideas, particularly those related to religiously infused nationalism. In his attempt to conceptualize the motivations and characteristics of religious extremism, Juergensmeyer (2017) proposes the notion of *Cosmic Wars*. These refer to the worldview of extremist religious actors, in which conflict is imagined as part of a metaphysical struggle, a war that is greater and more meaningful than material life itself. This is why Juergensmeyer calls these wars "divine," as they evoke the great battles of the legendary past, and relate to metaphysical conflicts between good and evil (Juergensmeyer, 2017, p. 184). The concept of the *Reconquista*, as demonstrated in these posts, fits perfectly within this framework. The mobilization of medieval themes often materializes in the form of references to past battles, which account for 68.3% of the entire sample. Furthermore, Juergensmeyer (2017) emphasizes that warfare in this context is not limited to legendary stories but is also linked to contemporary symbols. In Christianity, this can be seen through topics such as *Christian soldiers*, *righteous struggle*, or the *Christian struggle*.

Figure 9 illustrates these dynamics: it is a humorous meme-style video presenting two opposing sides, represented by two distinct figures. On the left, there is a caricature of a devil saying, *"The West has fallen. Why don't you just give up?"* On the right, there is an image of a medieval soldier with three flags of medieval Spanish kingdoms behind him. This soldier responds, *"Because they never did."* Beneath the two characters, a video plays showing an epic, dramatized map of Spain illustrating the chronology of the Battle of Covadonga. In one corner of the post, next to the Christian warrior, there is an image of Jesus Christ's bloodied face after the Crucifixion. This post is illustrative of what Juergensmeyer describes: a battle between Good (the attractive Christian soldier) and Evil (the crying devil with human features). In this imagined battle, the side of evil is equated with Muslims, while the good side is represented by Christians, who must fight for Jesus and who always have Him on their side. Moreover, the video depiction of the Battle of Covadonga serves as a direct reference to the kind of legendary religious battles that Juergensmeyer identifies as central to the cosmic war narrative.

Figure 9. *Edit using incel-culture visual rhetoric while disseminating a propagandistic vision of the Reconquista*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

According to Juergensmeyer (2017), divine struggles, in addition to having heroes, necessarily identify a foe. Without one, it is not possible to generate empowerment and hope, since every "victory" implies the creation of a *negative reference* to which one can position oneself and over which one can hope to triumph (p.213). An enemy that is invented or manufactured. In the case of this thesis, as has been demonstrated, the foe around which SCCN positions itself is the Muslim. The creation of this enemy follows strategies of dehumanization, demonization, satanization, and stigmatization, which also align with the ideas proposed by Juergensmeyer (2017). While Figure 9 is a clear example of the strategy of *satanizing* the enemy, it is pertinent to look at *Figure 10*, a video by a young Chilean who records the streets of Barcelona during the celebration of Ashura, a holy day for the Shi'a community commemorating the sacrifice of Husayn ibn Ali, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, in his fight against injustice.

The original video was posted by the TikTok account @Chilean Mate; however, it has been stolen by a Twitter account that adds the following description: "Handsome Spanish chads will lead a new Reconquista." Here, although there is no explicit religious mention, the description of Barcelona's cultural environment gives multiculturalism a negative connotation. Islam is

perceived as a threat that must be fought, just as it was done. There is another noteworthy detail: the tweet itself is fake news, since this TikToker is not Spanish but Chilean, and he has no intention of confronting Islam. He is, in fact, a TikToker whose goal is to showcase the city to his audience. Thus, through images of the Raval neighborhood in Barcelona, we find a stigmatization of the Muslim as someone who seeks to impose their culture, who is invading European civilization, and who, being perceived as barbaric, must be fought against.

Figure 10. *Video that uses incel rhetoric to misinform and polarize perceptions of Barcelona's multiculturalism*

Note. Screenshot made by the researcher

4.3. Christian Nationalist use of the Manosphere visual rhetoric

This section analyses the relationship between meme culture/the manosphere and Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism, as well as the promotion of hegemonic masculinities through social media posts on topics such as the *Reconquista*, the Crusades, and the current Christian nationalist movement. To develop the analysis presented in this section, I have drawn on KnowYourMeme and Namuwiki, two open online sources that serve as encyclopedias of various Internet subcultures. Accordingly, it is necessary to first examine *Figure 11*. This Instagram post is composed of two images. In the first image, we see three panels: in the top panel, there is a doodle of a man smoking a cigarette, saying to a woman, "You are beautiful." In the next panel, a medieval knight appears on the side and says to the man: "Come with me to expel Moors"[4]

In the final panel, we see the man joining the knight, smiling, wearing a helmet and holding a sword, while the woman remains silent. The woman does not participate at any point. The second image follows the same structure: three panels, and a Spanish imperial knight who interrupts the conversation between the man and the woman, saying: "Come with me to conquer America." In the final panel, the man leaves with the knight. Textually, the post description reads: *Defend your country*, and the hashtags used include: #españa #historia #fyp #parati #humor #wojak #saveeurope #hispanidad #hispanismo #edit #imperio #imperioespañol #gigachad #basado #cristianismo #catolicismo #vivaespaña. This example is part of a pattern observed throughout the study: the evidence of a shared visual rhetoric between the manosphere and SCCN.

Figure 11. *Meme combining manosphere rhetoric with a Christian-nationalist message*

[4] According to the language advisory service of the RAE: *Moro* sounds derogatory in Peninsular Spanish and can be replaced by *Moroccan*, *Algerian*, *Tunisian* -depending on the context- or by *Maghrebi*. (FundéuRAE, 2008)

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher

The manosphere refers to the broad set of blogs, websites, forums, and social media spaces where users share their toxic, sexist, sectarian views of society, particularly regarding masculinity and femininity (Rothermel, 2022). The term, coined on Blogspot in 2009 and popularized by porn marketer Ian Ironwood (2013), author of *The Manosphere: A New Hope for Masculinity*, the has received media attention for its extreme misogyny and offline incidents such as Isla Vista[5] and the Oregon shootings[6] (Ging, 2019). In the Spanish context, the most popular forums for articulating manosphere discourse are Forocoches and Burbuja.info (Lacalle, 2023). However, this study has found that these discourses and visual narratives extend to other social media platforms such as Instagram. Lilly (2016) identifies the different groups that form the manosphere (pick-up artists, Men's Rights Activists, Incels, and Men Going Their Own Way), which are unified by the shared belief that masculinity is in crisis due to feminism and feminist ideology. Mamie et al. (2021) study how misogynistic online communities function as gateways to far-right groups, while Han and Yin

[5] In May 2014, Elliot Roger, a 22-year-old man killed 6 people in a misogynist motivated attack. Roger, who took his own life after the massacre, had written that this event was to be revenge on a society that denied him sex and love. See BBC News (2018): https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43892189

[6] On October 1, 2015, nine people were killed in a shooting at Umpqua Community College by Chris Harper-Mercer, a 26-year-old student who admired Elliot Rodger and used language associated with the incel subculture (Bates, 2020).

(2023) argue that the new reactionary masculinity can be divided between those adopting an anti-feminist discourse and those defending hegemonic masculine traits while rejecting inclusivity.

For this thesis, it is relevant to understand in depth some of the concepts that frequently appear in these posts, beginning with the meme *Yes, Chad*. Lacalle (2023), in her study on the Spanish manosphere, identifies the "Chad" as one of the key characters in the incel cultural imaginary, who along with the "Stacys," are "those genetically gifted people who embody the prevailing standards of attractiveness" (p. 46). "Chad Thundercock" is the nickname this culture uses to refer to any attractive, popular man who is sexually successful with women (Brook, 2022). The "Chads" are the sexual targets of "Beckys," who are average women but settle for leftist men who promise to "deconstruct" themselves (Lacalle, 2023). In a way that mirrors the findings presented in this section, Mattheis (2019) shows how this type of meme is used by the radical right as a tool that combines "racial animus and incel shame and self-loathing through articulating violence as a path to 'real masculinity'" (p. 8). Mattheis's (2019) article is relevant to understanding the characteristics of this visual rhetoric, as it shows how mosque attackers in Norway or Poland are portrayed as strong men, with pronounced jawlines, emphasizing their masculine features. Represented as "saints," these Chads who commit attacks are framed as paving the way to manhood by protecting European culture and the white race.

Humorous-style posts use incel culture's visual rhetoric, specifically through sharply defined jawlines representing the ideal of masculinity, in contrast to the enemies, who are drawn in a grotesque way, with facial indicators such as dark circles under their eyes, double chins, or even a different skin tone, all functioning as markers of human hierarchy (Mattheis, 2019) . See the previous example (*Figure 11*), where the young man is depicted as "Wojak," a character that represents sadness and resentment, in short, an "average man" who feels abandoned or weak. More specifically, this is a concrete type of Wojak, the Doomer, always illustrated smoking a cigarette, representing the loneliness of a man typically in his 20s who is disillusioned with society and the main events occurring in the world. In contrast, the medieval knight in *Figure 11* represents the Chad figure, with a pronounced jawline, who fills the Doomer's existential void by inviting him to "expel the Moors" or to "reconquer America." Textually, a close look at the hashtags reveals terms like #wojak, #gigachad, or #based, alongside others such as #saveeurope, #cristianismo, #catolicismo, and #vivaespaña.

