



Fascisms 2.0: The Spanish Case

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Abstract

Since the beginning of the millennium and especially since the birth of social networks, a large number of studies have emerged that analyze the influence of these new spaces on social movements. These new forms of communication have generated new ways of making and understanding politics, expanding democracy, making it more participatory, enlarging freedom, making possible to break of censorship and the mass media monopoly of information and communication, etc. The Arab Spring, the Indignados 15M movements, the occupations in North America and Gezi Park, are just some examples of how social networks and global communications have opened new spaces of protest, denounce, experimentation, transformation, etc.

But there is also a negative side of the power of social networks and these new forms of communication. New fascisms have also understood the power of social networks. In the past the indoctrination took place face to face, in the street, in more or less hidden places, in football stadiums, or in certain bars, now the networks allow to spread out a message globally.

In addition to the channel, new fascisms have realized how important is the aesthetic aspect of the message. They omit any kind of symbolism that reminds fascism or Nazism, and they mask their racist discourse pointing out the importance of helping Spaniards in times of crisis. The nationalist exaltation is articulated into an identitarian discourse but no longer makes reference to the Franco regime, to Catholicism or traditional elements. In this way many people who support these groups consider neither them nor themselves to be extreme right, but Spaniards who help other Spaniards.

In this text, I am going to expose some of the main results of a netnography I have been doing for the last three years following the actions of some right-wing groups and parties on social networks. I will reflect how some events as the independence of Catalonia and the refugee crisis have increased the support of these groups and ideas. There will be two theses in this document: there are new forms of captation different from the past, and the most important, even if there is no important representation or success of the extreme right in the Spanish political arena, its ideas are disseminated in large spheres of Spanish society, including moderate parties. This is one of the most important differences in the Spanish context, there is not "liga norte", "Front national" or any other extreme right party, because these ideas are normalized and naturalized by society, and this is increasing.

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Introduction

In the first part of this text we analyze contemporary forms of fascism, different groups with different interests, practices and tactics. The objective is not to make an historical analysis, although sometimes the historical perspective is used, but to analyze the birth and development of new types of fascism, which coexist with collectives and traditional fascist parties. We also reflect on their political success at the European and international level, analyzing at the same time the Spanish uniqueness regarding the rise of fascist groups in the current era. The main hypothesis will be that fascism's failure at the electoral level in Spain is due to the fact that many of the ideas that are normally associated with this ideology have been naturalized and normalized by moderate parties and by voters who do not consider themselves to be fascists.

In the second part of the text will be analyzed the Fascism's role in social networks. The second hypothesis of the text is that the contemporary fascist collectives and parties, especially the so-called alter-activists of the far-right or third-millennium fascism, use progressive movements tactics, among them the combination of local, international and Internet actions. Thus, in the title we refer to them as fascism 2.0 because they are new forms of fascism that have many similarities with post-2011 social movements and because they have made the Internet and social networks one of their main fields of action.

Methodology

Netnography has been the main research technique used for this research. Also known as digital ethnography, virtual ethnography (Hine 2004) or cyber-anthropology (Vázquez 2008), netnography is an anthropological analysis technique of networks that is used for the study of communities, groups, interactions, conflicts, problems, etc., in Internet. The term netnography was used in 1997 by Kozinets for the first time, who later has been the leading representative in this methodology's development. Although this technique is often related to marketing research and marketing studies (Kozinets 2010), its extension has been very rapid to other fields of social research, such as social and cultural anthropology, psychology and sociology. The technique is similar to classical ethnography but adapted to the network's context and one of its main characteristics is participant and non-participant observation. Since the birth and development of social networks, it has become an essential tool to analyze these types of communities and their interactions (Hooley, Tristram; Marriott, John and Wellens 2012). In this way, it is also a methodology with many potentials for social movements' sociology, being social networks one of the most important areas of contemporary activism.

For this research, we have been monitoring weekly for more than three years the Facebook, Twitter and Youtube accounts of the main extreme right parties, collectives and associations, as well as some of the personal accounts of their leaders¹. Other messages of Spanish parties and politicians that have sometimes approached the extreme right have also been analyzed². The research also has compiled the comments of other users to the publications, however in this text only the first level of the discourse has been analyzed (Albanese *et al* 2014), discarding the interactions. The analysis has had a qualitative dimension, although some tools have been used to synthesize and to group messages as MessageSaver or Twlets, there has never been an attempt to cover all the groups, messages and fascist expressions.

