

Radical-right populism in Spain and the strategy of chronopolitics

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ABSTRACT

Given ongoing debates in Spain over how to reckon with its recent past, time operates as a potent site for doing politics in the Peninsula. In this article, I develop the concept of chronopolitics—that is, the discursive configuration of time or history to advance political projects in the present—by analyzing a speech from the leader of Vox, a radical-right populist party in Spain. Through detailed analysis of the text, I reveal a range of chronopolitical strategies, including blatant acts of historical revisionism and the resurrection of slogans associated with Spain’s authoritarian past. I also shed insight on more subtle forms of chronopolitical action: the confusion of temporal modes, the subversion of linear perceptions of time, and metapragmatic talk about historical interpretation itself. My aim is to illuminate Vox’s particular tactics of persuasion, while drawing lessons from the case of Spain about the mechanics of populist discourse in general. (Spain, Vox, populism, chronopolitics, time, history)*

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, far-right populist parties have grown mainstream in many Western democracies, particularly those in Europe. Fueled by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and later the global recession of 2008, this steady rise can be explained in part by the experience of socioeconomic hardship among many citizens and their perceived incompetence of the political establishment. For a while, Spain seemed impervious to this trend. Upon the country’s transition to democracy in 1978, three years after the death of the authoritarian dictator Francisco Franco, two conventional forces dominated its government for decades: the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE), a left-leaning, social-democratic party, and the *Partido Popular* (PP), a right-leaning, liberal-conservative party. In 2013, however, increasing disenchantment within the PP over ongoing corruption scandals led to the birth of a populist offshoot that called itself Vox. Taking its name from the Latin word for ‘voice’, this new party promised to ventriloquize and serve the will of the people.

Given the strength of regional identity in Spain and long-standing tensions over devolution, Vox at first had difficulty ‘playing the nativist card’ essential to the formation of national-populist movements (Alonso & Rovira Kaltwasser 2015:40).

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In 2018, however, the party won nearly 11% of the vote in a regional election in Andalusia, vanquishing any doubts about its viability. Vox's campaign had highlighted corruption within the provincial PSOE along with two other national phenomena: the movement for independence in Catalonia and efforts to exhume Franco's remains from the Valley of the Fallen, a state-funded mausoleum on the outskirts of Madrid. A year before the Andalusian vote, the government in Catalonia held an illegal referendum on secession and declared independence from Spain, actions that violated both regional and constitutional laws, inciting the central government to impose direct rule from Madrid. In public debates about the affair over the following months, Vox attracted followers from around the country through its fervent opposition to the movement and its participation in a lawsuit against separatist leaders (see Turnbull-Dugarte 2019a). In addition, President Pedro Sánchez (PSOE) had promised the public upon his election in June 2018 that he would disinter the dictator's body from the Valley of the Fallen, a polemical act of reckoning dismissed by Vox as political spectacle and historical revisionism. (After much wrangling, Sánchez accomplished the exhumation the following year, seeming to satisfy as many Spaniards as he offended; see Arroyo Menéndez 2020.)

Riding on its regional success in Andalusia, Vox performed increasingly well in subsequent national elections—first in April 2019, and then, after Pedro Sánchez failed to form a coalition in Congress, again in November. In that second round, Vox earned over 15% of the vote, becoming the third largest party in the country. A month earlier, it held a game-changing rally at Vistalegre, a vast complex of meeting halls in Madrid. It was there that Santiago Abascal, Vox's founder and its current president, roused thousands of attendees with the impassioned speech that serves as the focal point of this article. The event, branded *Vistalegre Plus Ultra*, reprised a rally that had taken place in the same arena one year earlier. In 2019, Abascal retook the pulpit to outline a populist agenda of concerns, inciting enthusiastic applause and thundering cries of *¡Viva España!* 'Long live Spain!' throughout his address. With Vox on the precipice of becoming the nation's third largest party, *Vistalegre Plus Ultra* marked a momentous turning point for the organization and its leader. Indeed, over two years after the rally took place, the link to a YouTube video of the event could still be accessed on Abascal's Instagram page (see Figure 1).¹

In this article, I perform close textual analysis on Abascal's speech, considering it a paradigmatic display of the party's political commitments and rhetorical strategies. Specifically, I develop the concept of *chronopolitics*—that is, the discursive configuration of time or history to advance political projects in the present. Such temporal tactics have recently been associated with far-right populist leaders, given their skills as 'persuasive storytellers' whose narratives comprise particular orders of time to conjure, often all at once, 'mythical pasts, crisis-driven presents, and utopian futures' (Taş 2020:2). Attending to linguistic and discursive details, I reveal a range of chronopolitical strategies, including blatant acts of historical revisionism and the resurrection of slogans associated with Spain's authoritarian past.

