

Analysing femonationalist discourses in campaign spots

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Abstract

This article examines how populist radical right parties in Spain deploy femonationalism in electoral campaigning by instrumentalising gender equality and women’s rights to legitimise exclusionary, nativist agendas. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of campaign videos, produced by Plataforma per Catalunya and Vox, between 2011 and 2025, the study shows how women are portrayed both as nation and symbolic border: typically framed as passive bearers of “Western” values allegedly threatened by racialised “others”, and only exceptionally as active political subjects. Gender equality is framed as an already-accomplished achievement rather than an emancipatory project, enabling a cultural boundary of rejection in the name of purported democratic values. The videos racialize sexism by projecting misogyny and gender violence onto foreign populations, thereby diverting attention from structural inequalities, normalising domestic policy inaction, and facilitating xenophobic policy claims. These narratives are reinforced through securitisation and moral panic, including the construction of external enemies, victim-perpetrator reversal, and the portrayal of mainstream parties as complicit, positioning the populist radical right as the sole actor capable of protection. The article concludes by highlighting the need to extend this research beyond audiovisual material to other campaign artefacts and comparative contexts.

Keywords: femonationalism; spot; populist radical right; electoral campaigns; gender equality

Resum. *Anàlisi de discursos feminacionalistes en anuncis de campanya*

El present article estudia com els partits polítics de dreta radical populista han desplegat estratègies de feminacionalisme a Espanya en diverses campanyes electorals. Aquestes estratègies instrumentalitzen la igualtat de gènere i els drets de les dones per legitimar agendes nativistes i excoents. A partir d'una anàlisi qualitativa de vídeos de campanya electoral produïts per Plataforma per Catalunya i Vox, entre 2011 i 2025, l'estudi mostra com les dones són representades simultàniament com a encarnació de la nació i frontera simbòlica: apareixen retratades, d'una banda, com a portadores passives de valors «occidentals» amenaçats per «altres» racialitzats i, de l'altra, excepcionalment, com a subjectes polítics actius. La igualtat de gènere és considerada un assoliment ja aconseguit i no un projecte emancipatori, la qual cosa permet construir una frontera cultural d'exclusió en nom dels valors democràtics. Els vídeos racialitzen el sexisme i projecten la misogínia i la violència de gènere en poblacions migrants, la qual cosa desvia l'atenció de les desigualtats estructurals, normalitza la inacció política domèstica i facilita la formulació de demandes polítiques xenòfobes. Aquestes narratives es reforcen mitjançant processos de construcció de la inseguretat i el pànic moral, incloent-hi la creació d'enemics externs, la inversió de víctima-perpetrador i la representació dels partits tradicionals com a còmplices, la qual cosa posiciona els partits de dreta radical populista com l'únic actor polític capaç de protegir els valors «occidentals». Es conclou amb la necessitat d'ampliar aquesta línia de recerca més enllà del material audiovisual incorporant altres materials de campanya i contextos comparats.

Paraules clau: feminacionalisme; anunci; dreta radical populista; campanya electoral; igualtat de gènere

Resumen. *Análisis de discursos feminacionalistas en anuncios de campaña*

El presente artículo estudia cómo los partidos políticos de derecha radical populista han desplegado estrategias de feminacionalismo en España en diversas campañas electorales. Estas estrategias instrumentalizan la igualdad de género y los derechos de las mujeres para legitimar agendas nativistas y excluyentes. A partir de un análisis cualitativo de vídeos de campaña electoral producidos por Plataforma per Catalunya y Vox, entre 2011 y 2025, el estudio muestra cómo las mujeres son representadas simultáneamente como encarnación de la nación y frontera simbólica: aparecen retratadas, por un lado, como portadoras pasivas de valores «occidentales» amenazados por «otros» racializados y, por otro, excepcionalmente, como sujetos políticos activos. La igualdad de género es considerada como un logro ya alcanzado y no como un proyecto emancipatorio, lo que permite construir una frontera cultural de exclusión en nombre de los valores democráticos. Los vídeos racializan el sexismo y proyectan la misoginia y la violencia de género en poblaciones migrantes, lo que desvía la atención de las desigualdades estructurales, normaliza la inacción política doméstica y facilita la formulación de demandas políticas xenófobas. Estas narrativas se refuerzan mediante procesos de construcción de la inseguridad y el pánico moral, incluyendo la creación de enemigos externos, la inversión de víctima-perpetrador y la representación de los partidos tradicionales como cómplices, lo que posiciona a los partidos de derecha radical populista como el único actor político capaz de proteger los valores «occidentales». Se concluye con la necesidad de ampliar esta línea de investigación más allá del material audiovisual incorporando otros materiales de campaña y contextos comparados.