Next to the Wojak, the woman in *figure 11* is known as *Trad Girl*, a character that embodies the traits men in these communities seek: she is white, blonde, conservative, right-wing, and Christian. Eviane Leidig (2023) traces the *#trad-wife* movement, highlighting its complexity and links to the far right, and emphasizing its foundation in a set of traditional values such as family unity, 'reverence for Western "classics'' and the defense of traditional structures such as religion and marriage. This movement "ranges from blogs focused on homemaking to social media forums such as the tradwife subreddit community, all of which are spaces for women to share advice and promote this lifestyle'" (p.92). In the context of this analysis, trad-wives or trad-girls are not actively involved; instead, it is only their image, and thus their symbolic meaning, that is used graphically.

Figure 12 uses the meme format "my parents when I was 20," depicting a Trad Girl and a Yes Chad, symbolizing nostalgia for a past of prosperity based on traditional values, contrasted with the son of those parents, whose interests are entirely different. In this case, the despair stems from witnessing how Christianity and the Spanish Empire have lost their supremacy, while in Spain, there is a rise in LGBTQ+ values. The post is accompanied by hashtags such as #Wojak, #basado, or #GigaChad, #LGBT alongside #Cristianidad, #Hispanismo, and #VivaEspaña. Also notable is the phrase found in the copy, 'May God protect us', indicating the use of religious rhetoric.

Figure 12. *Meme in the "my parents when I was 20" format alongside a slogan*

Note. *Screenshot by the researcher*

In addition, there are English-written posts that mobilize *Reconquista* discourse in their description or inside graphic elements, but they do not use any hashtags referring to it, nor do they mention Spain. See *Figure 13*, where the incel culture is employed, specifically through the Psycho Wojak, representing a medieval soldier, and Chudjak, a figure that can be used either to depict the "stereotypical left" or an incel (in this case, the former). Among the hashtags, terms such as #Boysmeme, #SelfDiscipline, #Homeland, and #SelfImprovement emerge. These target a young male audience ("boysmeme") and promote messages of self-control, aligned with Red Pill theory, which is one of the key ideas of the manosphere (Ging, 2019). This theory originates from *The Matrix*, in which the protagonist, Neo, is given the choice between a red pill and a blue pill. According to Red Pill theory, "taking the blue pill means switching off and living a life of delusion; taking the red pill means becoming enlightened to life's ugly truths" (Ging, 2019, p. 640).

Figure 13. Reel that uses manosphere visual rhetoric while referencing the *Reconquista* process

Note. Screenshot made by the researcher

Drawing together these findings, it can be argued that, similarly to the already well-documented use of meme culture by the Far Right (McSwiney et. al, 2021; Mamie et al., 2021), Christian nationalist movements also employ the visual and textual rhetoric of the manosphere, particularly through incel culture's imaginary. Notably, direct visual references to key Christian figures are relatively rare in these posts. However, there are exceptions such as representations of Jesus Christ as a "Chad" contrasted with the devil depicted as a "Crying Wojak" (see *Figure 9*). Alternatively, on a textual level, explicit references to Christianity in these posts are limited to

hashtags such as #Christianity, #Catholicism, and others like #God, #Jesus, #Bible, or #BibleVerse.

4.3.1. God Spanish Warriors: construction of masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity is a term that Connell (1995) describes as 'the configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently accepted response to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is seen as guaranteeing) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (p. 77). Trott (2022), building on Connell's ideas, explains that this hegemonic masculinity does not have fixed characteristics but can change depending on its social context and respective norms of behavior. However, hegemony is not only applied externally (towards women), but also internally, towards other masculinities, which are either subordinated, marginalized or oppressed (Demetriou, 2001). Drawing on Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), this thesis identifies how homosexuality emerges as a subordinate masculinity, which endangers one of the institutions of the cultural ideal of manhood: heterosexuality. It needs to be noted that in the Spanish case, the far-right party, Vox, and ultra-Catholic sectors maintain a homophobic, anti-LGBTQ+ and anti-feminist discourse (Cornejo-Valle and Ramme, 2022).

See *Figure 14,* which shows an image of *The Lord of the Rings* (2003) in a battle where Aragorn, depicted as the ideal of masculinity by being white, honorable, a warrior and heterosexual, has the logo of Vox superimposed onto him. Opposing this warrior there is an army of orcs, subhuman creatures, which have communist, queer, feminist, Catalan pro-independence anarchist, and media icons also superimposed on them. It is worth noting that the data sample does not have a large number of posts with explicit homophobia or misogyny (6 out of 116). Marginalized masculinities are linked with the 'relationships between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups, that is, the relations that result from the interplay of gender with other structures, such as class and ethnicity' (Demetriou, 2001 p.345). In the case of this thesis, these marginalized communities are Arab Muslim men. Connell (1995) explains how, to maintain the dominance of this hegemonic ideal, it is necessary to demarcate clear boundaries between the in-group and the out-group, so that the latter is dispossessed of hegemonic characteristics. This dynamic is illustrated in the case of the SCCN through the depiction of the Christian warrior, white, handsome,

physically imposing, as opposed to the racialized migrant, mostly Muslim, without honor, a thief, and a criminal.

Figure 14. *Viral montage used by Spanish far-right profiles, employing the final battle from The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (2003)*

Note. Screenshot made by the researcher

The SCCN promotes the construction of a Christian and traditionalist identity that upholds hegemonic masculinity. Based on Roose (2020), what is presented in this thesis is a clear example of *religious-warrior masculinity*, which frames contemporary problems in millennial and apolitical terms, and is considered a modern manifestation of religious extremism. Roose (2020) refers to social media as "a force multiplier for identity-based movements to both project their voices and to recruit", in which "these groups have interconnected strands locally, nationally, and internationally" (p.36).

Luger (2024), in his analysis of the *God Viral Warrior,* describes how online users combine *muscular masculinity*, Christian Nationalism, and heterosexuality, along with a form of masculinity with authoritarian and fascist tendencies. Hinojosa (2010) links *muscular development* with traditional constructions of hegemonic masculinity, which are associated with the cult of toughness, physical domination, and aggression, and are grounded in male dominance over women

(Donaldson, 1993; Connell, 1995). However, this study presents no evidence of exaggerated muscularity, nor are there any depictions of shirtless muscular bodies showing off their physique. Instead, the figure of the medieval warrior emerges as the so-called *God Viral Warrior*, who displays traits such as physical dominance and toughness. These warriors are represented in three main ways: through incel culture drawings, paintings, and modern illustrations generated by AI tools or digital drawing. The warriors are generally depicted wearing armor, with athletic builds and facial features that convey testosterone. See *Figure 15*. In all instances, the warriors are male.

Figure 15. *AI-generated image of a medieval Spanish knight, part of a reel explaining a Reconquista battle*

Note: Screenshot made by the researcher.

The construction of masculinity presented in this study shares similarities with the hegemonic masculinity of the Franco period, which repudiated a feminine and weak Spain and was shaped by National Catholicism (Vincent, 2018). There is also a contraposition of roles assigned between men and women during Francoism: women were required to be faithful, while men were assigned the role of conquering, being promiscuous and governing public affairs (Fernández, 2017). This study presents a complex representation of women in the analyzed posts. On the one hand, there is the idolization of Isabel the Catholic and references to Saint Helena. On the other hand, women are rarely the subject of the posts, but rather a discursive element used to support the overall narrative; this use can be either textual or visual. See the following example

of the use of "women" at the textual level. It is a POV-format video that says: "*Women*: I let my intrusive thoughts win, and I have changed the dress once again hahahaha… *Me and the boys if we let our intrusive thoughts win*." Below this text is a video from *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), depicting a Crusades battle and suggesting that the intrusive thought of men is to start a new holy war. In this case, the woman is represented grammatically as a contrasting element, opposed to the man. A sense of mockery and stereotyping is implied, portraying the woman as weak, superficial, and interested in trivial matters. In contrast, the man's interests are eternal, grounded in Christian morality and warfare. As for visual representation of women, the primary sources are paintings, excerpts from the television fiction *Isabel* (2012), religious figures, and caricatures of women in incel meme culture.

Having observed the link between SCCN and the Manosphere, it is important to note that this type of online communication strategy originates in the United States and later extended to the anglophone world (Ging, 2019). However, it is now employed by far-right movements in other countries and adapted to fit each nation's cultural and political context (Luger, 2024; Moreno-Almeida, 2021). The following section, moving away from the representation of these masculinities, aims to reflect on how SCCN positions itself in relation to other Christian nationalisms such as the American one, by examining their convergences and divergences.