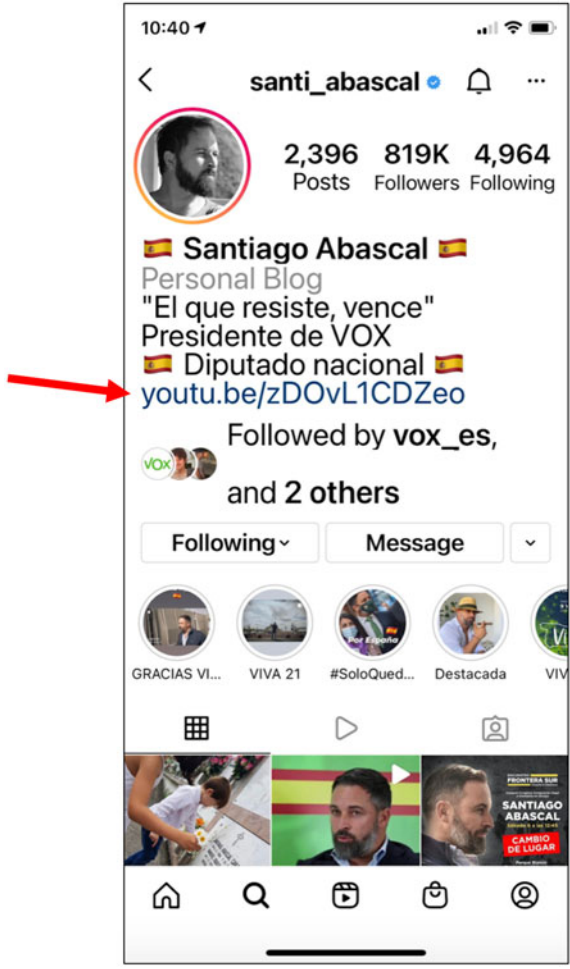


FIGURE 1. Santiago Abascal’s mobile Instagram page with a YouTube link to Vistalegre Plus Ultra (November 1, 2021).

I also shed insight on more subtle forms of chronopolitical action: the confusion of temporal modes (past, present, future), the subversion of linear perceptions of time, and metapragmatic talk about historical interpretation itself. Such chronopolitical gambits are especially effective in contemporary Spain, where the past has remained a political lightning rod since the final years of Franco’s dictatorship. Throughout the article, I draw from an extensive corpus of journalistic articles and social media content to make sense of this single political event. My aim is to illuminate Vox’s particular tactics of persuasion, while drawing lessons from the case of Spain about the temporal mechanics of populist rhetoric in general.

Right-wing populism, although it may be considered an ‘elusive phenomenon’, generally references a political sensibility based on a fundamental opposition between ordinary people and the so-called establishment (Wodak & Krzyzanowski 2017:474). In Mudde’s (2019:7–8) words, its proponents consider society to be ‘separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the pure people and the corrupt elite’. Crucially, right-wing populist parties tend to construe racial, religious, and/or linguistic minorities as a threat to the nation’s well-being, while their leaders position themselves as ‘saviors’—that is, representatives of the ‘true’ people, who harbor the power to protect them (Wodak 2021:6). Far-right populist politicians often rely on ‘media and the effects of mediatization’, constructing crises that stir the emotions of their adherents (Rheindorf 2020:624). Trading in divisiveness and exclusion, they brand their virulent opposition to the ‘mainstream’ as a common-sense reaction to its undeniable partisanship and tireless exploitation of regular folk.

Although populism can serve interests of the left—see, for example, Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser (2017:27–32), who discuss its prevalence in Latin America—in Europe it has largely driven political projects on the right. The rapid rise in this strain of politics there has incited research among scholars eager to make sense of the phenomenon through the critical analysis of public discourse. In the past couple of years alone, researchers have examined the far-right populist rhetoric of parties across a range of countries on the continent: the National Rally in France (Geva 2020), the Northern League in Italy (Perrino 2020), the Freedom Party of Austria (Rheindorf & Wodak 2019), the Dutch Freedom Party (van den Hemel 2020), the Hungarian Civic Alliance (Wodak 2020), the Law and Justice Party in Poland (Karolewski 2020), and the Swedish Democrats (Ekström, Patrona, & Thornborrow 2020), to name only a smattering of examples. Less attention has been paid to the far-right populist movement in Spain, perhaps because it is considerably younger than many of its counterparts elsewhere in Europe.²

Since its formation eight years ago, Vox has seemed to draw its convictions from a familiar populist playbook, assuming a role in Spanish politics similar to that of its ideological kin long established in countries nearby. On a main page of its website, for example, Vox claims to be the party of ‘common sense’, vowing in two short paragraphs to ‘defend Spain, family, and life’, ‘expel government from private life’, and fight against ‘asphyxiating political correctness’.³ Despite the historical particularities of its emergence, Vox thus not only mirrors many of the positions and commitments of its transnational analogues, but it deploys their discursive strategies as well. Indeed, as Norris (2020:699) writes, the essence itself of populism may comprise ‘a form of rhetoric, a persuasive language’—one that can legitimate claims to authority merely through its performative, rather than referential, meaning (see Yurchak 2005). A number of sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have contributed to the body of work cited above, shedding insight on ‘the reality-

generating property and the bluster of words’ of far-right populist actors in Europe and elsewhere by analyzing the various forms, themes, and tactics that they deploy (McIntosh 2020:1): discourse markers (Sclafani 2018), slogans (Dick 2019), topoi (Wodak 2021), chronotopes (Jereza & Perrino 2020), narrative (Taş 2020), incoherence (Slotta 2020), ambiguity (Krzyzanowski 2020), symbolic warfare (Kramsch 2021), and gestures (Hall, Goldstein, & Ingram 2016). Although many of these phenomena animated Abascal’s speech at Vistalegre Plus Ultra in 2019, I focus here on one that has yet to receive much attention in the literature: chronopolitics.

THE POLITICS OF TIME

From a variety of disciplinary perspectives, scholars have shown how authoritative bodies represent time in distinct ways, mobilizing temporality in efforts to regulate the public sphere. As Rutz (1992:8) writes within anthropology, such representations ‘become ideologies that legitimize the exercise of power’, forming the foundation of what might be thought of as chronopolitics. Wallis (1970:102), who first coined the word over fifty years ago in a sociology journal, defined it broadly as ‘the relationship between the political behavior of individuals... and their time-perspectives’. In a recent article, the philosopher Charles Mills (2020:312) points out that any definition remains open to creative interpretation due to the term’s relative obscurity (cf. its far more popular cousin ‘Geopolitics’).