Palabras clave: feminacionalismo; anuncio; derecha radical populista; campaña electoral; igualdad de género

1. Introduction

The recent rise of parties of the new populist radical right—visible both in electoral results and in their ability to outflank mainstream parties—has renewed interest in questions about the cultural conditions and symbolic repertoires that help explain the rapid growth of these formations in Western democracies. This article contributes to that line of inquiry by focusing on electoral campaigning and campaign materials produced by such parties, while also considering the broader cultural context that renders certain messages, identities and political styles intelligible and persuasive.

Within the repertoires of the new radical right, the “defence of women” operates as a particularly effective resource in party competition and vote mobilisation. This is not merely a matter of “talking about gender”, but rather of re-signifying and instrumentalising equality in order to redraw political boundaries: constructing a national “us” (modern, safe and protective) against a stigmatised “them” portrayed as a threat (often racialised and/or associated with immigration and Islam). This strategy of instrumentalising feminism—conceptualised in the scholarly literature as *femonationalism* (Farris, 2017)—enables the radical right to legitimise nativist and securitarian positions; to activate emotions of threat and protection that facilitate electoral mobilisation; and to contest issues traditionally linked to progressive agendas by shifting them onto a terrain of order, punishment and control. Appeals to “protect women” thus function as a high-yield electoral frame that reconfigures competition over issue ownership, fosters culture-war dynamics, redefines feminism as a tool of exclusion and identity bordering, and recasts equality as self-evident proof of “civilisation” that authorises the exclusion of outsider minorities.

Political opposition to gender equality—embedded within broader processes of populist radical right ascendancy at a global level—has turned the instrumentalization of women’s rights into a central political strategy (Kalm & Meeuwisse, 2020; Stoeckl, 2020).

When new populist radical right parties enter campaign mode, campaign videos often display, in explicit terms, the deployment of rhetoric around “gender ideology” to sustain nativist and Islamophobic discourses. Analysing femonationalism during electoral campaigns allows us to observe how universalist values are converted into resources for polarisation and competitive differentiation. In this respect, studying campaign videos is particularly important, as they function as essential channels of political communication and as unmediated campaign instruments that reflect party strategy (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). These “calling cards” of populist radical right politics during electoral campaigns reveal not only the pursuit of polarisation but also attempts to reconfigure the political order in nativist and exclusionary terms (Dietze & Roth, 2020).

This article focuses on the Spanish case by analysing campaign videos produced by *Plataforma per Catalunya* (PxC) and *Vox* across different electoral contexts between 2011 and 2025.

2. The radical right, the instrumentalisation of feminism, nationalism and campaigning

2.1. *The radical right in Spain*

The term *radical right parties* refer to new parties which, while accepting democratic and electoral rules, reject some core features of liberal democracies, such as political pluralism or the protection of minorities. They do not necessarily reject democracy as such, but rather contest key liberal-democratic components, especially minority protections and pluralist constraints (Mudde, 2007, 2019). From a theoretical perspective, the literature converges around two minimal features of the radical right: the primacy of *law-and-order* values over other democratic values, and nativism (Mudde, 2007). Additional components may include populism, neoliberalism, or anti-parliamentarianism (Norris, 2005; Ferreira, 2019). The primacy of law and order reflects “the belief in a strictly ordered society, in which infringements of authority must be severely punished” (Mudde, 2007: 23). Nativism combines nationalism and xenophobia by conceiving the state as the exclusive property of the “native group”, and by framing non-native elements as structural threats (Mudde, 2007). In this logic, several authors underline the centrality of Islamophobia as a mechanism of exclusion—understood both as a distinction or restriction that erodes equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms, and as a salient axis of these parties’ ideological profile and political messaging (Elahi & Khan, 2017; Kallis, 2019). This articulation links to classic approaches regarding the relationship between nation and religion: the mythologisation of identity threats and religious conflict have been described as factors contributing to national homogenization through mechanisms of exclusion of the “other”, producing an “exclusive cohesion” (Hastings, 2000; Marx, 2003). In Benedict Anderson’s (2006) terms, if the nation is an imagined and bounded community, the radical right imagines it in more monolithic and restrictive ways, intensifying membership criteria and exclusion, and presenting immigrants as a dangerous alterity to the national conception itself.