In addition, secondary sources of quantitative and demoscopic survey sections have been used, mainly through the consultation and data processing of the different opinion barometers published monthly by the Spanish Sociological Research Center (Spanish acronym: CIS). Data

¹ Parties and collectives: Hogar Social (Madrid, Toledo, Granada, Zaragoza), Iberia Cruor, España 2000 (Toledo, Valencia, Exterior), Alianza Nacional, VOX, Alianza Nacional, Juventud identitaria and the Falanges (Nacional, JONS, Acción Juvenil Española); Leaders: Melisa Ruiz (Hogar Social) and Santiago Abascal (VOX).

² Partido Popular (Esperanza Aguirre, Javier García Albiol, Mariano Rajoy) and Ciudadanos (Albert Rivera).

from the Spanish National Institute of Statistics, as well as other international research institutions, has also been used.

New and Old Fascisms: The Fascism of the Third Millennium

Fascism, word that comes from the Italian, is a political ideology that emerged in Europe over 100 years ago. Like many other social sciences' concepts, the term fascism has quickly passed into popular language, to the field of "ethnoscience" (Lamo de Espinosa 2003, following Garfinkel 1967). That generates certain difficulties to define this ideology, as well as to demarcate which formations and political groups can be considered fascists. The term fascism is vague (Fernández and Rodríguez 2001, 11) and is confused with Nazism, National Socialism, ultranationalism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism and even with supremacism, racism, anti-Semitism, etc. It is also very unusual that nowadays a political party or a person openly proclaims themselves to be fascist³ (Ignazi 1994). However, this vagueness allows analyzing a large number of groups, people and political attitudes that remains fascist, even if they are not defined as fascist. There are many authors who have defined and pointed out the fundamental characteristics of fascism as Payne (2005), Gottfried (2016) or Eco (2018). In this text we will consider fascists to social and political groups:

- with an openly ultranationalistic character, based on the nation's exaltation, its symbols and the defense of the nationals' primacy. Also, a strong defense of the central role of the State. In the Spanish case, the suppression of autonomies and the regional differences as language or any other identity that weakens the Spanish identity;
- who strongly reject immigration, multiculturalism (mainly Muslims) and diversity in general (anti-feminist, anti-LGTB, etc.);
- who have a vision and a pessimistic discourse of the present;
- in which the leader plays a central role.

These groups are very varied depending on the country, or the region. For example, there are groups that have a protectionist attitude in economic policy close to autarchy, but others that define themselves as ultra-liberal; some that are anti-European and others that support European identity and the Union as a way of fighting against Muslims. Each one has its own affiliations and phobias, objectives, interests, enemies and sympathizers, but all could be included within the extreme right.

In more than 100 years of history, fascism has evolved ideologically, formally and programmatically, adapting to different scenarios, both momentary and geographical. The formations that survived WWII are unusual, so most of them are political parties that were emerging in Europe since the 70s in the wake of the *Nouvelle Droite* (Rodríguez Jiménez 2006, Ignazi 1992), like the Front National, Northern League, etc. (Gallego 2007). In the last decade new extreme right formations have emerged and others have been redesigned with important changes, in their forms, appearances, discourses, programs and tactics; they are the so-called "third-millennium fascisms" (Lazaridis, Campani and Benveniste 2016).

New Forms, New Tactics

The first sign of identity that stands out from these new groups is that they refuse to be defined as far-right groups. Most have also abandoned the aesthetics and the characteristic symbology of radical right-wing groups. In the 90s, the skin-head aesthetics and the use of Nazi flags or

³ Obviously, there are exceptions. In Italy the term fascist does not have such a negative symbolic connotation (Di Nunzio y Toscano 2011) such as, for example in Spain.

symbology was common among young fascist, as well as the Francoist flag in Spain's case. Nowadays any reference to that past is avoided.

The refusal to be defined as right-wing groups is already a majority in the fascist collectives, but there are a number of collectives that have gone further, experimenting and delving into the so-called alter-activism. They use tactics and speeches of leftist movements creating a really new and "original" type of fascism. The most characteristic example in Spain is Hogar Social (Social Home), a collective that emerged around 2014 and appears regularly in the media since 2016. They are defined as a Spanish organization dedicated to social aid for the most disadvantaged and at-risk Spaniards. Among their most highlighted actions are the distribution of food and clothing to Spaniards, the occupation of buildings for cultural activities and for the relocation of Spanish families without housing and demonstrations in favor of Spaniards' rights. The collective is inspired by Casa Pound Italia, born in Rome in 2003 and widely analyzed by Italian researchers as Albanese et al (2014), Di Nunzio y Toscano (2011) or Bartolini (2008), who define it as a new fascism *à la carte*. They take fascism's ugliest characteristics and hides them, they avoid any symbolism that reminds us of Nazism or fascism, and they focus on cultural and social actions as a vehicle to spread their political message.