To date, scholarship on the politicization of time has focused on the discursive and disciplinary tactics of non-democratic regimes in the past, such as fascist Italy (Esposito & Reichardt 2015), Ceausescu’s Romania (Verdery 1996), and the Soviet Union (Yurchak 2005). To be sure, late-modern political formations of today have also mobilized temporality to produce and sustain the social polarization that characterizes them. For a public disenchanted with the present and fearful of the future, the past may emerge as a pliable source of identification. Bauman (2017) coined the term ‘retrotopia’ to name a type of semiotic figure that extracts and amplifies the past along with its various potentials, whether realized or untapped. Strategically mining historical matter, political actors reference retrotopias to assuage public insecurities about the here-and-now and to entrench antagonistic perceptions of us-versus-them. Retrotopia is thus a particularly potent form of chronopolitical discourse. As Bauman (2017:65) writes, ‘the multiplicity of interpretations to which every selection of past events is amenable... may be a nasty irritant for a professional historian’, but they are especially attractive to those in the political realm seeking to excavate ‘trench lines for their faith’. Among far-right populist leaders in Europe, such narratives about the past work to redefine historical knowledge and undermine a ‘hegemonic post-war consensus’ that has endured for several decades (Wodak 2021:49; see also De Cesari & Kaya 2020; Taş 2020).

In this article I deepen our understanding of such chronopolitical tactics by analyzing their most visible proponent in contemporary Spanish politics: Santiago Abascal. Throughout his public performances, Abascal draws on temporally

infused, content-related topoi—that is, devices of argumentation that presume ‘widely shared knowledge’ among the audience (Wodak 2021:76)—to legitimize his claims and to fortify his crowd’s allegiance. By subverting a dominant notion of time as a linear progression forward, he disrupts the social-semiotic phenomena that it underpins: common understandings of causality, historiographical narratives and chronologies, and evaluative frameworks that link perceptions of time to ideas about moral personhood. My analytical focus on temporality helps make visible these phenomena, while complementing recent scholarship on far-right discourse in which the *chronotope* has been mobilized to account for time and space concurrently (Bakhtin 1981; see Jereza & Perrino 2020; De Fina & Wegner 2021).⁴ In what follows, I address the following questions: Through what textual and semiotic mechanisms are chronopolitics accomplished? Why is time such a potent site for doing politics in Spain? What might we learn from Spain’s populist radical right about how representations of time may be marshaled to legitimize political projects in general?

SPAIN: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RECENT PAST

To understand the possibilities of chronopolitical persuasion in the present, it is first necessary to grasp events and processes of the past. In this section I outline the tumultuous sequence of political transformations that comprise recent Spanish history, beginning nearly a century ago.⁵ In 1936, a failed military coup led in part by General Francisco Franco instigated a civil war. This pitted Franco’s Nationalist forces—which included monarchists, religious conservatives, and fascists—against Republicans, defenders of the democratic government comprised in part of communists and anarchists. By the time the struggle ended with Franco’s victory three years later, approximately 200,000 soldiers had been killed in combat, and another 200,000 civilians had been executed (Preston 2012:xvi).⁶

Throughout the war’s repressive aftermath, Franco oversaw an authoritarian regime founded on the principles of *Nacionalcatolicismo* ‘National Catholicism’. Well into the 1950s, the Church pervaded all aspects of social and political life. Moreover, the regime squelched any impulse to resistance through visible threats of power, such as extrajudicial killings. Isolationist policies of this first stretch of dictatorship caused nearly twenty years of economic stagnation while post-war economies elsewhere in Europe thrived. Then, in 1959, the regime implemented an economic stabilization plan by introducing forms of industrial development in emulation of its European neighbors: an open market; a focus on services, such as tourism and banking; and an open-border policy. This period of rapid modernization became known as the *milagro español* ‘Spanish miracle’, and it lasted for over a decade before stopping short due to an international oil crisis. Spaniards living through this epoch experienced dramatic social changes that created a rupture between two different ways of life

under dictatorship. This engendered among some a greater tolerance for a political regime that remained autocratic, thereby spurring the deferral of any historical reckoning.

After Franco's death in 1975, Spain's transition to democracy revolved around an amnesty law that enshrined what became known as the 'pact of forgetting' (*pacto del olvido*), a blanket pardon of any illegal acts or human rights violations, on either side, in the interest of protecting the fledgling democratic state. The pact was seen as a necessary component of the democratic transition and Spain's pursuit of modernity. The investment in amnesty on both sides effectively ensured a complicit oblivion, foreclosing all forms of transitional justice, such as truth commissions and human rights prosecutions, like those later generated by civil and judicial bodies in Argentina and Chile. As Encarnación (2014:3) writes, the pact of forgetting 'succeeded in turning the past into a taboo among ordinary Spaniards, by making discussion of the violence of the Civil War... inappropriate and unwelcome in almost any social context'. And yet, Spain's history was not as easily forgotten as the pact's proponents desired. The absence of any reckoning in the wake of Franco's death fed multiple and conflicting interpretations of the historical record, which live on unabated today.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, a generation after the transition, Spanish historians began to frame talk about the past in terms of victimhood (Labanyi 2008). This new mode of recollection compelled grassroots efforts to bring to light the traumas inflicted by Franco's regime. Most notably, the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, since its inception in 2000, has lobbied for the exhumation and identification of remains found in mass graves throughout the country (see Ferrándiz 2008, 2013; Rubin 2020). The civilian mobilization for restitution eventually sparked legislative action—most notably the Law of Historical Memory of 2007, a largely symbolic gesture that, for the first time, formally condemned the Franco regime. Later, in 2020, the Council of Ministers moved to revise this legislation by drafting a Law of Democratic Memory, which aimed to concretize and expand the provisions set out earlier, in part by requiring the state to oversee the exhumation of mass graves and by outlawing public exaltation of the dictator.⁷

Put forth decades after Franco's death, these memory laws have stoked widespread debate. Whatever their motivation, they consecrate 'state-approved interpretations of crucial historical events' (Belavusau & Gliszczynska-Grabias 2017:1) and thus constitute a powerful mode of chronopolitical action. Although they exist elsewhere in Europe, perhaps most notably in relation to the Holocaust, memory laws have garnered potent currency in Spain, where 'the lack of a formal process of transitional justice and memory legislation during the transition' created a social, political, and legal vacuum (Aragoneses 2017:177). As Spaniards have grappled with how to address the legacies of war and Franco's dictatorship, there is not much consensus on what those legacies are, or whether discussion is worth having in the first place. In Faber's (2018:165) provocative words,

the story of twentieth-century Spain lacks ‘moral closure’. For that reason, I would add, it remains ripe for chronopolitical manipulation.