The rise of the radical right in Europe has become a major object of scholarly analysis due to its growing electoral success and its entry into coalition governments in consolidated democracies, as well as its progressive normalisation in the public sphere (Akkerman, 2015; Mudde, 2019). Resisting this continental trend, Spain and Portugal were long described as exceptions due to the weak electoral performance of such parties (Alonso & Rovira, 2015).

In that context, PxC—founded in Vic in 2002 in the wake of neighbourhood protests against the construction of a mosque (Casals, 2026)—constituted a partial anomaly. Operating only in Catalonia, the party achieved significant municipal support in several inland Catalan localities yet failed to cross the threshold needed for representation at either the regional or state level. Its ideological-discursive repertoire was consistent with the modern populist radical right (Casals, 2026; Hernández-Carr, 2011; Mudde, 2019).

After a period of relative electoral success at the beginning of the 2010s, the party dissolved in February 2019.

Vox, founded in 2013, articulates a modern radical right offer that reconfigured the political space to the right of the Partido Popular (Valentim, 2021). Structurally, its discourse combines an ultra-nationalist, re-centralising project with an anti-feminist rhetoric (Álvarez-Benavides & Jiménez Aguilar, 2021). Boosted by the *procés*, the party secured its first representatives in the Andalusian regional elections in 2018. From that point to the present, Vox has gained representation in the European Parliament, the Congress of Deputies, the Senate, all regional legislatures except Galicia, the assemblies of the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and a large number of municipalities.

Finally, there is a third successful modern populist radical right formation in Spain. In 2020, Silvia Orriols, after leaving the Front Nacional de Catalunya, founded Aliança Catalana in Ripoll, another modern radical right party operating only in Catalonia. This Catalan independentist and ultra-nationalist party, with a strong anti-immigration, Islamophobic and Hispanophobic¹ discourse, holds the mayoralty of Ripoll and won two seats in the 2024 Catalan regional elections.

2.2. *Femonationalism*

A growing body of research shows that, although criticism of gender equality policies has been widely present among radical right parties since the early 2000s (and especially after the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States), gender—and, in particular, equality—has become increasingly central in the discourses and documents of populist radical right parties, ultimately becoming a routine component of their rhetoric (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Farris, 2017).

The exploitation of feminist themes by political actors linked to the radical right in order to legitimise xenophobic, racist and Islamophobic agendas—defined as femonationalism—has become a discursive strategy as “the radical right has gone mainstream” (Miller-Idriss, 2019: 75).

This strategy enables conservative and populist actors to establish an “opportunistic synergy” in the pursuit of power (Farris, 2017). At the heart of this discourse lies the concept of “gender ideology”, which functions as an “empty signifier” capable of bundling disparate agendas by channelling collective fears (such as “demographic winter” or moral corruption) and resentments linked to globalisation and liberal elites. Electoral campaigns racialize sexism in order to create a rigid and simplified dichotomy: the nation is

1. While the materials analysed deploy femonationalism with Islamophobic overtones to advance an anti-immigration agenda, both formations also resort to this type of strategy against other culturalized groups, which have remained outside the scope of the present analysis.

framed as the defender of “our women” against the “other” (Farris, 2017; García-Santamaría & Antón-Merino, 2023). Crucially, the objective is not emancipation but the legitimization of a nativist, exclusionary agenda, often expressed through securitisation, moral panic, and restrictive migration proposals. In campaigning, it is used strategically to generate moral panic and to promote policies that seek to maintain traditional gender roles among the native population, while restricting immigration. Nationalism operates as the underlying conceptual signifier, with women placed at the centre of nation-building: reinforcing a nativist vision of the polity and enlarging perceptions of non-natives as threats. In this way, the nation is imagined as a culturally homogeneous entity threatened by “globalism”, immigration, and the progressive values of international elites.