This would be another novelty of this new far-right; direct social action as the movement's key reference. This is, according to them, the real policy, what really matters to the people. On Hogar Social Facebook page 90% of the publications are photographs related to the distribution of food or the "social services" that they provide: accommodation for homeless families, playroom and nursery, library, gym, even informative talks on the Spanish Floor Clause, plus of a whole series of cultural activities such as debates, exhibitions and screenings. There is a clear intention to articulate an apparently left-wing social discourse; in fact, they are defined as socialist, anti-capitalist, anti-globalization and anti-establishment, which is why this ideology has also been defined as left-wing fascism. In the words of Melisa, founder and leader of Hogar Social:

"The right is liberal, we are not, we are socialists (...) Gramsci's contributions seem fundamental to me. I strongly agree that in order to conquer the State, we must conquer the culture and tools that surround the State. We have to politicize culture, music, poetry... It is fundamental... and with regards to that the leftists have a great advantage" (Torrús 2017b).

They combine this discourse with elements of a cultural nature (art, music, photography, dramatizations etc.) and with tactics and the actions characteristics of progressive social movements: the occupation of buildings (squat movement and anti-globalization movement), something similar to assemblies (15M), performances to avoid evictions (Stop Evictions, Spanish: Stop Desahucios), hanging giant banners for different demands (environmental actions), including an attempt to demonstrate in front of congress (Surround the Congress, Spanish: Rodea el Congreso), etc.

The Spanish Specificity

Although fascism's political growth is a widespread event at the European and international level, and despite the fact that these alter-fascisms are developing intensely in Spain, the Spanish case presents certain exceptionalities with respect to other contexts. The first thing that draws attention is that the presence of far-right parties in representative politics is minimal or even non-existent in the national parliament. According to European Parliament data, right-wing political parties have grown in all countries in a sustained manner throughout the eurozone over the last decade. In most countries, it represents at least 10% of the electorate, in some up to 40%. However, in Spain, according to the ideological self-identification data from the CIS in October of 2018, it represents only 2% of the electorate. There are various works from different disciplines that have analyzed the reasons that explain the limited electoral success of the right-wing parties in Spain (Alonso and Rovira 2015, Suárez and Van de Brock 2016, González-Enríquez 2017). Without going into a detailed description, we can point out at least five:

1. During the first years of the Transition⁴, the extreme right sees military action, a *coup d'état*, as the only way to achieve power. By not accepting democracy, their support is minimal.
2. Neither the neofrancoists nor the neofascists contributed any new aspect to the ideology of national-Catholicism or to the Spanish fascism of the 30's, as the new European right had done. They did not achieve the consolidation of a true political project or a program that attracted a wider electorate apart from the older people who were nostalgic of Franco's regime or young people, mainly males, who were attracted by military aesthetics and nationalist rhetoric.
3. The violence of many of these groups, with beatings and murders of commies, homosexuals and drug addicts, mainly in the 80's and 90's with the emergence and development of the skinheads, made them have very little social support and little capacity to form a stable political party.
4. The majority of far-right voters have historically opted for the Partido Popular (Popular Party) (Ignazi 1994), all attempts to form a party akin to the image of French Lepeinism during the 90's failed. It is not until 2004, at the municipal level, when parties such as España 2000 (Spain 2000) or Plataforma Per Catalunya (Platform for Catalonia) have had some success, with a xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-immigration discourse.
5. Many of the ideas normally associated with the extreme right, such as the defense of national unity or the primacy of Spaniards' rights over that of immigrants, are being naturalized and normalized by Spanish society, being also supported by more moderate parties, such as the Partido Popular or the Ciudadanos (Citizens Party).