METHODOLOGY

In the remainder of this article, I perform discourse analysis on extracts of Abascal’s speech and social-media posts, drawing from both the linguistic-anthropological methods detailed by Wortham & Reyes (2015) and the discourse-historical approach associated with Wodak (2001). After transcribing Abascal’s address, I coded every linguistic feature and discursive strategy related to time: explicit references to the temporal frames of past, present, and future; invocations of temporal orders such as linearity, cyclicity, and timelessness; the representation of historical figures and events; and the deployment of mottos, expressions, and symbols, sometimes associated with previous eras. Treating the speech as an interactional event, I engaged in an ‘iterative interpretive process’ by identifying indexical cues that pointed to relevant historical context for Abascal’s audience of Spanish supporters; I then traced patterns of such cues across discourse events (Wortham & Reyes 2015:141). To that end, since early 2018 I have mined daily Spanish-language Google alerts on the following search terms: Vox and España, *memoria histórica* ‘historical memory’, and Franco and *exhumación* ‘Franco and exhumation’. This enabled me to access, read, and annotate journalistic publications that have discussed Vox and pertinent current events, charting the party’s burgeoning visibility over the past three years. During this period, I have also followed the Instagram accounts of Santiago Abascal (@santi_abascal) and Vox itself (@vox_es), along with those of other political leaders and parties in Spain, logging descriptions of images, videos, and thematic content. In addition, I have supplemented this growing archive of data with a periodic survey of relevant Twitter accounts, as well as the recording of interviews with figures from the populist radical right on national TV. In my analysis of the speech at Vistalegre, I draw on this original corpus of research alongside the work of social historians who specialize in twentieth-century Spain (Graham 2012; Preston 2012, 2020; Richards 2013; among others), instantiating the methodological principle of triangulation at the heart of the discourse-historical approach (see Reisigl 2017, among others). Attending thus to historical references, I am able to bolster my interpretive claims about the chronopolitical dimensions of Abascal’s performance. Ultimately, I hope to show that Vox’s temporal gambits are not isolated examples of populist stagecraft but rather mechanisms of a larger political project.

VISTALEGRE PLUS ULTRA: SETTING THE STAGE

On October 6, 2019, Santiago Abascal took the stage at Vistalegre accompanied by his party’s Wagnerian hymn and roars of support from a crowd of around 12,000 people.⁸ For just over thirty-three minutes, he stood on a raised dais in the center

of the stadium, surrounded by video screens that alternately broadcast images of him speaking, still shots, and the text *España Siempre* ‘Spain Always’, one of his party’s popular mottos at the time (see Figure 2). In such events, as Hodges (2020:41) reminds us, ‘policy matters less than spectacle’. Still, Abascal put forth a series of Vox’s positions on social, cultural, political, and historical questions that, all together, comprised a summary manifesto. After welcoming his audience of ‘compatriots’ and claiming to represent ‘a patriotic majority’, Abascal went on to address a sequence of political flashpoints: the Law of Historical Memory and the impending exhumation of Franco’s body from the Valley of the Fallen; the historically corrupt nature of the governing party of social democrats (PSOE); the responsibility to protect unborn children, women, families, and elders; the defense of borders; the questionable science of climate change; the threatening movement for Catalanian independence; and *ad hominem* criticism of other political leaders. Throughout the speech, Abascal thus projected the ‘oppositional habitus’ (Wodak 2021:69) associated with populist politicians, revealing his party’s largely adversarial platform by identifying in turn the many laws, policies, and trends that it identifies as anathema. Below I analyze two stretches of the speech that feature invocations of temporality, drawing from my body of social-media and journalistic data to shed insight on Abascal’s methods of chronopolitical persuasion.

Spain now vs. Spain forever

This first excerpt, which occurred toward the end of the speech, demonstrates how chronopolitical tactics can include the deployment of condensed, familiar slogans that circulate quickly and widely. Before it began, Abascal mocked his adversaries for the derivative mottos that they had recently propagated: *España en Marcha* ‘Spain on the move’; *Ni izquierdas, ni derechas: España* ‘Neither leftists, nor conservatives: Spain’; *Ahora España* ‘Spain now’. After suggesting that these were little more than fanciful catchphrases created by marketing experts, he nevertheless applauded such direct references to Spain and thanked his audience for igniting this trend. He then went on to critique the governing party’s new ‘Spain now’ motto, revealing the logic behind Vox’s deliberate alternative, ‘Spain forever’.