4.4. A Comparative Analysis of White Christian Nationalism and Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to explore how the SCCN compares with other forms of Christian nationalism, such as WCN, which, unlike the Spanish case, has received extensive scholarly attention. Thus, I elucidate the particularities that both movements share, as well as those that separate them. By incorporating this comparative framework, the aim was to examine how Christian Nationalism is localized in Spain. In other words, how, using a similar approach, it possesses specific characteristics influenced by its geographical, historical and social context. It is important to clarify, before delving into the comparison between the two, that this study does not aim to assess the reach or social consequences of either movement, but rather the narratives that constitute them.

Whitehead and Perry (2020) define Christian Nationalism as "a cultural framework, a collection of myths, traditions, symbols, narratives, and value systems, that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life." Smith and Adler (2022) affirm that the "Christianity involved is of a particular type: racialized, identitarian, and exclusionary" (p.2). It is a totalitarian political ideology, different from any other religious revival, as it views America's triumphs and challenges as part of a cosmic war between God and the Devil (Goldberg, 2006); and has a close connection to the Old Testament, in the parallel between America and Biblical Israel, blood purity, or the justification of war (Delehanty et al., 2017).

Gorski and Perry (2022) add another layer to this movement by attributing it the label of "white", as it maintains a "desire to restore and privilege the myths, values, identity, and authority of a particular ethnocultural tribe" (p.14). Moreover, it rejects pluralism and supports national unity and international power. This last point could be attributed to broad traditionally conservative sectors, but what distinguishes it is its racist element: "A truly Christian nation, in their view, would celebrate and privilege the sacred history, liberty, and rightful rule of white conservatives, tolerating 'others' at best; enslaving, expelling, or exterminating them at worst" (Whitehead and Perry, 2022, p.14). WCN goes hand in hand with what Kaufmann (2018) conceptualizes as Ethno-traditionalist nationalism, which refers to ideological movements that seek to recover the racial and ethnocultural order of the historically dominant group.

Just like the Tea Party and Trump's MAGA program, WCN draws from this ethno-traditionalist sentiment, adding the religious component as the symbolic identity to be restored (Perry and Schleifer, 2023). The hierarchy created by WCN is twofold: first, a religious one, in which non-Christians are essentially not real Americans; and second, a racial one, with its roots in slavery and segregationist heritage that established that true Christians and Americans were white (Corbin, 2019). In essence, Christian nationalist discourse is based on a division between "us", the White Christian Americans, and the potential "them", imagined threats that undermine the interests of the nation.

This last feature is crucial to begin to draw some similarities between the two movements, primarily based on how both are articulated. The 'us' vs. 'them' division is prominent in the SCCN because, as has been observed in this study, its discourse is created around a perceived enemy. Thus, it delimites the boundaries between the in-group, being the nationalists, mostly white, male Catholics; and the out-group, being the radicalized Muslim migrant or people who present a threat to the Spanish-Christian identity, as is the case with the LGBTQ+ community. Perry and Whitehead (2020) point out how this ideology encourages the rejection and mistrust of citizens who do not meet the main characteristics of the dominant group, namely being native-born, white, and Christian.

Vox's example is paradigmatic, as the party advocates for a moral, cultural, and religious homogeneity of Spain, through what they call *Ethnic Hispanism*, referring to the view that Spanish identity goes beyond legal criteria, but is based on ethno-cultural notions (Fernández-Vázquez and Ibarra, 2022). Thus, excluding all those who do not fit into this tradition, citizens of Muslim and African descent, and extending a symbolic inclusion to citizens of Latin America, who share religion, language, and an imperial past with Spain. In 2015, Vox launched its political campaign in Covadonga, a mythical site of the *Reconquista*. According to Ballester (2021), the myth of Covadonga is not directed solely at Muslims but rather at all enemies of Spain. In a similar way to Kaufmann's *ethno-traditionalism*, their purpose is to mobilize a rhetoric of 'recovery' of past Spanish identity. One of the quotes in regional elections in Andalusia made this explicit: 'The Reconquista begins in Andalusian lands and will spread to the rest of Spain' (Vox, 2018).

Spain, however, is not an isolated example. The new far-right, which uses new digital media as a space to recruit followers, mobilizes a civilizationalist discourse across Europe, incorporating Christian religion as a core identity marker of European civilization, positioned in direct opposition to Islam (Brubaker, 2017). In countries such as Sweden, a link with Christianity and radical nationalism, also based on Christian identity, is being observed in opposition to the "other", in this case Muslim (Nilsson, 2020). Beyond Europe, in Brazil, former president Jair Bolsonaro has projected Christian identity as a defining feature of the good Brazilian, as opposed to the population of African or Indigenous descent who have been targeted implicitly and explicitly through racially and religiously motivated attacks (Barbosa and Casarões, 2022).

Christian Nationalism uses Christianity as a marker of identity based on "assumptions of nativism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and heteronormativity, along with divine sanction for authoritarian control and militarism" (Whitehead and Perry, 2020, p.10). Throughout this thesis, it has been observed how these characteristics permeate SCCN: Firstly, there is a representation of nativism, understood as "an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (the nation) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state." (Mudde, 2007. p 17). In the analysis, this nativism is reflected in the construction of a racialized enemy who can never truly belong to the group and who functions as an antagonistic figure against which national identity is shaped.

Regarding the heteronormativity and the maintenance of patriarchal structures, as shown in the previous section, it is observed that hegemonic masculinities are constructed in opposition to other marginalized and subordinate masculinities. The Spanish God warrior embodies a model of masculinity and militarism that acts as a bridge between historical myth and modern national identity. This militaristic character is a shared feature of both Spanish and American Christian nationalisms, which place strong emphasis on violence justified by divine sanction.

4.4.1. Localizing Christian Nationalism: The Spanish Case

It has previously been noted how the articulation of WCN and the SCCN is similar. However, each of these movements is influenced by a series of country-specific elements and narratives. This section disseminates how Christian Nationalism has been localized in Spain, focusing first on *National Catholicism*, as it is crucial for understanding the current discourse, and

then looking at the evolution of the *Reconquista* as a foundational myth in recent years. To understand how different cultural realities interact and transform as a result of their contact with others, it is necessary to briefly introduce the concept of *Glocalization*. Robertson (1997), at the *Globalization and Indigenous Culture* conference, defines it as "the simultaneity, the co-presence, of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies." This concept has been developed to illustrate the complexities of global-local dynamics (Robertson, 1995), and provides the context to recognize how Christian Nationalism adopts a series of characteristics particular to the Spanish cultural, historical, and political landscape.

During Francoism, Catholicism once again took center stage through the implementation of *National Catholicism*, a political regime characterized by the union of Church and State (Pérez-Agote, 2003). The ideology of National Catholicism draws from traditionalist authors such as Menéndez Pelayo, Ramiro de Maeztu, and García Morente, who sought to promote the imperial Catholicism of the 15th and 16th century, its history and myths, as foundational elements of national culture and a guiding light against growing secularism (Díaz-Salazar, 2009). This medieval ideology was later absorbed by Francoist National Catholicism, which saw its nationalist and Christian elements as an opportunity:

> "Francoist propaganda, in all the victory rituals employed by the victors of the Civil War, reflects the return of 'the imaginary of *La Reconquista* as a privileged mythical fantasy.' The constant symbolic evocation of those military exploits (Covadonga, the reconquest of Toledo, Las Navas de Tolosa), their sacred references (Santiago), and their protagonists (Pelayo, El Cid, Alfonso VI, Fernando III, the Catholic Monarchs), as well as the framing of the Civil War as a crusade or a 'second *Reconquista*,' exemplify this" (Fitz, 2009, p. 147).

The medieval imaginary in Francoism was not limited to glorifying the *Reconquista* alone but also included the Crusades, framing the 1936 conflict and military uprising as a crusade against Marxism and atheism (García San-Juan, 2021). They argued that Spain could only return to its divine greatness if the State and the Church were reunited (Díaz-Salazar, 2009). Marcelino de Olaechea, Bishop of Pamplona, referred to the Civil War as a conflict between civilization and barbarism, a crusade, in which the Church, "as she prays to God for peace and to save the blood of all His children, those who love her and fight to defend her and those who insult her and wish for her ruin, cannot but give everything she has to her crusaders" (Peñalba, 2021, p. 280). Thus,

the Francoist State, which viewed the Church and religion as one of its main identity symbols, identified with the medieval era by resurrecting elements of the Catholic Monarchs' monarchy, such as the eagle of Saint John, the yoke and arrows of the Falange (the regime's fascist party), and the discourse of the evangelization of the Americas (García San-Juan, 2017).