This last point is the most controversial of the text and one of its most central arguments. Apparently, as one of the latest studies carried out by the Elcano Institute points out (González-Enríquez 2017), despite the economic crisis, endemic unemployment and international migrations, Spanish citizens continue to consider themselves as center-wing voters. Therefore, political parties also try to move and raise their discourses around this ideological center, and anti-immigration discourse, although with exceptions, has not generated as intense debate as in other countries around us. According to the data in the report, only 4% of respondents are "against immigration". There are other surveys that multiply this number by up to 10⁵, but also other data provided by the report itself states that 74% believe that the number of immigrants in Spain is too high, 41% would vote for parties with anti-immigration policies and 77% consider that Spaniards should have priority over immigrants in the labor market. Without going into more statistical data, the hypothesis that we establish is that in the same way that most fascist parties do not define themselves as fascists, racists, supremacists, etc., the majority of citizens who support these types of ideas or measures, do not consider themselves to be racist, fascist, ultranationalist or supremacist. Many of the messages, affirmations and proposals from Spanish right wing and the far-right wing leaders, both in traditional media and on social networks, are similar in their content to that of politicians of the European far-right, but they are assimilated, by a relatively large number of Spaniards, through messages of "common sense" and which are in no case from the extreme-right. Therefore, although only 2% of the population is defined as ultra-right-wing, there is a larger percentage that supports fascist ideologies and proposals, even if they do not define themselves as fascists and although they do not consider these measures to be fascist. The Syrian refugee and the Catalonia independence crises have been two of the

⁴ Transition (*Transición* in Spanish) is the historical period when Spain pass from a dictatorship to a democracy. This Spanish transition to democracy started on 20 November 1975 with the death of the dictator Franco, but historians disagree on the exact date when was completed (1977-1982).

⁵ SigmaDos for El Mundo (15/07/2018), available at:

<http://www.elmundo.es/espana/2018/07/15/5b49f24922601d43678b4578.html>

central events in the amplification of this process of ideological normalization of fascism, with, for example, the acceptance of openly xenophobic, anti-immigration or anti-Muslim discourses, in which the nationals' primacy is defended; or the defense of Spain's unity, patriotic symbols' exaltation, the legitimization of violence by the State (violent repression of demonstrations, acceptance of life imprisonment); or the limitation of freedom of expression and the acceptance of censorship.

In short, these ideas have been normalized and assimilated; there is an intention on the part of right-wing politicians to do so, and there are more moderate parties and politicians who, being aware of this, have used some of these speeches for electoral purposes. The groups of fascist alter-activism have been especially creative and active in the formulation of these new discourses, turning the Internet and social networks into a fundamental means for which this normalization of fascism is produced and reproduced⁶.

Fascism's New Spaces

If we said that contemporary models of fascism have imitated many of the tactics of progressive social movements, one of the most analyzed, is the use of digital media as one of the main tools for the dissemination and normalization of their messages and their ideology.

In Spain, the first studies on new forms of activism emerged in the digital field after the "No to War" demonstrations, against Spain's participation in the Iraq War. Researchers such as Benjamín Tejerina (2005) or María Luz Morán (2005) analyzed how instant messaging through mobile phones served as a vehicle to call mobilizations spontaneously and to open up new spaces and ways in which policy-making were carried out. This was truly remarkable after the Islamist attacks in Atocha on March 11, 2004. Three days before the general elections the Partido Popular government claimed that they had been perpetrated by ETA terrorists, while at the international level it was already for taken for granted that they had been Islamist terrorists. The dissemination through email and SMS of international news in which ETA's authorship was discarded was the flame that ignited a whole series of demonstrations that granted the PSOE a political turnaround, when the surveys had taken the PP for granted as the winner by a large margin. What Castells would define as the "mass self-communication" (2008) was developing. The activists began to use new channels to organize and to hold demonstrations, to disseminate, share and produce news, opinions and information. They started to use new means of

⁶ Based on the ideas above, we could make a brief classification of the fascist collectives in Spain, which does not purport to be exhaustive but clarifying and operative:

- Far-right neonazi and skin-head groups. Some of these groups have formed political parties such as National Alliance and have no problems in defining themselves as fascists or neo-Nazis. They have no problems in using violence and they are against democracy.
- Classic parties, such as the Spanish Falange or Falange de las JONS or those that emerged during the transition period as the Spanish Catholic Movement with an openly Francoist ideology, which speak of a glorious past that must be valued, remembered and even reissued.
- New Far-Right Political Parties. They appear since the end of the 90s and especially during the year 2000, little by little they are separating themselves from Francoism, until they stop using any symbolism that refers to it. They consider Francoism a part of Spanish history that must be remembered, but without the need to exalt it. They do not define themselves as extreme right, but they combine all the characteristics of the European fascist parties. There are several parties like Plataforma per Catalunya or España 2000, but the most relevant and that could change the Spanish specificity is VOX born in 2013.
- New social movements of the far-right, the so-called alter-right or the alter-activism of the extreme right. Nor do they define themselves as extreme right: they reject the use of Nazi, fascist and Francoist symbols. Among these groups Hogar Social stands out; very similar to CasaPound in Italy and Golden Dawn in Greece, but without being constituted as political parties.
- Political parties such as the Partido Popular, which historically has taken the right-wing vote, and Ciudadanos, which although could not be considered extreme right, have among their constituents people who define themselves as extreme right (13.6% in the Popular Party and 6.1% in Ciudadanos) and are considered by some voters as far right parties (20% in the case of Ciudadanos, 40% in the PP's case) (CIS, July 2015).