(1) ‘Vox is just an instrument’ (30:27–31:17)⁹

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Pero me quería detener un poco con el lema del PSOE porque este tiene guasa.</p> <p>2 Hace no mucho, nos decía Pedro Sánchez—</p> <p>3 bueno, había salido con lo de la bandera aquella gigante, ¿os acordáis?—</p> <p>4 pero hace no mucho nos decía que en España había cuatro naciones.</p> <p>5 Y hoy nos dice ‘Ahora España’.</p> | <p>‘But I wanted to stop for a bit on the PSOE’s motto, because this is funny.’</p> <p>‘A short while ago, Pedro Sánchez told us—’</p> <p>‘well, he had come out with that giant flag, do you remember?—’</p> <p>‘but a short while ago, he was telling us that in Spain there were four nations.’</p> <p>‘And today he tells us ‘Spain now’.’</p> |
|---|--|

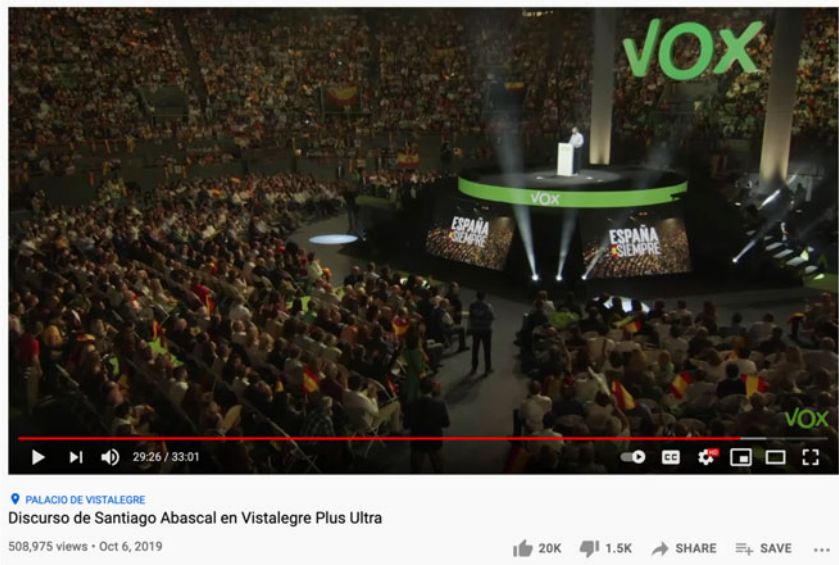


FIGURE 2. Still shot of YouTube video of Abascal's speech at Vistalegre Plus Ultra.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6 Ayer 'Esquerra Republicana'. 7 Y mañana 'Bildu'. 8 A este individuo, no se le puede creer absolutamente nada. 9 Utilizan el nombre de España, igual que lo hacen en las siglas de su partido. 10 Pero traicionan sistemáticamente todos vuestros anhelos y los intereses generales de los españoles. 11 Y por eso, nosotros hemos respondido a ese lema, diciendo desde Vox, 'España Siempre'. 12 Porque Vox es solo un instrumento. 13 Y también os lo dijimos aquí justo hace un año: 14 No hemos venido a ganar en España, hemos venido para que España gane con nosotros.</p> | <p>'Yesterday '<i>Esquerra Republicana</i>'. 'And tomorrow '<i>Bildu</i>'. 'You can't believe anything at all from this individual.' 'They use the name of Spain, just as they do in the initials of their party.' 'But they systematically betray all your desires and the general interests of Spaniards.' 'And for that reason, we responded to that motto, saying from Vox, 'Spain forever'. 'Because Vox is just an instrument.' 'And we also said this to you here a year ago: 'We didn't come to win in Spain, we came so that Spain could win with us.'</p> |
|---|---|

In this excerpt, Absacal makes direct and implicit references to time, drawing on a tops of inconsistency to represent President Sánchez as egregiously untrustworthy in

contrast to his own timeless reliability. In lines 2 and 4, Abascal repeats the phrase ‘a short while ago’ to underscore his rival’s recent, supportive stance on regional nationalism. The ‘four nations’ in Spain acknowledged by Sánchez (line 4) comprise the nation-state itself along with three of the country’s most culturally distinct autonomous communities: Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. Abascal goes on to utter a second, contrasting temporal cue—‘today’ (line 5)—to highlight Sánchez’s current, contradictory position in support of federal nationalism. As Abascal suggests, this position is indexed succinctly by the president’s new motto: ‘Spain now’. He then reiterates the notion of contrast through two temporal deictics, ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’ (lines 6 and 7), along with references to regional pro-independence parties—*Esquerra Republicana* of Catalonia and *Bildu* of the Basque Country. Through such shifts in temporal perspective, Abascal projects Sánchez’s vacillation into the future, thereby revealing it to be innate and incurable.

More indirectly, in a rapid-fire aside in line 3, Abascal alludes to a minor brouhaha from four years earlier, when Sánchez appeared onstage in front of a giant video image of the Spanish flag to accept his candidacy as the PSOE’s representative in a forthcoming election for the presidency. At the time, critics derided such a gesture from a member of the social-democratic party as a blatantly hypocritical ploy to convince the public of its nationalist proclivities. Abascal delivers this line briskly in a slightly lower pitch; it is meant to seem like a breezy digression, beginning with the discourse marker ‘well’ and ending with the tag question ‘do you remember?’ (line 3). In this casual aside, Abascal mitigates his chronopolitical machinations while offering further evidence of Sánchez’s character. Once he has established its inconstant nature, Abascal then asserts a related truth, addressing his audience directly with a declarative statement in line 8: ‘you can’t believe anything at all from this individual’. In contrast to the president and the PSOE, Abascal serves as an oppositional alternative: strong, reliable, and consistent over time. Vox, he promises, will not betray the interests of ‘Spaniards’ (line 10)—a term used here as a membership categorization device that points to the ‘patriotic majority’ for whom Abascal claims to speak.

Abascal cites the PSOE’s systematic treason as the catalyst for the creation of Vox’s current motto, ‘Spain forever’, which had been animating the party’s campaign materials and was now flashing periodically on the TV screens surrounding the dais. His explicit references to slogans, both before and during this excerpt, point to his awareness of the power that they wield to condense a political platform into an easily spreadable sound bite. As Wodak (2021:50) writes, mottos, along with national emblems and flags, function as ‘marketable brands that guarantee recognizability’, providing ways of ‘relating to the remembered (or imagined) present or past’. The antagonistic tension that Abascal sets up between those of Vox and the PSOE represents, metonymically, the stark opposition between the parties’ chronopolitical projects. ‘Spain now’ and ‘Spain forever’ encapsulate distinct and, according to Abascal, incompatible conceptions of time. In response to the short-sighted, predictable temporality of Sánchez and the PSOE, which stretches no further

beyond the immediate present, a mere plot point in a linear narrative (Now!), Vox offers its supporters an alternative of timelessness that presupposes a glorious past and promises a prosperous future (Forever!). This claim to a non-linear, eternal conception of time facilitates the party's romanticized representation of Spain's authoritarian past, as I discuss in the next section.