Within this narrative, feminism and equality policies are demonised as a “totalitarian ideology” and as an external colonial imposition that threatens national sovereignty, the traditional family and Christian values. Anti-feminist discourse thus becomes a metalanguage of contemporary hegemonic struggles (Laclau, 2012; Cabezas Fernández et al., 2023). This instrumentalization serves strategic objectives in electoral campaigning, such as the normalisation of these parties’ discourse and vote-gathering, especially among women voters, new voters, disaffected voters who perceive themselves as losers of globalisation, or voters committed to heteropatriarchal family values (Mokre & Siim, 2013; Álvarez-Benavides & Jiménez Aguilar, 2021; Cabezas Fernández et al., 2023).

The scholarly literature on the instrumentalization of feminism helps explain how certain frames of equality and “women’s rights” are strategically appropriated by political actors not as genuine programme commitments, but as resources for legitimisation, differentiation and moral contestation in competitive contexts (García-Santamaría & Antón-Merino, 2023).

Femonationalism can be analytically specified through broader mechanisms that serve to translate gendered claims into narratives of threat, protection and exclusion. The concept of moral panic, developed by Cohen, refers to a “group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media” (Cohen, 2011: 44). This symbolic amplification enables specific groups to then be transformed into a representation of social disorder. Within this context, a second relevant mechanism gains salience, securitisation. Securitisation refers to the process whereby an issue is presented as an existential threat to values or a referent object, seeking to legitimise urgent, exceptional contestation (Buzan et al., 1998). Finally, victim-perpetrator reversal is a logic identified in radical right-wing populist narratives, through which majority populations are presented as silenced or endangered, while minorities are constructed as threatening or aggressive (Wodak, 2015), thus allowing actors to reallocate blame.

To grasp how this appropriation becomes politically effective and persuasive, it becomes necessary to analyse campaign audiovisual material, especial-

ly campaign videos, where parties translate ideological frames into short, affective, and highly codified narratives. The electoral campaign, as an intensive window of symbolic production and condensation, offers a privileged laboratory in which parties translate ideological frames into short, affective and highly codified narratives—articulating images, music, editing and performance—to activate identifications and hierarchies of meaning.

2.3. Campaigning and campaign videos

Electoral campaigns are a space of intense political production and, therefore, allow us to assess party positions, the strategies parties decide to deploy, and the political culture they seek to consolidate. They also reflect the wider social context, making it possible to observe how campaigns have evolved from “partisan” orientations (Bale et al., 2019; Gibson & Römmele, 2009; Norris, 2002) to today’s “new political campaigns” (Pasquino, 2001), characterised by leadership personalisation (Römmele & Gibson, 2020; Dommett et al., 2025). This article focuses on campaign videos. The decision reflects both the intensity of their messaging and the extensive diffusion of these communication materials during campaigns.

Campaign videos are “intrusive media” that, unlike other materials, dominate public space and capture voters’ attention (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). They cannot easily be ignored and often generate passive consumption. They have also adapted to the new spheres of the hybrid campaign, circulating as content generated and shared via social media (Sides et al., 2022). Campaign videos constitute unmediated communication based on simplified messages which, in synergy with other stimuli, help voters construct opinions and reinforce partisan identity.

Since their emergence in the 1950s, campaign videos have become a cornerstone of electioneering (Gordon & Hartmann, 2013). Today they circulate both on television and online. They are highly effective in terms of electoral impact and cost-efficiency (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). They are unmediated communicative materials through which parties deploy persuasive strategies: seeking to change attitudes or provide new information, and to reinforce positions on one or several issues on the electoral agenda (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017).