communication different from the traditional ones, avoiding the official media, controlled by the political elites, not only reaching the activists, but also reaching an ampler scope of the population who were not necessarily mobilized. The prosumers emerged (Isla-Carmona 2008), new spaces for politics and information were opened, and the Internet became a fundamental tool for the transformation of social movements, as predicted by Castells.

The Techno-Political

With social networks' arrival and globalization, this activism transformation will have its peak with the emergence of the so-called post-2011 movements, making the digital space one of the fundamental areas for new policy. The Arab Spring is probably the first major mobilization that used social networks, mainly Facebook and Twitter, to organize itself, to organize and disseminate spontaneous mobilizations, to inform on the areas where the police or the army were in charge, but also to globalize the movement. Although the international media had reported other mobilizations at the global level, such as the anti-globalization movements, this time it was the actors themselves, the activists and demonstrators themselves, who produced the information. It was reproduced by other activists and supporters in other parts of the world, causing other protests and demonstrations.

At a national level, the 15M or "indignados" movement is also paradigmatic in terms of the use of these new communication channels and of these new spaces in which social movements make politics. 15M was the movement of the squares, with assemblies, camps, and demonstrations, but it was also the movement of the networks. Twitter, Facebook, blogs, streaming reproductions and all a plurality of digital media made the movement be known around the world. The social actors who were present who collectively consumed, produced and reproduced information; spreading it to demonstrations and mobilizations in other parts of Spain and around the world, such as the *Occupy movements*, Gezi Park, even the Nuit Debout. In addition, a new kind of 100% digital activism was generated, that is, people who did not go to the squares, who did not participate in the demonstrations, but who supported the movement through the networks, being also consumers, producers and reproducers of information.

The general feeling about the new media, especially after the first years of post-2011, was very positive; it was cyber-optimistic. Internet, social networks, new forms and new spaces in which politics are made, were the new mobilizations' main drivers (Ghomin 2012). They have also come to make people's vindications stronger, multiplying actions and means of protest, extending the horizontal, deliberative and participatory practices of the squares to the digital domain and to the new political parties (Romanos and Sábada 2015), to subvert domination practices and to amplify democracy (Haro and Sampedro 2011, Taibo 2011, Gil 2014).

Social networks and more specifically the different devices and digital spaces have enabled new tools and meanings, but two great nuances would have to be made. The first is that after a while and once the initial euphoria has settled down, the new media's influence on the generation, diffusion, spread and "contagion" of social movements has been relativized. This highlights the importance of personal contact between individuals (Romanos 2016) and the primacy of the traditional media as a primary source of information for many activists or even the only information channel for a majority of the population (Pleyers and Álvarez-Benavides 2018). This is also one of the main theses of the techno-political: *from the perspective of the network system, technopolitics can be redescribed as connected crowds' capacity, of brains and connected bodies in a network, to create and automate collective action. Technopolitics can encompass cyber-activism while collective action is limited to the digital world, however, in a full sense, techno-politics is a collective capacity to use the network to invent means of action that can be given or split in the network but that does not end with it* (Toret, 2013). Secondly, because in addition to serving for progressive purposes, to promote "good" activism, they are also used systematically for purposes contrary to democracy, to spread negative, reactive and reactionary ideas, to captivate and activate individuals towards extremist positions, confirming the technopolitical and Castells' thesis referred above even in the worse sense. The extreme right has landed strongly on the Internet and especially on social networks (Bernabé 2017, Blackburn

2017, Fuchs 2017). They are very aware of the importance of networks, as the leader of Iberia Cruor Jaéén also points out:

“The message we launched was there before, but now everyone has a phone in hand with access to the internet. We have grown a lot, within our limitations” (Torrús 2017a).