Elsewhere, Vox has repurposed popular slogans from earlier epochs, including the 'Plus Ultra' used to brand its second rally at Vistalegre. Meaning 'further beyond' in Latin, 'Plus Ultra' was first used by the king of Spain in the early sixteenth century 'to symbolize the dynamism of the new Spanish Empire, in which the sun never set' (Rama et al. 2021:7). The expression appears today in a coat of arms on the national flag, recognizable (if not exactly intelligible) to the average Spaniard. Another motto, 'the living Spain' (*la España Viva*), also served the party throughout its months of campaigning, perhaps most visibly in the party's release of an online, downloadable manifesto before the 2018 elections in Andalusia: '100 measures for the living Spain' (see Figure 3).¹⁰ As Casals (2020:30) points out, the expression 'living Spain' implies a 'dead Spain' or more generally an 'anti-Spain', a concept that, historically, comprised a mix of liberals, leftists, and regional nationalists who opposed the apparatus of Franco's *Nacionalcatolicismo*. Such historical allusions are no doubt deliberate. Vox has strived to create 'maximum political polarization' by capitalizing on a 'simplistic duality' from yore (Casals 2020:30; see also Rama et al. 2021:117–18). The use of 'Spain forever' alongside these other mottos works to conjure a semiotic realm of timelessness that confirms the country's eternal greatness, making possible Abascal's national-historical project—not to 'win Spain', as he says in line 14, but to make Spain win through the realization of Vox's agenda. He reminds his audience that he uttered these words a year earlier (line 13), thereby evoking the topos of (in)consistency yet again to highlight the contrast between his party's stalwart convictions and the dubious principles of the PSOE.

Personalizing the past

This second excerpt from Abascal's speech occurred shortly after it began, following expressions of gratitude for the crowd and the familiar invocation of a topos of threat, in this case from 'enemies... who want to break apart our country'. Abascal went on to specify who, exactly, these enemies are, animating a collocation that had appeared throughout Vox's public discourse: *la dictadura progre* 'the progressive dictatorship'. Such a phrase instantly conjures Franco's long-running regime while reimagining its present-day incarnation as leftist dogma. Before the excerpt began, Abascal alluded to the exhumation of Franco's remains, criticizing the PSOE for politicizing the event and thus committing an act of *totalitarismo depravado* 'depraved totalitarianism', again resignifying a charged term for a form of authoritarianism. He went on in (2) below.



FIGURE 3. The cover of Vox's '100 measures for the living Spain', an online manifesto published in October 2018.

(2) 'To force some of those Spaniards to condemn their grandparents' (5:31–7:13)

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 El cadáver de Franco, los restos del General Franco, son solo la excusa. | 'Franco's cadaver, General Franco's remains, are only the excuse.' |
| 2 El objetivo es otro. | 'There's another objective.' |
| 3 El objetivo es destruir la reconciliación de los españoles. | 'The objective is to destroy the reconciliation of Spaniards.' |
| 4 El objetivo es reescribir la historia. | 'The objective is to rewrite history.' |
| 5 El objetivo es deslegitimar la monarquía. | 'The objective is to delegitimize the monarchy.' |
| 6 Y el objetivo es derrocar a Felipe Sexto. | 'And the objective is to overthrow Felipe VI.' |
| 7 ¡Y nosotros nos hemos dado cuenta de eso! | 'And we have realized that!' |
| 8 Porque el objetivo de todos esos... | 'Because the objective of all those...' |
| 9 ((applause for seventeen seconds)) | ((applause for seventeen seconds)) |
| 10 Los que estamos aquí somos españoles sensatos y gente inteligente que ha sabido ver cuáles eran los objetivos de la izquierda. | 'Those of us who are here are sensible Spaniards and intelligent people who figured out what the left's objectives were.' |
| 11 El objetivo era también amordazar a los historiadores, amordazar a los españoles, y obligar a una parte de esos españoles a condenar a sus abuelos. | 'The objective was also to muzzle historians, muzzle Spaniards, and to force some of those Spaniards to condemn their grandparents.' |
| 12 Yo sé que hoy aquí, sentados codo con codo, banco con banco, hay españoles que | 'I know that here today, seated elbow to elbow, seat to seat, there are Spaniards |

| | |
|---|--|
| no se conocen, | who don't know each other,' |
| 13 y que tendrán al lado a alguien cuyo abuelo luchó en el bando republicano, | 'and who will have someone next to them whose grandparent fought on the Republican side,' |
| 14 y otro tendrá al lado a alguien cuyo abuelo luchó en el bando nacional en nuestra triste guerra civil. | 'and someone else whose grandparent fought on the Nationalist side in our sad civil war.' |
| 15 Y sé que ninguno de vosotros queréis obligar al que tiene al lado a que condene a sus abuelos, | 'And I know that not one of you wants to force the person next to you to condemn their grandparents, ' |
| 16 porque amáis a España, porque amáis la reconciliación. | 'because you all love Spain, because you all love the reconciliation.' |
| 17 ((applause for seven seconds)) | ((applause for seven seconds)) |

Here, Abascal purports to reveal the various chronopolitical objectives behind the PSOE's campaign to exhume Franco's remains from the Valley of the Fallen and to repurpose the mausoleum as a *lieu de mémoire* that both condemns the dictatorship and teaches the public about it (see Comisión de expertos 2011). As he sees it, the PSOE is driven to achieve multiple goals through the 'depraved' act of digging up a body and prohibiting its family from deciding where to rebury it. Abascal's exaggerated litany of revelations, amplified rhetorically through his repetition of the word 'objective', culminates in line 7—'and we have realized that!', earning him one of the longest stretches of applause during the entire speech, replete with indecipherable chants in the video recording. Exposing his enemies' motives even further, Abascal goes on to identify their intention to 'muzzle historians, muzzle Spaniards', who have both been pummeled by the progressive left's imposition of its version of the past, epitomized by its plans to exhume Franco's remains (line 11). Abascal then appeals strategically to the personal experience of historical time, invoking a figure that appears elsewhere in his campaign propaganda: *abuelos*—that is, grandparents.