National Catholicism evolved and endured, adapting to new contexts and frameworks. Saloma (2009) explains that a new use of the *Reconquista* and medieval myths began to emerge in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This new interpretation is adopted by those who endorse the "clash of civilizations" theory and "portray current conflicts between the European-Western and the Islamic worlds as a mere continuation of the medieval conflict" (p. 198). After the 9/11 attacks and former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar's support for George W. Bush, the rhetoric of the *Reconquista* returned to the political sphere as an argumentative justification of Huntington's thesis (García Sanjuán, 2020). This narrative was further intensified by the Al-Qaeda bombing of Madrid's Atocha train station on March 11, 2004. After losing the 2004 elections, Aznar stated during a lecture at Georgetown University that "Spain's problem with Al-Qaeda" did not begin with the Iraq crisis, but rather "in the 8th century," when "Spain, having just been invaded by the Moors, refused to become just another part of the Islamic world" (Aznar, 2004).

The mobilization of heroes such as Pelayo is presented as a unique and present feature of modern-day Spain, which once held the vision of a millenarian nation, based on Catholicism, in contrast to the United States, whose recovery of founding myths dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries. In any case, it is worth noting that both place great importance on these founding myths. This study has observed that SCCN focuses on Spain's role as defenders of the European nation and, ultimately, of Christianity. Connecting with one of the ideas emanating from the medieval period, the Castilians presented themselves as "the people chosen by God to do little less than redeem mankind from its sins and spread the faith of Christ throughout the world" (Saloma, 2005, p. 391). I, therefore, identify the following patterns that lead me to define SCCN as a defensive movement: First, the symbolism of battles and military events is present throughout the analysis. Additionally, there are mentions of divine battles, such as Clavijo, involving the participation of Santiago Matamoros. Currently, Vox positions itself as a defender of Catholicism and of its importance in the Spanish national identity, which, according to this party, is being threatened by other cultures and ideologies (Ugarte and Grau, 2020).

If the SCCN is characterized for its use of the medieval past through la *Reconquista*, and this role of defenders of humanity, WCN, is based on a series of Christian stories and myths, together with the central importance of *American exceptionalism*. Broadly, this term refers to the supposed distinction of the United States from the rest of the world, as a result of unique rights derived from a peculiar economic, cultural, and political history (Koh, 2002). Madsen (1998) traces the origin of American exceptionalism back to the arrival of British Puritans in New England. This migratory movement brought with it the belief that the settlers' new land was the Promised Land, and that those who inhabited it were God's chosen people: "the colonists have identified themselves as a nation within Christ, as the visible sainthood redeemed by Christ, and as a spiritual nation they have been led to found a geographical nation in the New World." (Madsen, 1998, p.9)

Alternatively, Ceaser (2012) argues that the shaping and use of the term is not purely religious or merely a legacy of English Puritanism, but also carries important political influence, for example, in the conduct of foreign policy. It is important to highlight that Ceaser (2012) does not draw a direct connection between Christian Nationalism and American exceptionalism but rather explains how the latter has become a term of polarization between liberals and conservatives. McDaniel et al. (2022) define *American religious exceptionalism* as *"*an ideology that perceives the nation as divinely inspired, favored, and called upon to carry out a divine mission. It is a fusion of religious identity and national pride*"* (p. 24). What is particularly important here is to draw a distinction between WCN and ARE: while the former incorporates characteristics of the latter, such as foundational myths and deep religiosity, WCN is an exclusionary, racist, and supremacist movement (Wilcox, 2024).

The emphasis on exceptionalism is not at the heart of the SCCN ideology, despite echoes the rhetoric of the "chosen people" (Saloma, 2009); rather, there is an emphasis on providentialism, combined with the previously mentioned self-awareness of being defenders of Christianity and Christian civilization. Shortly, while for the WCN the United States is the promised land (New Israel); in Spain's catholic tradition, it exists the belief that God has a divine plan, which serves to justify the defense of territory, expansion and evangelization. The *Reconquista*, in this sense, is key to understanding this dynamic, as it has been considered throughout the centuries as a conflict inspired by God, 'a holy war, in which the finger of Providence could be clearly observed, which

was made visible through a war liturgy' (Peña 2010 p. 160). Providence is regarded as a shared element across different branches of Christianity, which usage has been, at times, indistinguishable among them. See, for example, the case of 17th-century Puritan providentialism, which forms the basis of contemporary WCN (Rowley, 2024).

The legitimization of historical events through a divine justification, based on God, was also crucial in Francoism for the support of the church in the civil war (Peña, 2010). The relationship between the divine mission of defending Christianity and providentialism is articulated through Menendez Pelayo, for whom 'Spain was a millenary nation providentially destined to defend the true faith, Roman Catholicism, which had reached world hegemony when it remained faithful to this mission and had declined when it deviated from it' (Álvarez and de la Fuente, 2017, p. 343). In his History of the Spanish Heterodox, Marcelino Menendez Pelayo (1882) refers to how 'Spain is the hammer of the heretics, the Light of Trent, the sword of Rome, the cradle of Saint Ignatius' (p.1019).

In summary, although WCN and SCCN are two movements with different historical and political trajectories, they are articulated similarly. On the one hand, WCN focuses on its Founding Myth and is rooted in American Exceptionalism, which is a biblically based vision of the country as the new Israel or Promised Land, with the Americans being the "chosen people". On the other hand, in the Spanish context, medieval narratives and nostalgia for past periods play a pivotal role. Moreover, Catholicism is at the center of SCCN, being part of the heritage of a centuries-old Catholic tradition, fundamental in the formation of Spanish identity (Villar, 2013). Finally, the current SCCN cannot be understood without the inheritance of Franco's National Christianity, which, despite its loss of weight, continues to carry weight in today's nostalgic sentiment. However, it is in discursive approaches that these movements converge, ranging from the construction of the 'us vs. them' dichotomy, to the ethno-traditionalism or nativism, the heteropatriarchal sentiment, and the perception of Christianity as an inseparable part of national identity. Ultimately, they both share the growing Huntington's "clash of civilizations" rhetoric, which does not originate within WCN itself but has been adopted by various religious nationalist groups (Haynes, 2017).

This thesis reveals a complex process: while SCCN emerges as a localized movement under the broader umbrella of Christian Nationalism, it is undergoing a transnationalization of its symbolism, specifically that of the *Reconquista*. 20.32% of the posts in the sample are in English, particularly from accounts defending European identity, Christianity, traditionalism, and accounts related to the manosphere. It is important to note that this adoption of medieval Spanish narratives by movements in other countries corresponds to internet users, not to the broader European political landscape. Although in the first section of this analytical block, I presented an example of European far-right political parties gathered at a rally in Madrid on February 8, 2024, this post is the only one in the entire sample that could suggest a possible adoption of this Spanish historical narrative. There is no academic literature confirming this phenomenon, which highlights the need for continued and extensive research on the subject. What does exist, however, is the mobilization of specific national myths in each country, as "historical tropes have been (re)articulated, (re)interpreted, banalized, or manipulated by far-right actors to render political legitimacy as the 'true heirs' and bearers of allegedly inalienable national historical traditions and values" (Couperus et al., 2023, p. 494)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The internet has become a space where religion and irreligion coexist, where billions of users express their faith and ideas. It emerges as a space not only for the practice and sharing of religious beliefs but also for the propagation of radical interpretations, which can contribute to the formation of violent and dangerous movements (Marwick et. al, 2022). This master's thesis is situated within that context: in a Europe where religion seems to be re-emerging in the public sphere and amidst the rise of Islamophobia, the far right strategically uses social media as a vehicle for easily spreading propaganda (Klein and Muis, 2019). This section presents the main findings of this thesis, its implications in relation to the field of study, its main limitations, as well as the future lines of research that arise from this work. All of this, with the underlying intention of addressing the research questions posed in the introduction.

First, I return to the main research question, which, to recapitulate, is 'how Christian Nationalist sentiment in Spain is manifested on social media (Twitter and Instagram), focusing on its main themes and elements'. Broadly defined, the Spanish Catholic Christian Nationalism is a movement that incorporates medieval myths linked to religion, mainly related to the *Reconquista*, along with a prominent role of Catholicism as an identity marker intrinsic to Spanish nationality. These stories from the past are mobilized around an 'other', an enemy of the nation, usually Muslims and racialized immigrants. Through social media, anonymous accounts make propagandistic and humorous posts, blending the defense of Christian identity with attacks on ethnic minorities, women, and queer identities, all under a rhetoric that promotes a hegemonic, heterosexual, white masculinity. This rhetoric is related to that used by other movements, such as the misogynist and anti-feminist *Manosphere*.