The Extreme Right in Social Networks

The first common element of all the extreme right groups is the exaltation of the “Spanish-ness”. This exaltation currently has two major fields of action. The first is against the fragmentation of Spain, mainly, due to the process of Catalonia’s independence initiated in 2017. All groups of the extreme right have campaigned tremendously against the “Spain’s rupture”, flooding the networks with Spanish flags, calling for demonstrations in different Spanish cities and clamming for the imprisonment of pro-independence Catalan politicians and for the illegalization of independence parties. They call the Spanish people to fight in the defense of Spain and they justify and encourage police violence during the independence demonstrations in Catalonia. But beyond the position of the most recognizable right-wing groups, this nationalism at all costs, against any negotiation or dialogue, which even advocates military intervention, the use of violence and the suppression of autonomy in Catalonia, it has become normalized in the speeches of politicians far, apparently, from fascist ideology. Pablo Casado, leader of Partido Popular, is quite active on Twitter, where he has supported several of these theses, such as banning of independence parties (9/29/18), imprisoning the pro-independence politicians with sentences of up to 25 years for rebellion (07/26/2018) or the suspension of the government in Catalonia (Twitter 08/30/18). He has even suggested in a public appearance on 10/10/2017 that if Puigdemont, president-elect of Catalonia and independence leader, continued with the intention of holding a referendum, he could end up in the same way as Companys, who was president of Catalonia and was executed by firearm in 1940 during Franco’s dictatorship. Albert Rivera, leader of Ciudadanos, a party born in Catalonia, has also defended Spain’s unity with vehemence and has been tremendously belligerent on social networks, seconding the outlawing of the independence parties (Twitter, 05/05/18), celebrating the imprisonment of the pro-independence politicians (Twitter, 05/05/18) and advocating for police intervention and the suspension of Catalonia’s government (03/10/2017). As we maintained, what is relevant is that this discourse has permeated the citizenship, so that up to 50% of people living outside of Catalonia supported the use of police violence to avoid the referendum in Catalonia on October 1, 2017, compared to 39.7% that were against its use⁷.

The second way in which “the Spanish-ness” is exalted is through the mythification of the past and Spanish identity, recovering characters and historical moments that present a glorious past that has been lost. Hogar Social resorts to Don Quixote several times and phrases from the book of Cervantes in their Twitter entries such as “combat the unbeatable enemy” (10/28/2016), or “let the dogs bark, we advance” (18/04/18), which they also include on shirts that they sell in their online store. The use of Unamuno’s phrase “Truth comes first before Peace” is also recurrent (07/30/17). This recovery of “the Spanish-ness” is usually articulated in opposition to what is foreign and, specifically, to Muslims. Although all the far-right parties have many messages in this regard, España2000 is especially recurrent. They have used images on Facebook of King Jaime I (10/09/18), Santiago Matamoros⁸ (07/25/18), the Tercios Españoles (12/08/2017) and annually commemorates the Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (07/16/2017), by which the “Reconquista” ended. Many politicians from the Popular Party have published similar messages. To give two examples, the former culture minister and president of the community of Madrid, Esperanza Aguirre, on 01/02/17 said on Twitter that “Today makes 525 years since the retaking of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs. It is a Glorious Day for Spaniards. With Islam we

⁷ SocioMétrica for El Español. Available at https://www.elespanol.com/espana/20171005/251975622_0.html

⁸ Matamoros means literally “who kill Moors”.

would not have freedom” (accompanied by a Spanish flag and an image of the Catholic Monarchs). Or the PP leader in Catalonia, who on 09/19/2015 stated on his Facebook page: “I am very aware that the ‘good guys’ will throw me fierce criticism, but I affirm without any kind of complex that one of the main problems that Europe and the West have is multiculturalism. A multicultural society is a guarantee of ghettos, maladjustment and conflicts... whoever comes to our country can maintain their customs of origin, as long as they are compatible with the values and laws that we have in the West. And to those who disagree... go home”. He also affirmed, on 08/29/17 in an interview on a national television network: “Islam is the only religion in the world that kills in the name of God (...) when a gentleman wants to come to Catalonia, he will have to show that he is perfectly adapted”. The attacks in France, Belgium and Barcelona, and the refugee crisis, have multiplied anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messages. All the extreme right groups are openly anti-Muslim, whom they blame for putting European identity at risk (the perversion of multiculturalism), as well as being terrorists. Many of the images are explicit, showing attack victims, lapidations, beheadings, etc. Regarding the refugees there are certain groups like VOX and even Hogar Social that try to articulate a more ambiguous, apparently rational message, trying not to blame the refugees. For example, Santiago Abascal, leader of VOX, tweeted “20 proposals for the victory in the Total War against Islamic fundamentalism, and the salvation of the West” with the hastag #Covadonga⁹ on (11/19/15). These measures include the “life imprisonment for the terrorists *who are imprisoned alive*”¹⁰, the “removal of nationality for anyone who by any means shows their support for the Jihadism”, or military interventions, closure of mosques, abandonment of the multicultural model, reconquest our identity, etc. But at the same time, he called for “solidarity with the victims of attacks and with the real refugees”, as well as a “drastic change in refugee policy prioritizing Christian refugees, Yazadis and other persecuted minorities.” That is, there is an attempt to pose it in a certain sense as a political issue, obviously cultural, but not directly associated with supremacist or racist ideas. Something similar happens with Hogar Social, which aims to be a reference within the Spanish Identitarian movement and, therefore, supports the thesis of ethnopluralism (Sebastián 2016). On several occasions they refer to NGOs as human traffickers and, in a tweet, they stated: “thousands of people risk their lives while the mafias and NGOs profit. Spanish workers suffer immigration's effect. Who benefits from this situation?”, accompanied by an image and news of the rescue of 243 people, including ten children, in the waters of Almería.