Born in 1976, Abascal was forty-three at the time of Vistalegre Plus Ultra. From his position in the life course, 'grandparents' signifies the last generation of Spaniards who experienced the war and its repressive aftermath firsthand. In Spain today, the kinship term thus resonates with a semiotic charge that is at once affective and historical.¹¹ A short while after the rally, for example, Abascal launched an advertisement for a regional campaign in Galicia that featured a video of his ninety-one-year-old *abueliña*, who hailed from there originally. Given the temporal rhythms caused by historical events in Spain, marking generational cohorts in profound but distinct ways, such invocations of grandparents prove to be an effective chronopolitical strategy. As Richards (2013:25), a social historian, has written, 'generational identity' in the Peninsula has become 'a significant influence on looking back at the conflict, though cohort-specific perceptions' have been

‘qualified by wartime allegiances and experiences, as well as by competing identities of social class and religion’. Abascal and Sánchez, now in their forties, along with many of their political opponents, might be considered what Richards refers to as ‘grandchildren of the war’ (2013:32).

Abascal exploits this generational dimension of historical meaning-making by aiming his words at any grandchildren in the audience who reject the progressive left’s insistence on redressing what it understands to be historical wrongs. In the speech, he equates and conflates the opposing sides of the war among a crowd of peers serving as proxies for their predecessors, alluding to their physical proximity in the present—‘elbows’ and ‘seats’ side by side (line 12). To dilute the friction from this heterogeneous kinship, Abascal emphasizes what the audience must share as ‘sensible Spaniards’ (line 10): the common-sense desire to avoid blaming the old for whatever the past may have required them to do. Referring to the violent events of the 1930s as ‘our sad civil war’ (line 14), Abascal impedes any epistemological attempt at historical reckoning, appealing instead to his audience’s affective reason and sense of moral personhood: What kind of person sits in judgement of the elderly, regardless of their past actions? The answer is clear: only the progressive left, dogmatic and polarizing, would ‘force [*obligar*] some... Spaniards to condemn their grandparents’ (line 11). The verb in Spanish that Abascal uses here (and a few lines later)—*obligar*—works to establish the left’s position as a morally infused imperative. Abascal thus invokes a topos of burden, promising that Vox will alleviate its supporters of the discomfort of decrying forebears, as well as any encumbrance to act against their will.

Filtering the past through the personal, Abascal engages in chronopolitical tactics that aim to displace nuanced accounts of historical record with its various emotional resonances in the present. As Abascal observes matter-of-factly later in the speech, ‘nobody wants to feel shame for their elders’. To avoid such an unfortunate situation, he dilutes whatever tension existed between Nationalists and Republicans in the ‘sad’ fratricidal conflict of the 1930s, deferring any accountability that might make their offspring uncomfortable today. Among this younger generation, the love for a unified, post-reconciliation Spain (line 16)—a retrotopic vision that entails a timeless sense of nationalism (Bauman 2017)—constrains possibilities for engaging with the past. Abascal reiterated this very point, along with his allusion to the condemnation of grandparents, in an Instagram post of a clip of this excerpt the day after Vistalegre took place (see Figure 4).¹²

Temporal conflation of then with now

Vox has also mined historical archives—particularly those that contain artifacts from the initial stages of the war—to engage in chronopolitical combat with Sánchez and his governing party. On the day of the exhumation, for example, just over two weeks after he delivered the speech at Vistalegre, Abascal expressed outrage in a tweet that comprised two black-and-white photographs taken during

the conflict eighty years earlier (Figure 5). The tweet included the antagonistic accusations put forth by Vox in the weeks that preceded Franco's disinterment, many of which Abascal voiced at Vistalegre (see excerpt (2)).

In addition to such charged rhetoric, Abascal again showcased one of his chronopolitical strategies by tampering with the dominant conception of time as linear progression. The gruesome images appended to his tweet featured militia members during the war posing with cadavers that had been removed from desecrated tombs. These soldiers formed part of the Popular Front, a coalition of left-leaning factions that included the PSOE. Abascal's spotlight on the Front's acts of violence in the beginning stages of the conflict effectively obscured the years of institutional terror inflicted by Franco after the Nationalist victory. Suggesting that Sánchez's government 'take the same picture' as its predecessors, Abascal framed the exhumation of Franco as a hateful act of equally grisly profanity. The reiterative nature of this hypothetical snapshot dissolved any meaningful distinction between then and now, evidencing, again, the PSOE's hardwired lack of morality. Abascal went on to affirm a common-sense truth that the progressive left chooses to ignore—'one must respect the dead'—enabling him to equate the dictator with Pasionaria, a communist revolutionary during the war who became a mythical hero for Republicans. Among Abascal's followers on Twitter, these brazen rhetorical moves proved effective. By the denouement of the news cycle that covered the exhumation, his post had been retweeted nearly 7,000 times.