The Content Analysis reveals how *medieval narratives* are weaponized by a nationalist movement that, similarly to what Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) described with the invention of tradition, incorporates past myths into a continuous historical narrative. Particular emphasis is placed on the commemoration of battles from the *Reconquista* and the partial incorporation of Christianity as an active force in that remote past. From the battle of Covadonga and Navas de Tolosa, through historical figures such as Pelayo, the Catholic Monarchs or the Cid, and religious figures such as Santiago Matamoros, these elements are present throughout the whole analysis.

While it is clear that the sample does not only include political organizations, but a mixture of different user profiles (meme accounts, history pages, personal profiles, etc.), the nostalgic appeal to the past resonates in most of the posts.

Whether through historical narratives or by focusing on current concerns, the movement revolves around a *perceived enemy*. Primarily, this is Islam. The use of the *Reconquista* or the Crusade as rhetorical weapons against Islam intensified after 9/11 and with the publication of *The Clash of Civilizations,* which predicted that 21st century conflicts would derive from clashes between cultural and civilizational blocs (García Sanjuan, 2017). At the same time, other enemies are also identified, although to a smaller degree, such as the LGBTQ+ community, the left, or the Spanish government. This finding contrasts with other countries, where European far-right movements maintain a protective position towards gay rights, discursively represented as an element of European cultural identity that must be defended from the Islamic threat (Magni and Reynolds, 2023). Radical right parties in the Netherlands (PVV, LPF), the UK (UKIP), and Belgium (Vlaams Belang) follow this protective approach, whereas others in Spain (Vox), Italy (Lega), and Greece (Greek Solution) embrace a more oppositional stance. In the case of the Netherlands, Wilders projects traditional values based on the hegemony of heterosexuality, and thus combines the defense of gay rights, while rejecting trans rights and positioning itself against what it calls Woke Ideology (Linders et. al 2023).

In constructing these enemies, several *communicative strategies* were observed, notably humor as a weapon, the propagandistic use of history, and the dichotomy of "us versus them". It is in the use of humor where this analysis identifies one of its most significant findings: the integration of Manosphere visual and textual rhetoric into Christian nationalist posts. Shortly, there is a convergence between a misogynistic online environment, composed of different male communities with varied ideas but united in their rejection of feminism, and a Christian Nationalist movement based on a racialized, identitarian, and exclusivist Christianity. This manosphere, which has been linked to recent violent attacks and is increasingly receiving scholarly attention, manifests here through the visual symbolism of incel culture and hashtags such as #boysmemes, #selfdiscipline, or #wojak. Although this master's thesis does not delve deeply into the relationship between Christian nationalism and the manosphere, as it is not its central focus, it lays the groundwork for future investigations. The findings are significant enough to warrant policy

development or to be included in reports warning of growing radicalization. Specifically, they highlight how users entering these may be exposed to Islamophobic, Christian nationalist, and militaristic content that glorifies ancient battles.

Lastly, this master's thesis proposes a comparative framework that serves to contrast the Spanish and American Christian Nationalist movements. Within this framework, a myriad of similarities is shared between the two, mainly referring to the construction of the 'us' against "them", through the use of Christianity for nativist, heteronormative and racial purposes. The WCN is based on the premise that the United States was founded on Christian principles, as well as on the idea of American exceptionalism, which positions Americans as God's chosen people and their land as the new Israel. (Whitehead and Perry, 2020). Alternatively, the Spanish case incorporates the medieval conflict of the *Reconquista*, the conception of Spain as the defense of Christianity and European identity, and the legacy of Francoist National Catholicism, whose nationalist and religious narratives remain relevant throughout the analysis. Having contrasted both cases, one of the main conclusions of this thesis emerges: SCCN falls within the broad framework of contemporary Christian Nationalism, but at the same time presents a different face; in other words, it is localized through a set of narrative elements specific to the Spanish context. Accordingly, the conceptualization of the phenomenon as SCCN is justified, as it adopts strategies common to other forms of Christian nationalism, while incorporating local and historical elements in which Catholicism plays a central role.

This thesis does not come without its limitations. Firstly, the constantly changing nature of online trending topics may cause the findings to become quickly outdated (Asur et. al 2011), making it problematic to capture a static moment in time on an issue that is constantly evolving, both in terms of the and the content (Srikhanth et. al 2021). Moreover, as briefly noted in the methodology's limitations, the violent nature of some posts led to a reduction in the initial sample size from 120 to 116 units of analysis, as platform policies had either removed the user's account or restricted the post. The violent nature of these posts raises ethical concerns that fall on the researcher, as the manual analysis of the sample can be not only a lengthy process but also mentally challenging.

Although research in the digital world is of the utmost urgency, this study does not address, nor can it affirm, that SCCN has validity or a high reach outside of social media platforms, as these should not be taken as a reflection of reality. It would be relevant, however, to translate this study within social networks to the physical world, adopting new methodologies, and observing whether the narratives that have been observed have a tangible impact on day-to-day life, in politics or civil society. Returning to social media, I open the door to more in-depth research, with a larger dataset, and tools to overcome barriers such as the time-consuming nature of QCA. Among these tools, there is the implementation of AI models used for multimodal research, which are currently being used in risk prevention and security and have the potential to work with large amounts of audiovisual data (Gandhi et. al 2023).

This study contributes to both Religious Studies and Media Studies as it demonstrates the existence of a Christian Nationalist sentiment in the Spanish digital environment, which has received little academic attention. Additionally, it adds a new layer to the existing scholarship on the *Reconquista*, not only linking it to contemporary politics but also examining its narrative and visual articulation in the digital sphere. At the same time, although I have sought to avoid making direct claims about the correlation between SCCN and youth radicalization due to a lack of time and tools for establishing such connections, this study provides valuable insights for researchers studying online radicalization as it offers a critical description of a totalitarian, militarist and racist ideology.

Finally, I recommend more in-depth research on topics that have been addressed in this thesis. Among these are the role of religion in the imaginary of the manosphere, particularly the use of misogynist rhetoric by explicitly Christian accounts, with a focus on figures such as the Trad Wife, Jesus, and Yes Chad, or notions like the Red Pill Ideology. Attention should also be placed on how the radical right is using medieval history linked to religion to mobilize anti-immigration or anti-LGBTQ+ rights discourses. In this sense, it would be relevant to draw cross-country comparisons between Sweden, Brazil, the Netherlands, Italy, or Spain. Ultimately, this research intends to serve as a first step toward developing recommendations, policies, and platform regulations that help to provide educational tools to identify hate speeches that have a certain radicalizing potential.

6. Reference list

Álvarez. j., & De la Fuente, G. (2017). *El relato nacional: historia de la historia de España*. Taurus.

Anderson, B. (1990). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. In The new social theory reader(pp. 282-288). Routledge.

Arato, A., & Cohen, J. L. (2018). Civil society, populism, and religion. In Routledge handbook of global populism (pp. 98-112). Routledge.

Asur, S., Huberman, B. A., Szabo, G., & Wang, C. (2011). Trends in social media: Persistence and decay. In *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*(Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 434-437).

Ballester Rodríguez, M. (2021). Vox y el uso de la historia: el relato del pasado remoto de España como instrumento político

Barbosa Jr, R., & Casarões, G. (2022). Statecraft under God: Radical right populism meets Christian nationalism in Bolsonaro's Brazil. *Millennium*, *50*(3), 669-699

BBC News. (2018, April 25). *Elliot Rodger: How misogynist killer became "incel hero."* https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-43892189

Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. NursingPlus open, 2, 8-14.

Béraud, C., & Portier, P. (Eds.). (2017). Métamorphoses catholiques: Acteurs, enjeux et mobilisations depuis le mariage pour tous. Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme.

Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research.

Berger, P. L. (Ed.). (1999). The desecularization of the world: Resurgent religion and world politics. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Billig, M. (1995). Banal nationalism. Sage

Botti, A. (1992). Cielo y dinero. El nacionalcatolicismo en España (1881-1975) (pp. 7-182). Alianza Editorial.

Brasher, B. (2001). Give me that online religion. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brubaker, R. (2012). Religion and nationalism: Four approaches. Nations and nationalism, 18(1), 2-20.

Brubaker, R. (2017). Between nationalism and civilizationism: The European populist moment in comparative perspective. Ethnic and racial studies, 40(8), 1191-1226.

Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. The SAGE handbook of social media, 1(1), 233-253.

Burgess, J. E. (2007). Vernacular creativity and new media(Doctoral dissertation, Queensland University of Technology)

Callaham, W. (1989): Iglesia, poder y sociedad en España, 1750-1874, Madrid, Nerea.

Campbell, H. A., & Bellar, W. (2022). Digital religion. Taylor & Francis Group.