Certainly, the use of social networks and the communication strategy of Hogar Social is especially intense, creative and thoughtful. In addition to a measured discourse, they increasingly use cultural elements as a vehicle to spread their ideology, using tactics similar to progressive social movements, such as 15M. They filled one of the main streets of Madrid with tombstones with each of the social rights that they considered were being lost (Facebook: 07/26/17). In their fight against Islam they simulated beheadings at Puerta del Sol (Twitter and Facebook: 07/22/16) and campaigned against Starbucks (Twitter 02/08/2017), covering all the logos of its cafeterias in Madrid with stickers with the image of a veiled woman, bearing the words “Star Burka”. The reason was that Starbucks had announced that it was going to hire 10,000 refugees while, supposedly, it did not hire Spaniards. To prevent the eviction of one of their last venues they dressed like the characters in the Netflix series “Money Heist” (Spanish title: *La casa de papel*), the most watched juvenile series in Spanish history, using the V for Vendetta masks and a rose in the hand, that is to say, elements that young people recognize. They claimed that in that place 20 families with no resources were housed, there was a food bank, a playroom, etc., and they resisted in their struggle to defend Spaniards with needs, such as the characters in the series who stole from the rich without spilling blood. All these actions are recorded, some are broadcast live and broadcast through all the channels and social networks that they have, also reaching traditional media. There is a clear intention to connect with the young public, with a collage ideology, *à la carte*, and with an aesthetic that, besides being recognizable, generates sympathy and attraction.

⁹ Christian Virgin who supposedly appeared to Don Pelayo, a mystified character and initiator of the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula against the Muslims.

¹⁰ The italics are added by the author of this article.

The most conventional far-right parties have the support of a middle-aged or old-aged electorate. For example, the average VOX voter is a 55-year-old male, and those who are self-seeking on the extreme right and who vote for the Partido Popular are mostly over 65. However, the far-right alter-activist collectives have their support in much younger people and their leaders are mostly men under 30 years of age. Social networks are one of its major fields of action. Although Hogar Social is a minority collective, with just 120 active members in Madrid, they have more than 90,000 followers on Facebook, while Vox, the most important party from the extreme right, has more than 20,500 members and a voting perspective that varies according to surveys of between 300,000 and 600,000 voters, and has around 200,000 followers. Internet is a space inhabited and navigated especially by young people, so the intensive use of social networks is a rationally logical strategy from the viewpoint of maximizing the scope of its political message. The systematic use of social networks is justified by its non-mediated nature, by the elimination of intermediaries and their apparent independence (Romanos 2016). If in the past the indoctrination took place in person, on the street, in more or less hidden places, in football stadiums or in certain bars, now the networks allow a mass audience and a capacity for planetary diffusion.

From virtual to local, from local to international

But like 15M, new fascism is a movement of social networks but also of the squares. Hogar Social has managed to combine this double dimension of activism in networks and activism in the street in a fairly successful way. They take great care of their activities in Madrid's different neighborhoods, with food distribution that they advertise before and after. They also visit other cities and have founded different delegations. They are interested in the specific social problems of each region and promote their actions while disseminating their ideas. They call for demonstrations for Spanish unity and against corruption, but they also manifest themselves with pensioners against cutting their pensions, with those affected by different economic scandals or with taxi drivers against Uber. They have employment exchanges, counseling for those affected by mortgage problems, support classes to prepare for college entrance exams, daycare, etc. They also organize recreational activities, such as parties for children, concerts, gastronomic festivals such as the Oktoberfest (Hogar Social Toledo, 10/02/2017) or the Fiesta del Jamón (Hogar Social Toledo 02/07/18), and outdoor activities such as marches, cultural excursions, raids to clean the fields or to reforest burned areas. They organize exhibitions, talks about current issues, and even collaborate with animalistic organizations. Many of these young people, as other researchers have described when they analyzed CasaPound (Toscano y Di Nunzio 2011), without being of a fascist ideology go to their concerts, talks, food distribution, parties and little by little they become part of the collective.