Campaign videos are key elements to the construction of collective imaginaries, delimiting agendas and persuading electorates by providing information capable of shifting attitudes (Holtz-Bacha & Johansson, 2017). Through strategies that condense messages into simple signs, they synthesise slogans that appeal to emotion. In an electoral environment saturated with stimuli, channels and media, campaign videos have become crucial spaces in which identity and belonging are continuously constructed.

3. Research question and research design

In light of the above, this article addresses the following research question: How do populist radical right parties instrumentalise gender equality in nationalist terms during electoral campaigns? This question is particularly relevant given the sharp increase in support for populist radical right parties across elections worldwide. We focus on Spain, and specifically on campaign materials produced by the radical right parties PxC and Vox. We do not include Aliança Catalana due to its short electoral trajectory (the party has participated in the 2023 municipal elections and the 2024 Catalan elections, solely).

The study takes videos from different campaigns, held between 2011 and 2025, as units of analysis. The corpus was constructed from campaign videos produced and disseminated through the official communication channels of PxC and Vox, including campaign videos publicly available through party websites, YouTube channels and social media platforms. From this broader collection, videos containing explicit or implicit references to women, gender equality, feminism, gender violence, Islam, immigration, cultural identity or national decline were selected for detailed analysis. The resulting sample consists of videos in which femonationalism constitute a central communicative element rather than a secondary or incidental reference.

The study employs a qualitative multimodal discourse analysis combining the examination of verbal content (speeches, slogans, captions and voice-over narration) with other elements (imagery, editing, symbolism, sound, music tracks, clothing, body language and framing). This approach is particularly appropriate for campaign videos, as political meaning is produced through the interaction of textual, visual and affective resources.

Building on the above-mentioned literature, this article understands femonationalism as a communication strategy that can be identified through a set of recurring discursive and visual mechanisms. These include: 1) the racialisation of sexism, whereby gender violence is primarily attributed to racialised or migrant groups 2) the construction of women as symbolic markers of the nation and its cultural boundaries; 3) the securitisation of immigration through references to threats against women's safety and freedoms; 4) the generation of moral panic through narratives of cultural decline, demographic replacement or imminent danger; and 5) victim-perpetrator reversal, through which native populations are portrayed as the primary victims of immigration and multiculturalism. These categories guide the empirical analysis presented below, used as a common framework across all cases.

All selected videos were viewed repeatedly and systematically coded according to the analytical categories outlined above. The analytical categories were established prior to the empirical examination and applied consistently across all cases, allowing for systematic comparison between spots. Each analytical category worked as an ordinal variable, which could be classified as absent, marginal, secondary and dominant presence depending on the

salience in every spot. Furthermore, the role of women in relation to the cultural boundaries was observed as a dichotomic variable. Particular attention was paid to recurring narrative structures, visual contrasts, gender role representations, depictions of immigrants and Muslims and references to national identity and security.

The purpose of the analysis was not to quantify the frequency of themes but rather to identify how femonationalist narratives are articulated and communicated across different electoral contexts, to further understand its deployment as a political strategy. To minimise interpretative bias, the analysis focused on observable verbal and other elements directly present in the campaign materials.

4. Analysis and discussion: PxC and Vox campaign videos

After a period of relative electoral success in the November 2010 Catalan elections—where PxC exceeded 75,000 votes, receiving support mainly in municipalities with a high proportion of foreign-born residents and a declining industrial sector (Hernández-Carr, 2011)—PxC approached the May 2011 municipal elections with increased media visibility. In this context, the party released a highly controversial campaign video. Following a title card reading “*Catalunya 2011*”, the video shows young girls in miniskirts skipping rope to a popular Catalan *sardana*, “*Baixant de la Font del Gat*”. After a few seconds, a second title card appears “*Catalunya 2025*” followed by three women in *burqas* skipping rope to Arabic music. The party leader, Josep Anglada, then appears with a concise and direct message: “*Primer els de casa, vota PxC, vota Josep Anglada*” (“Our own people first, vote PxC, vote Josep Anglada”).