Campbell, H. A., & Evolvi, G. (2020). Contextualizing current digital religion research on

emerging technologies. Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 2(1), 5-17.
Casanova, J. (1994). Public religions in the modern world. University of Chicago press.
Ceaser, J. W. (2012). The origins and character of American exceptionalism. American political thought, 1(1), 3-28.
Cervi, L., & Divon, T. (2023). Playful activism: Memetic performances of Palestinian resistance in TikTok# Challenges. Social media+ society, 9(1), 20563051231157607.
Cervi, L., Tejedor, S., & Lladó, C. M. (2021). TikTok and the new language of political communication. *Cultura, lenguaje y representación*, *26*, 267-287.
Cho, J. Y., & Lee, E. H. (2014). Reducing confusion about grounded theory and qualitative content analysis: Similarities and differences. *Qualitative report*, *19*(32).
Cinelli, M., De Francisci Morales, G., Galeazzi, A., Quattrociocchi, W., & Starnini, M. (2021). The echo chamber effect on social media. Proceedings of the national academy of sciences, 118(9), e2023301118.
Cole, F. L. (1988). Content analysis: process and application. Clinical nurse specialist, 2(1), 53-57
Connell, R. W. (1995). Masculinities. Routledge.
Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & society*, *19*(6), 829-859.
Corbin, C. M. (2019). The Supreme Court's facilitation of white Christian nationalism. Ala. L. Rev., 71, 833.
Cornejo-Valle, M., & Ramme, J. (2022). "We don't want rainbow terror": Religious and far-right sexual politics in Poland and Spain. *Paradoxical right-wing sexual politics in Europe*, 25-60.
Couperus, S., Tortola, P. D., & Rensmann, L. (2023). Memory politics of the far right in Europe European Politics and Society, 24(4), 435-444.
Cuevas, A. M. O. (2020). La Reconquista: construcción de un mito identitario. Usos políticos y discursivos de un concepto anacrónico. Nuestra Historia: revista de Historia de la FIM, (9), 55-72.
Damas, M. S. L. (2001). Una iconografía de frontera: Santiago Matamoros en el privilegio de Pegalajar. *Sumuntán*, (15), 51-58.
Davis, F. (1979). Yearning for yesterday: A sociology of nostalgia. *New York*, *4*, 2-4.
Delehanty, J., Edgell, P., & Stewart, E. (2019). Christian America? Secularized evangelical discourse and the boundaries of national belonging. Social Forces, 97(3), 1283-1306.
Demetriou, D. Z. (2001). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique. *Theory and society*, *30*(3), 337-361.
Díaz-Salazar, R. (2009). El factor católico en la política española: del nacionalcatolicismo al laicismo. PPC Editorial.
Domínguez, J. P. (2021). ¿ Patriotismo o leyenda negra? La Reconquista en el siglo XIX. Historia contemporánea, (65), 7-40.
Donaldson, M. (1993). What is hegemonic masculinity?. Theory and society, 643-657.

Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992). Content analysis: method, applications, and issues. Health care for women international, 13(3), 313-321.
Ekman, M., & Widholm, A. (2017). Political communication in an age of visual connectivity: Exploring Instagram practices among Swedish politicians. Northern lights, 15(1), 15-32.
Elgenius, G., & Rydgren, J. (2022, December). Nationalism and the Politics of Nostalgia 1. In Sociological Forum (Vol. 37, pp. 1230-1243).
Elliott, A. B. (2017). Medievalism, politics and mass media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the twenty-first century (Vol. 10). Boydell & Brewer.
Emery, E. N., & Utz, R. J. (Eds.). (2014). *Medievalism: key critical terms* (Vol. 5). Boydell & Brewer.
Evolvi, G. (2023). "Europe is Christian, or It Is Not Europe": Post-Truth Politics and Religion in Matteo Salvini's Tweets. Europe in the Age of Post-Truth Politics, 129.
Fazeli, S., Sabetti, J., & Ferrari, M. (2023). Performing qualitative content analysis of video data in social sciences and medicine: the visual-verbal video analysis method. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *22*, 16094069231185452.
Fernández-Vázquez, G., & Ibarra, D. L. (2022). Hispanismo étnico e iberosfera. *Revista CIDOB d'afers internacionals*, (132), 49-72.
Fernández, A. A. (2017). El descanso del guerrero: la transformación de la masculinidad excombatiente franquista (1939-1965). *Historia y Política: Ideas, procesos y movimientos sociales*, (37), 177-208.
Fitz, F. (2009). La Reconquista: un estado de la cuestión.
Fitz, F. G. (2005). *Las navas de Tolosa* (p. 192). Ariel.
Fitz, F. G. (2014). La batalla de Las Navas de Tolosa: el impacto de un acontecimiento extraordinario. *Las Navas de Tolosa, 1212–2012*, 11-36.
Forlenza, R. (2018). 'Abendland in Christian hands': Religion and populism in contemporary European politics. In Populism and the Crisis of Democracy (pp. 133-149). Routledge.
Forman, J., & Damschroder, L. (2007). Qualitative content analysis. In Empirical methods for bioethics: A primer (pp. 39-62). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
FundéuRAE. (n.d.). *Árabe, moro, musulmán e islamista*. Fundéu. from https://www.fundeu.es/consulta/arabe-moro-musulman-e-islamista-759/
Friedland, R. (2001). Religious nationalism and the problem of collective representation. Annual Review of Sociology, 27(1), 125-152.
Fuente, V. de la. (1873). *Historia eclesiástica de España*. Compañía de Impresores y Libreros del Reino.
Gallardo, L. F. (2005). Santiago Matamoros en la historiografía hispanomedieval: origen y desarrollo de un mito nacional. *Medievalismo*, (15).
Gandhi, A., Adhvaryu, K., Poria, S., Cambria, E., & Hussain, A. (2023). Multimodal sentiment analysis: A systematic review of history, datasets, multimodal fusion methods, applications, challenges and future directions. *Information Fusion*, *91*, 424-444).
García Sanjuán, A. (2020). Weaponizing historical knowledge: The notion of Reconquista in

Spanish nationalism. Imago temporis: Medium Aevum: 14, 2020, 133-162
García-Sanjuán, A. (2018). Rejecting al-Andalus, exalting the Reconquista: historical memory in contemporary Spain. Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies, 10(1), 127-145..
Geary, P. J. (2003). The myth of nations: the medieval origins of Europe. Princeton University Press.
Gellner, E. (1983). Nations and nationalism. Paris, Payot.
Ging, D. (2019). Alphas, betas, and incels: Theorizing the masculinities of the manosphere. Men and masculinities, 22(4), 638-657.
Goldberg, M. (2006). Kingdom coming: The rise of Christian nationalism. WW Norton.
Goldenberg, D. M. (2009). The curse of Ham: race and slavery in early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Princeton University Press.
Gorski, P. S., & Perry, S. L. (2022). The flag and the cross: White Christian nationalism and the threat to American democracy. Oxford University Press.
Graneheim, U. H., & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative content analysis in nursing research: concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. Nurse education today, 24(2), 105-112.
Graneheim, U. H., Lindgren, B. M., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse education today*, *56*, 29-34.
Griera, M., Martínez-Ariño, J., & Clot-Garrell, A. (2021). Banal Catholicism, morality policies and the politics of belonging in Spain. Religions, 12(5), 293.
Hakokõngäs, E., Halmesvaara, O., & Sakki, I. (2020). Persuasion through bitter humor: Multimodal discourse analysis of rhetoric in internet memes of two far-right groups in Finland. Social media+ society, 6(2), 2056305120921575.
Han, X., & Yin, C. (2023). Mapping the manosphere. Categorization of reactionary masculinity discourses in digital environment. Feminist media studies, 23(5), 1923-1940.
Hase, V., Boczek, K., & Scharkow, M. (2023). Adapting to affordances and audiences? A cross-platform, multi-modal analysis of the platformization of news on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter. Digital Journalism, 11(8), 1499-1520.
Haynes, J. (2017). Donald Trump,"judeo-Christian values," and the "clash of civilizations". *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, *15*(3), 66-75.
Helland, C. (2005). Online religion as lived religion. Methodological issues in the study of religious participation on the internet. Online-Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet.
Hinojosa, R. (2010). Doing hegemony: Military, men, and constructing a hegemonic masculinity. The Journal of Men's Studies, 18(2), 179-194.
Hjelm, T. (2014). Social constructionisms: Approaches to the study of the human world. Bloomsbury Publishing
Hobsbawm, E. J. (1992). Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality. Cambridge university press.
Hobsbawm, E. J., & Ranger, T. O. (1983). *The Invention of tradition*.