Also, the most conventional groups and far-right parties do an intense job on the streets, in the neighborhoods, in each city, with informative tables, play activities, etc. VOX, in just one year has gone from 3000-3500 affiliates to 20,500, opening branches in the main Spanish cities and getting 10,000 people to meet at a rally in Madrid. In the last Andalusian elections (December 2, 2017) they obtained almost 400,000 votes and 12 seats. It is still difficult to know if this result would be similar in a general election, but without a doubt, the specific work in this region and the normalization of far-right speech, which they use without reservation, has been an excellent breeding ground for this electoral success.

In the last place we can speak of an international scenario, where different fascisms (including the Spanish one) are expanding their influence and networks. This scenario is broad, diverse and shows how this normalization of fascism is gradually becoming a fact in our country. Thus, for example, Mischaël Modrikamen, one of Steve Bannon's European partners, in his company to form an alliance of the European extreme right, affirmed that "there are many people who are more for the majority and who are not far from our convictions, like Pablo Casado in Spain". Ciudadanos has also flirted with the European extreme right, as in 2009 when they were presented to the European elections with the Libertas party. VOX imitates Trump's messages

("Spain First") and publicly supports the speeches and demands of Le Pen, Salvini or Wilders. They have been congratulated for their success in the Andalusian elections by most European far-right parties, and even by the KKK. The alter-activists also have their own links, organize simultaneous demonstrations in different cities (on 05/16/16 in homage to Dominique Venner) and even meetings between their leaders, as in March 2017 in London (Alberto Palladino from Casa Pound, Steven Bissuel from Bastión Social Francia, David Olla and Grancesco Susinno from The Vorex Londinium, Melisa from Hogar Social Madrid and different Amanecer Dorado members). All of them are part of what is known as the transversal commitment, which seeks the alliance of different right-wing initiatives, organizations and political parties in Europe, in which the differences between nations and groups of the extreme right are recognized, respected and valued, but in which they are committed to two major common issues: the defense and vindication of a national identity, that is, the national preference or the exclusive attribution to nationals of political, economic and social rights; and the aversion to multicultural society and immigration's limitation. In addition, they would also be included within the so-called identitarian movement, very present in North America, which is also known as the extreme high center. Neither the nationalist nor anti-immigration discourse is abandoned, but it is constructed in a different way:

"The activists of 21st century fascism are called Identitarians and they refuse to be labeled as part of the extreme right. Their symbols have been renewed: they do not wear swastikas or have shaved heads. They also reject communism and capitalism, the left-right axis, and call themselves social-patriots. They claim that they adore the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the world more than anyone. They proclaim ethnopluralism, that is, not to consider any race or culture superior to another, but rather appreciate diversity and try to conserve it by preventing them from mixing; that is, avoiding immigration, multiculturalism and mixing. Italian identities have even made trips to conflict zones to deliver humanitarian aid. Because, if they are doing well in their own countries, they will not come to seek fortune from ours" (Torrús 2017c).

Conclusions

It is a fact that the far-right advances at European and international levels and also in Spain. The Spanish case presents certain differences with respect to other neighboring countries. After Franco's dictatorship the far-right in Spain has been very fragmented and has had its broadest support at the municipal level. However, many ideas usually held by fascist parties have been supported by more moderate parties and have been assumed little by little also by a more moderate electorate. This transfer of ideas and voters to moderate parties, together with fragmentation, has meant that the extreme right has not experienced the success of other groups as in France Italy or Greece. But at the same time, it could be the optimum breeding ground, in which new collectives openly from the extreme right win support.

This multiplication of extreme right groups in Spain and internationally is worrisome. It is essential to analyze all its action spaces and speeches. Within the new right new groupings have emerged under a mask of social action. Although there are many elements that we can find in these alter right-wing activists from other groups of the past, the truth is that little by little they have been building a discourse, tactics and actions that are increasingly genuine and with an increasing capacity to attract a wider audience, especially among young people. It would be a mistake to think that the speech is only an imposture, that truly it is a smokescreen that hides fascism's classic argument. They are fascists, they are against diversity, they are ultra-nationalist, anti-Muslim, but their activities in the networks and on the streets make many young people find meaning in their actions, in their discourse, in their ideology, and do not consider themselves to be radicals.

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