This video mainly activates three of the central analytical dimensions identified in the research design: racialisation of sexism, moral panic and securitization. It juxtaposes an image of girls dressed in Western clothing, skipping rope to a Catalan children’s tune, with a future in which women are dressed in *burqas* and move to Arabic-language music. The video warns of the threat of a possible Islamisation that could end Catalan society and culture within fourteen years, portraying girls and women as the most vulnerable link in this alleged Islamisation: ultimately fully covered by a *burqa*. The proposed solution is encapsulated by the candidate’s slogan “our own people first”, i.e., the native population. The portrayal of women as a symbolic boundary of the national community in this spot makes moral panic the dominant theme.

The visual contrast deepens the idea of a “clash of civilisations”, in which women’s bodies operate as an identity border between the national *demos* and the “other”. The video frames gender equality as an already-achieved Western accomplishment that must be defended, thereby justifying the exclusion of Muslim populations from the national political community. This strategy stigmatises Muslim men as intrinsically misogynistic, depicts Muslim women

Figure 1. Still from the PxC campaign video for the 2011 municipal elections (“Skipping rope”)



Source: Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY0KCD_pzAQ>.

as passive victims in need of rescue, and assigns Catalan women the role of guardians against an alleged replacement of native culture. The narrative appeals to moral panic by suggesting that a lack of border control will lead to the disappearance of “us”, consolidating an exclusionary nativism that culminates in the final message: “our own people first”.

Months later, PxC contested the general election with a campaign strategy parallel to that used in the municipal contest. In that election, the party won around 60,000 votes. The campaign included other videos with femonationalist content. The first begins with a written message announcing that what follows may become the reality of Barcelona and Spain in a very short time. The video shows a woman rocking her baby’s pram, with the television on, broadcasting a Spanish drama series. After the sound of two gunshots, the scene changes: the woman now wears a *burqa* through which she sees the room and her child in the pram. The television now shows images of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. After these contrasting images, the party leader Josep Anglada addresses viewers directly, urging them to reflect on the Barcelona and the Spain they want for their children.

The video is particularly illustrative of the interaction between moral panic, securitisation and racialisation of sexism. Women and children are

Figure 2. Still from a PxC campaign video for the 2011 general election (“Baby stroller”)

Source: Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVengq1D9hA>>.

mobilised as highly affective symbols through which immigration and Islam are transformed into perceived existential threats. As in the previously analysed video, the central frame is a supposed clash of civilisations and the threat of being replaced by “Islamic values”. The violent transition via gunshots, and the contrast between the televised drama series and the burning Twin Towers, links Muslim populations to international terrorism invoking moral panic and the urgency of acting to prevent an “invasion by replacement”. Islamic culture is presented as something that annihilates women’s agency and that infiltrates or transforms the national. Again, the video ends by addressing viewers directly, appealing to the need to defend the freedom of women and girls, reinforcing the identity border and expelling the “other”.

For the same election, PxC released a second video. This one uses the soundtrack of *Gone with the Wind* and presents a situation purportedly “based on real events”. It contrasts a woman wearing a *hijab* with María, the protagonist. María is stripped of healthcare, scholarships and schoolbooks for her children, a coat, and even food in favour of the Muslim woman, who ultimately receives all the assistance. The agents who progressively remove María’s goods and services are representatives of parties labelled in the video as right-wing (PP), centrist (CiU), left-wing (PSOE) and further-left (ICV). María ends up defenceless and naked, stripped by politicians. Against a fade

Figure 3. Still from a PxC campaign video for the 2011 general election (“María”)

Source: Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Xh6bPwlwQw>>.

to black, the party suggests the scenario could be close to the viewer: “La María podria ser la teva mare, la teva filla, la teva nòvia, la teva germana...” (‘María could be your mother, your daughter, your girlfriend, your sister...’).

Among the analytical dimensions identified in this study, victim-perpetrator reversal is especially salient in this campaign material. This video foregrounds femonationalism and a clear logic of *welfare chauvinism* (Ennsner-Jedenastik, 2018), in which social justice is not projected as a universal right but as a right that the “other” steals from the native turning solidarity into a zero-sum game. The juxtaposition between the two women seeks to portray native women’s vulnerability: under “invasion by replacement”, they will be dispossessed of their rights. This is one of the videos in which violence against women is most explicit, as the protagonist’s ultimate state of defencelessness is stark. Paradoxically, the violence is perpetrated directly by the political elite, not by immigrants. Through a victim-perpetrator reversal, the local population (embodied by a native woman) is framed as the primary victim of a political system that allegedly privileges the ‘other’. As observed elsewhere, the video ends by appealing to viewers’ family and relational ties, thereby seeking to reactivate the exclusionary nativism it pursues.