https://app.kortext.com/borrow/215385
Howard, E. (2017). Freedom of speech versus freedom of religion? The case of Dutch politician Geert Wilders. *Human Rights Law Review*, *17*(2), 313-337.
Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. Qualitative health research, 15(9), 1277-1288.
Huntington, S. P. (1994). The clash of civilizations?. In The new social theory reader (pp. 305-313). Routledge.
Juergensmeyer, M. (2017). Terror in the mind of God: The global rise of religious violence (Vol. 13). Univ of California Press.
Kaufmann, E. (2019). Ethno-traditional nationalism and the challenge of immigration. Nations and Nationalism, 25(2), 435-448.
Keane, R. (2024). Elon Musk's Purchase of Twitter and its Effect on Hate Speech Impressions.
Klein, O., & Muis, J. (2019). Online discontent: Comparing Western European far-right groups on Facebook. *European societies*, *21*(4), 540-562.
Koh, H. H. (2002). On American Exceptionalism. Stan. L. Rev., 55, 1479.
Kozinets, R. V. (2020). Netnography today: A call to evolve, embrace, energize, and electrify. In Netnography unlimited (pp. 3-23). Routledge.
Krippendorff, K. (1980). Validity in content analysis. Computerstrategien für die Kommunikationsanalyse, 69, 45p.
Lacalle, M. R.. (2023). The otherless other: las pasiones misóginas de la Manosfera española. *Signa: Revista De La Asociación Española De Semiótica*, (32), 41-53.
Lafuente, M. (1850). Historia general de España: desde los tiempos más remotos hasta nuestros días (Vol. 23). Establecimiento tipográfico de Mellado.
Leidig, E. (2023). *The women of the far right: Social media influencers and online radicalization*. Columbia University Press.
Levinger, M., & Lytle, P. F. (2001). Myth and mobilisation: the triadic structure of nationalist rhetoric. *Nations and nationalism*, *7*(2), 175-194.
Levy, G., & Razin, R. (2019). Echo chambers and their effects on economic and political outcomes. Annual Review of Economics, 11(1), 303-328.
Light, B., Burgess, J., & Duguay, S. (2018). The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps. *New media & society*, *20*(3), 881-900.
Lilly, M. (2016). *'The World is Not a Safe Place for Men': The Representational Politics Of The Manosphere*(Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa).
Linders, N., Dudink, S., & Spierings, N. (2023). Masculinity and sexuality in populist radical right leadership. *Politics & Gender*, *19*(3), 653-674.
López-Fonseca, Ó. (2025, April 8). *La Guardia Civil lleva a los juzgados al grupo ultra Núcleo Nacional por un delito de odio*. *El País*. https://elpais.com
Luger, J. (2024). God's Viral Warriors: Christian Nationalism, Masculinity, and the Representation of Self. Journal of Bodies, Sexualities, and Masculinities, 5(1), 35-58.
Madsen, D. L. (1998). American exceptionalism. Univ. Press of Mississippi.

Magni, G., & Reynolds, A. (2023). Why europe's right embraces gay rights. *Journal of Democracy*, *34*(1), 50-64.

Mamié, R., Horta Ribeiro, M., & West, R. (2021, June). Are anti-feminist communities gateways to the far right? Evidence from Reddit and YouTube. In Proceedings of the 13th ACM Web Science Conference 2021 (pp. 139-147).

Marchetti, R., Righetti, N., Pagiotti, S., & Stanziano, A. (2022). Right-wing populism and political instrumentalization of religion: The Italian debate on Matteo Salvini's use of religious symbols on Facebook. Journal of Religion in Europe, 16(2), 144-171.

Marwick, A., Clancy, B., & Furl, K. (2022). Far-right online radicalization: A review of the literature. *The Bulletin of Technology & Public Life*.

Mattheis, A. A. (2019). Manifesto memes: The radical right's new dangerous visual rhetoric. CARR Insights. Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right. (2023). The otherless other: las pasiones misóginas de la Manosfera española. Signa: Revista De La Asociación Española De Semiótica, (32), 41-53.

Mayring, P. (2019, September). Qualitative content analysis: Demarcation, varieties, developments. In *Forum: Qualitative social research* (Vol. 20, No. 3). Freie Universität Berlin.

McDaniel, E. L., Nooruddin, I., & Shortle, A. F. (2022). The everyday crusade: Christian nationalism in American politics. Cambridge University Press.

McSwiney, J., Vaughan, M., Heft, A., & Hoffmann, M. (2021). Sharing the hate? Memes and transnationality in the far right's digital visual culture. *Information, Communication & Society*, *24*(16), 2502-2521.

Méndez Santos, M. D. C. (2020). La construcción de la identidad lingüística de Santiago Abascal en Twitter.

Menke, M., & Wulf, T. (2021). The dark side of inspirational pasts: An investigation of nostalgia in right-wing populist communication. Media and Communication, 9(2), 237-249.

Mihelj, S., & Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2021). Digital nationalism: Understanding the role of digital media in the rise of 'new'nationalism. *Nations and nationalism*, *27*(2), 331-346.

Moreno-Almeida, C., & Gerbaudo, P. (2021). Memes and the Moroccan far-right. The International Journal of Press/Politics, 26(4), 882-906.

Moreno, J. M. O. (2024). Historia y etnonacionalismo en el discurso electoral de Vox: Twitter como estudio de caso. Encuentros: Revista de Ciencias Humanas, Teoría Social y Pensamiento Crítico, (20), 280-294.

Morieson, N. (2021). Religion and the populist radical right: Secular Christianism and populism in Western Europe. Vernon Press.

Muro, D., & Quiroga, A. (2005). Spanish nationalism: Ethnic or civic?. Ethnicities, 5(1), 9-29.

Murthy, D. (2024). Sociology of twitter/x: Trends, challenges, and future research directions. Annual Review of Sociology, 50(1), 169-190.

Nilsson, P. E. (2020). "Shame on the church of Sweden": Radical nationalism and the

appropriation of Christianity in contemporary Sweden. *Critical Research on Religion*, *8*(2), 138-152.

Novak, C., Haselbacher, M., Mattes, A., & Limacher, K. (2022). Religious “bubbles” in a superdiverse digital landscape? Research with religious youth on Instagram. Religions, 13(3), 213.

Oleaque Moreno, J. M., Rossell, P., & Pellicer Lázaro, M. (2021). La" España" imaginada de Vox: el discurso radical en Twitter.

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research, 42, 533-544.

Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. penguin UK.

Pelayo, M. M. (1978). Historia de los heterodoxos españoles, vol. II. Madrid, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 687.

Peña Pérez, F. J. (2010). La sombra del Cid y de otros mitos medievales en el pensamiento franquista.

Peñalba-Sotorrío, M. (2021). From Civil Conflict to Crusad e: Mobilisation and National Identity in the Spanish Civil War. International Journal of Military History and Historiography, 41(2), 277-307

Pérez-Agote, A. (2003). Sociología histórica del nacional-catolicismo español. Historia contemporánea, (26).

Perry, S. L., & Schleifer, C. (2023). My country, white or wrong: Christian nationalism, race, and blind patriotism. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 46(7), 1249-1268.

Perry, S. L., & Schleifer, C. (2023). My country, white or wrong: Christian nationalism, race, and blind patriotism. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 46(7), 1249-1268.

Perry, S. L., Whitehead, A. L., & Grubbs, J. B. (2020). Culture wars and COVID-19 conduct: Christian nationalism, religiosity, and Americans’ behavior during the coronavirus pandemic. Journal for the scientific study of religion, 59(3), 405-416.

Pidal, R. M. (1982). *Los españoles en la historia* (Vol. 182). Espasa Calpe Mexicana, SA.

Pink, S. (2021). Digital futures anthropology. In Digital anthropology (pp. 307-324). Routledge.

Riquelme, P. F. (2022). El discurso reaccionario de la derecha española: de Donoso Cortés a Vox. Editorial Doble J.

Roose, J. M. (2020). The new demagogues: Religion, masculinity and the populist epoch. Routledge.

Rothermel, A. K. (2023). The role of evidence-based misogyny in antifeminist online communities of the ‘manosphere’. Big Data & Society, 10(1), 20539517221145671.

Roy, O. (2019) Is Europe Christian? London: Hurst.

Saloma, M. F. R. (2008). La Reconquista: génesis de un mito historiográfico. *Historia y grafía*, (30), 191-216.

Saloma, M. F. R. (2011). La Reconquista: una construcción historiográfica (siglos XVI-XIX). Marcial Pons Historia.

Saloma, R., & Martín, F. (2005). De la Restauración a la Reconquista: la construcción de un mito nacional (Una revisión historiográfica. Siglos XVI-XIX). *En la España medieval*, *28*, 379-414.

Sánchez-Albornoz, C. (1956). España, un enigma histórico.

Schreier, M. (2012). Qualitative content analysis in practice.

Schwörer, J., & Romero-Vidal, X. (2020). Radical right populism and religion: Mapping parties' religious communication in Western Europe. Religion, state & society, 48(1), 4-21.

Seidel, A. L. (2019). The founding myth: Why Christian nationalism is un-American. Union Square & Co.

Serafini, F., & Reid, S. F. (2023). Multimodal content analysis: expanding analytical approaches to content analysis. *Visual communication*, *22*(4), 623-649

Simonet, F. J. (1896). Cuadros históricos y descriptivos de Granada: coleccionados con motivo del cuarto centenario de su memorable reconquista. Sociedad Editorial de San Francisco de Sales.

Siuda, P. (2021). Mapping digital religion: Exploring the need for new typologies. *Religions*, *12*(6), 373.

Smith, J., & Adler Jr, G. J. (2022). What Isn't Christian nationalism? A call for conceptual and empirical splitting. Socius, 8, 23780231221124492.

Smith, L., & Campbell, G. (2017). 'Nostalgia for the future': memory, nostalgia and the politics of class. International Journal of Heritage Studies, 23(7), 612-627.

Sola, L. M. (2009). El catolicismo Identitario en la construcción de la Idea de Nación Española. Menéndez Pelayo y su «Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles».'. *Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones*, *14*, 101-116.

Spillman, L. (1997). Nation and commemoration: Creating national identities in the United States and Australia. Cambridge University Press.

Srikanth, M., Liu, A., Adams-Cohen, N., Cao, J., Alvarez, R. M., & Anandkumar, A. (2021). Dynamic social media monitoring for fast-evolving online discussions. In *Proceedings of the 27th ACM SIGKDD Conference on Knowledge Discovery & Data Mining* (pp. 3576-3584).

Sumiala, J., & Tikka, M. (2020). Digital media ethnographers on the move–An unexpected proposal. Journal of Digital Social Research, 2(1), 39-55.

Svatoňová, E. (2023). The Dark Side of Laughter: Humour as a Tool for Othering in the Memes of Czech Far-Right Organization Angry Mothers. The Power of Morality in Movements, 239.

Tebaldi, C., & Gaddini, K. (2024). Socialism sucks: campus conservatives, digital media, and the rebranding of Christian nationalism. Information, Communication & Society, 27(8), 1628-1649.

Togores, L. E. (2016). *Historia de la Legión española: La infantería legendaria. De Africa a*

Afganistán. La Esfera de los libros.
Trott, V. A. (2022). 'Gillette: The best a beta can get': Networking hegemonic masculinity in the digital sphere. *New Media & Society*, *24*(6), 1417-1434.
Tsuria, R., & Yadlin-Segal, A. (2021). Digital religion and global media: Flows, communities, and radicalizations. Handbook of global media ethics, 157-175.
Turner, B. S. (1991). Religion and social theory (2nd ed). Sage.
Ugarte, B. A., Grau, C. I., & Palacios, M. L. (2020). La influencia política de la derecha radical: Vox y los partidos navarros. *methaodos. revista de ciencias sociales*, *8*(2), 242-257.
Vila, R. C. (2015). Reescrituras cidianas: Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar y la condición posmoderna. *Cuadernos de Aleph*, (7), 31-52.
Villar, J. L. (2013). Nación y catolicismo en la España contemporánea. Revisitando una interrelación histórica. *Ayer*, 65-89.
Vincent, M. M. (2018, September). La masculinidad en la construcción del nacionalcatolicismo después de la Guerra Civil. In *Feminidades y Masculinidades en la Historiografía de Género*(pp. 127-160). Comare
Whitehead, A. L., & Perry, S. L. (2020). Taking America back for god: Christian nationalism in the United States. Oxford University Press
Whitford, D. M. (2017). The curse of Ham in the early modern era: the Bible and the justifications for slavery. Routledge
Wilcox, C. (2024). Cities on a Hill: American Religious Exceptionalism and White Christian Nationalism. Political Science Quarterly, qqae053
Winthrop, J. (2020). *A model of Christian charity* (p. 83). Passerino.
Wolkenstein, F. (2023). Christian Europe Redux. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 61(3), 636-652.
Zhang, L. (2025). The Digital Age of Religious Communication: The Shaping and Challenges of Religious Beliefs through Social Media. Studies on Religion and Philosophy, 1(1), 25-41.

7. Appendix

7.1. Codebook

Analytical Category	Code	Definition
Themes	Reconquista	Posts related to the Reconquista period, making reference to it either visually or textually.
	Franco and God	Posts that contain mentions of the Franco era, but that necessarily make a mention of God, Christianity and Catholicism.
	Movement Today	Posts that reference present-day situations and display elements of religious nationalist content. These posts range from protests and religious marches to the use of contemporary imagery. They may occasionally include references to the past, but the main focus of this type of post is not any historical event.
	Crusades	Posts that explicitly or implicitly mention the medieval conflict known as the Crusades. Sometimes the concept crusade is used to define the Reconquista, in this case the code is assigned only to those that make reference to the medieval European conflict outside Spain.
	Empire and God	Posts that recover stories and narratives defending the Spanish Empire and the importance of Catholicism in it. Occasionally, the empire is used as a contextual element in Reconquista-themed videos. In this case, it is not coded as "Empire and God", since it is not its main theme.
Type of Post	Art with text	Posts that incorporate works of art such as paintings, or sculptures along with texts that can be from informative to propagandistic.
	Epic Edits	They are a type of viral video on social networks that includes images on a given topic, with a frenetic, epic rhythm and music that is usually electronic or techno.
	Current Images	Posts that include current images, recorded in an amateur way and that are usually of demonstrations, rallies, religious marches. It is usually correlated with the code

		“MOVEMENT TODAY”.
	Humorous style posts	These are posts that feature memes, usually emanating from the manosphere's incel culture, or other types of memes. They can be identified by their Hashtags and humorous tone.
	Reused TV material	These posts are uncut fragments of scenes from TV movies and series. Normally the most common are those of the Spanish TV series Isabel, the Kingdom of Heaven, and other medieval works. They are distinguished from epic edits that use audiovisual material, because they are large and isolated fragments, that is to say, they are the only audiovisual resource.
	AI generated	Posts whose graphic material is generated by Artificial Intelligence. They are characterized by a narration with an artificially generated voice and images digitally created by an AI.
	Video Produced	These are videos that have a professional audiovisual production and are not fiction.
	Other	
Lenguage	English	Posts in English, although some Spanish words may be used.
	Spanish	Posts entirely in Spanish
	Catalan	Posts entirely in Catalan
Perceived Enemies	Muslim	Posts identifying Muslims as the “other”, as the enemy.
	Government	Posts that identify the government, or Pedro Sanchez as their enemy
	Women	Posts that ridicule women. Tend to be humorous
	LGTBQ+ community	Posts identifying the LGBT community as a threat to Christian civilization

	Enemies of Spain	Posts that identify some enemies of Spain, similar to how it was during Franco's regime. This code groups masonry, globalism and progressivism.
	Non identified enemy	Posts whose narrative does not revolve around an “other”, or at least not explicitly.
Communication Strategies	Humor as weapon	Posts that use the humor, and rhetoric of memes to mobilize a message
	Call for action	Strategy based on explicitly or implicitly suggesting a political action.
	“Us vs Them”	Creation of a distinction between the “in-group” and the “outgroup”, creating exclusivist and ethno-nationalist boundaries.
	Informative Frame	An approach aimed at explaining a given situation in a supposedly rigorous manner, but which, nevertheless, may have an important bias. In this case it can be combined with Propagandistic Historicism.
	Propagandistic Historicism	Explanation of history in a propagandistic manner, with language that is often grandiloquent and serves the purpose of extolling the prowess of the past.
	Battle Mobilization	The specific mention of medieval battles and glorification of battles goes in tandem with the previous code, but is more focused on the communicative intention of giving a warlike character to the movement.
	Religious Nationalism Propaganda	They are all those posts that make an explicit and implicit propaganda of the relationship between Christianity and the country in which it is located, in this case, Spain. References to Christ the King, references to Catholicism, references to God.
	Identity formation	Strategy that is based on making mentions of what Spanish identity means, they usually make an explicit mention of what makes a person Spanish or not.
Type of Profile	Defending Western-Spanish	Ranges from the promotion of hypermasculinity and the defense of Judeo-Christian values to an emphasis on aestheticization and militarism.

	Meme accounts	They include accounts whose main communicative strategy is humorous memes, often dark humor.
	Religious defense	They national-Christian groups, Catholic or Orthodox profiles, or religious figures such as priests
	Political militants	They include far-right organizations such as spanish Far right party, Vox or movements close to fascism like Núcleo Nacional or Movimiento Nacional. This group also includes figures such as Vox leader Santiago Abascal and Frente Obrero's leader Roberto Vaquero.
	Far-right activists	Profiles that defend reactionary and traditional ideas on a personal basis, through the publication of varied content such as fake news, propaganda, or memes.
	History-themed	Accounts whose communicative interest is only to explain the story, the names of the users are usually quite descriptive.
	Pro-Franco accounts	Accounts that publish Francoist content, the profile name is usually related to dictatorship.
	Pro-Israel accounts	Accounts that use the Reconquista to mobilize or justify the battle against the Muslims.
	Military content	Accounts that post military content.