We can also find campaign videos with femonationalist content in Vox. As noted above, anti-feminist discourse is a central element in the party’s rhetoric (Álvarez-Benavides & Jiménez Aguilar, 2021; Cabezas Fernández et al., 2023).

For the November 2019 general election, Vox released a campaign video whose main theme was the alleged problems associated with irregular immigration. The video intercuts images of migrants scaling the fences at Ceuta and Melilla, fights, violent robberies and clashes with police, while a speech against immigration delivered by Santiago Abascal in the Congress of Deputies is heard (shown in the final image). Securitisation frames the entire video, directly linking immigration to crime. Within this security narrative there is a direct reference to women, when Abascal poses the following rhetorical question:

Do you really think you are capable of convincing Spaniards that dozens of irregular immigrants have nothing to do with this new type of aggression, with the increase in attacks against women, against homosexuals, or with the illegal trade mafias that ruin our small businesses?

While the politician speaks, several images appear, including a violent attack by an “immigrant” on an elderly woman in a building entrance.

Figure 4. Still from a Vox campaign video for the November 2019 general election (“Aggressions”)



Source: Youtube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVmg1sLYF1I>>.

The dominant analytical category in this case is securitisation, which structures both the visual narrative and the verbal message delivered by the party leader. The femonationalist move is folded into securitisation: irregular immigration is presented as a driver of violence against women and homosexuals, thereby racializing sexism and turning minority rights into a badge of the native polity. Migrant men are identified as the main perpetrators: misogyny and violence are portrayed as intrinsic features of otherness. Native women and homosexuals are presented as groups enjoying superior freedom, whose defence justifies border closures and restrictive migration policies. As with PxC, the video also performs a victim-perpetrator reversal: “the Spanish people” are threatened by external agents. Both voice-over and imagery frame women as passive subjects requiring protection from a violent and dangerous external element. Native women are again positioned as an identity border, with securitisation operating as the justificatory logic for instrumentalising women’s rights in pursuit of anti-immigration agendas. Protection of native women’s physical and cultural integrity against the migrant—framed as a direct cultural, physical and sexual threat—once again triggers moral panic among viewers.

The final video analysed here was produced by Vox for the June 2024 European Parliament elections. This material was designed to be viewed and shared on social media. The video opens with a headline from *La Gaceta* stating that Vox has launched a poster calling on Spaniards to choose what kind of Europe they want: “we are clear about it”. The video then shows a group

of eight women—Vox’s female candidates for the European elections—standing in front of the campaign poster. The poster depicts a woman in a *burqa* alongside another wearing a sleeveless top, with the message: “¿Qué Europa quieres?” (“What kind of Europe do you want?”). The poster was reused from a controversial party advertising campaign prior to the election in the town of El Ejido. Next, three of the women (MEPs Mireia Borrás and Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, and candidate Marcela Reigía) explain what radical Islamism is and enumerate the threats this “politico-religious ideology” supposedly poses to the rights and freedoms for which European women have fought historically. The women use careful language, political jargon, and assertive non-verbal communication.

Figure 5. Still from a Vox campaign video for the 2024 European Parliament elections (“Candidates”)



Source: Twitter (X) <https://x.com/vox_es/status/1797705630376923357>.

Unlike previous examples, this campaign material partially reconfigures the role assigned to women. Rather than being represented exclusively as passive victims, female candidates become active communicative agents responsible for defending the symbolic boundaries of the nation and Europe, this material was selected as an example of newer modes through which fem-onationalism is deployed. Compared with PxC’s materials, it differs in its use of imagery, verbal and non-verbal communication: all are used to highlight the modernity supposedly achieved in Europe and Spain, contrasted with otherness. Islam—and the Muslim man—are framed as threats to rights, freedoms and modernity, linked to the presumed submission of the Muslim woman depicted on the poster behind the candidates, fully covered by a *burqa*.

In this video, women are given an “active” role in defending their rights and freedoms: they are those who must defend their daughters, Europe and Spain; they become the border between “us” and “them”. Once again, they link the defence of women’s rights to a securitarian frame centred on strict border control and suspicion towards an Islamic culture portrayed as gaining ground in Europe, allegedly imposing restrictions on women in neighbour-

ing countries such as France or Belgium. The candidates address the camera wearing crucifixes, reinforcing the “clash of civilisations” they evoke between Christianity and Islam. This clash is further reinforced through superimposed footage shown during their statements, depicting women in black *burqas* performing everyday tasks, or girls wearing *hijabs*.

As in the previous video, the focus shifts away from domestic inequalities in order to portray misogyny as a trait exclusive to otherness, and equality as a static, historical achievement of the West. Alongside this racialisation of sexism, Vox depicts other political forces as complicit, reinforcing its exclusionary nativist vision.

Within the pro-European frame developed in the video, women become the nation’s physical and symbolic border; they are biological and cultural reproducers of the nation; and any threat to them is read as an attack on the national *demos*, thereby deploying a paternalistic protectionism.

Table 1. Analytical dimensions identified in the campaign spots

Video	Racialization of sexism	Securitisation	Moral panic	Victim-perpetrator reversal	Role of women
PxC 2011 “Skipping rope”	Secondary	Secondary	Dominant	Marginal	Passive
PxC 2011 “Baby stroller”	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant	Secondary	Passive
PxC 2011 “María”	Marginal	Marginal	Secondary	Dominant	Passive
Vox 2019 “Aggressions”	Secondary	Dominant	Secondary	Secondary	Passive
Vox 2024 “Candidates”	Dominant	Dominant	Secondary	Dominant	Active

Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

5. Conclusions

From a political communication perspective, the study contributes to understanding how audiovisual campaign materials translate ideological narratives into emotionally resonant messages. Rather than merely reflecting party ideology, campaign videos actively participate in the construction of collective identities, perceptions of threat and symbolic boundaries between national insiders and racialised outsiders.

For radical right parties the defence of women’s rights, presented as an unquestionable Western value, operates as an entry point to legitimise (across all the materials analysed) an agenda of exclusion, nativism and de-democratisation. The materials analysed rely on the racialisation of sexism to buttress a femonationalist discourse, they project violence and gender inequality exclusively onto foreign populations, diverting attention away from structural violence and inequality, justifying inaction on domestic policies and facilitating the adoption of xenophobic measures. Both organisations highlight the “complicit” role of other political forces, positioning themselves as the only political option capable of halting external threats. Without specifying how to end such threats, they present situations, images and messages that

generate moral panic. Moral panic is especially useful because it helps construct enemies, facilitates victim-perpetrator reversal, and legitimises restrictive agendas. It also functions as a trigger for negative emotions known to be useful for the affective mobilisation of the electorate. Women function as nation and as an identity border.

More broadly, the findings suggest that femonationalism operates not simply as a discursive frame but as a communicative repertoire that combines visual symbolism, emotional mobilisation and boundary-making practices. It functions *ad intra* to bundle actors, organisations and voters with very different values (from the defence of the traditional family, the woman's role as carer and mother, the limitation of women's role in civil society, opposition to mandatory parity, and condemnation of comprehensive laws against gender-based violence), and *ad extra* to advance an anti-immigration agenda through narratives of demographic winter, "invasion by replacement", and the disappearance of "Western values".

Furthermore, the corpus of spots analysed reveals an evolution in the use of feminationist in radical right-wing populist parties' electoral campaigns in Spain. Whilst the earlier adverts feature more direct and aggressive messages in which women are portrayed as passive subjects in need of rescue, the latest adopt a more sophisticated narrative in which women are at the forefront of the fight and defend for freedom and rights that are under threat.

Finally, this article has analysed campaign videos with femonationalist content produced by populist radical right parties in Spain. It remains necessary to pursue this line of research by examining other campaign materials and by extending the analysis to other geographical contexts.

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