Vox has enacted such temporal confluences with respect to members of its own party as well, although to quite different effects. During the first round of national elections in 2019, for example, about six months before Vistalegre, Abascal kicked off his campaign for the presidency in Covadonga, the site of a battle in 722 that is popularly thought to have started the 700-year 'reconquest' of the Peninsula from Muslim occupiers (see Figure 6). As he stood at the base of a statue of Don Pelayo, the fabled initiator of that skirmish, Abascal again invoked a topos of threat, railing in fiery terms against 'the Islamists' (*los islamistas*).

As he did with Franco and Pasionaria, Abascal thus established his likeness to a historical figure associated with the defense of Spanish nationhood, conflating himself in the present with Don Pelayo in the past. But Vox's chronopolitical maneuvers did not end there; they incorporated the future as well. During his pronouncement, as the photograph shows, Abascal was surrounded by supporters holding signs that exhorted Spaniards to look forward: '*¡Adelante!*'. His political performance thus included card-carrying members of Vox, complicit in a production of simultaneity in which the temporal orders of past, present, and future had converged, thereby subverting hegemonic conceptions of chronological time. Such a theatrical display recalls Benjamin's (1968/2019) notion of 'messianic time', which dissolves linearity and contains the potential for revolution. Here, Abascal stages the topos of savior common in much populist rhetoric, revealing himself to be a redemptive hero for his people. Elsewhere in Spain that same day, regional candidates of the party launched campaigns beside the statues of



FIGURE 4. Abascal posts a clip about condemning grandparents the day after Vistalegre.



Sánchez is going further than trash TV with this cadaver-eating, pre-election show. The vulture in Moncloa [*the official residence of the president*] has begun a campaign of hate. The government should take the same picture as their esteemed militias. One must respect the dead, whether they're called Franco or Pasionaria.

FIGURE 5. A tweet from Abascal on the day of the exhumation (October 24, 2019).

other historical figures, including El Cid, a medieval knight, and Mariano Álvarez de Castro, a nineteenth-century military officer. Time-warping spectacle was thus a calculated mechanism of their political operation.

The freedom to opine about the past

Vox's chronopolitical tactics also include metapragmatic talk about the act of historical interpretation itself. Explicit claims about how it engages with the past ostensibly index the party's transparency while enabling it to propagate particular



FIGURE 6. Abascal announces his campaign for the presidency in Covadonga (April 12, 2019).¹³

accounts surreptitiously. Since the outset, Vox has repeatedly accused the left of imposing a ‘sectarian vision’ of Spanish history, aiming to destabilize the dominant historiography on which their vision is based. In the following excerpt, a stump speech that Abascal gave in 2018, he both reveals a positive personal stance on the relativity of historical meaning and pushes a pointed version of the past.

(3) ‘The obligatory interpretation of what happened’¹⁴

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 Yo no quiero que Vox diga cuál es la interpretación obligatoria de lo que ocurrió en la República en la guerra civil. | ‘I don’t want Vox to say what’s the obligatory interpretation of what happened in the Republic in the civil war.’ |
| 2 Puedo decir la mía, y la puedo decir en libertad. | ‘I can say mine, and I can say it freely.’ |
| 3 Yo creo que la guerra civil la provocó un partido que sigue existiendo actualmente con las mismas siglas, el Partido Socialista Obrero Español— | ‘I believe that the war was provoked by a party that remains in existence today with the same acronym, the <i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i> —’ |
| 4 ((applause)) | ((applause)) |
| 5 que provoca 1500 muertos— | ‘that caused 1500 deaths—’ |
| 6 ((applause))— | ((applause))— |
| 7 1500 muertos en una semana en el año 34... | ‘1500 deaths in one week in 1934...’ |
| 8 Yo pienso eso. | ‘That’s what I think.’ |
| 9 Pero puede haber alguien en Vox que piense que la guerra civil la provocaron quienes se levantaron el 18 de julio [1936]. | ‘But there can be someone in Vox who thinks that the civil war was provoked by those who rose up on the 18th of July [1936].’ |
| 10 Que opine en libertad. | ‘Let them opine freely.’ |

| | |
|---|--|
| 11 Vox no tiene una interpretación obligatoria de nuestro pasado. | ‘Vox doesn’t have an obligatory interpretation of our past.’ |
| 12 Lo que sí tenemos es una defensa obligada de nuestra libertad para que los españoles podamos opinar sobre nuestro pasado como bien entendamos, | ‘What we do have is an obligatory defense of our freedom so that we Spaniards can have opinions about our past as we understand it,’ |
| 13 o como nos dé la gana, | ‘or as we wish,’ |
| 14 sin dar explicaciones a la izquierda dominante durante los últimos treinta años. | ‘without giving explanations to the left that has dominated Spain for the past thirty years.’ |
| 15 ((applause)) | ((applause)) |

History, as Abascal claims to understand it, is merely a matter of opinion. And Vox, unlike its opponents, accommodates a multiplicity of them. To illustrate his party’s interpretive largesse, Abascal animates conflicting accounts of the causes of the war. He first offers his unorthodox version in lines 3 through 7, highlighting a violent event that took place in 1934, two years before the war began: an attempted coup by an earlier incarnation of the party now in power, the PSOE, which resulted in 1,500 deaths. Abascal then articulates the dominant perspective held by historians and much of the public today, referencing the failed military coup in which Franco participated on July 18, 1936 (line 9). As Irvine (2004:107) writes about the semiotics of time, temporalities ‘often... come in pairs, as ways in which one compares and assesses possible worlds, whether these worlds are different aspects of one’s own experience or different hypothetical realms’. Here, Abascal illustrates this sometimes confounding relationality by presenting two different historical facts and the conflicting historicities that they make possible. Resorting to a topos of history, he both throws into question common knowledge about Spain’s past and legitimizes Vox’s opposition to the establishment that accepts it. The bursts of applause from members of the audience (lines 4, 6, and 15) suggest their avid support for their ‘freedom to opine’ about historical matters, as well as, perhaps, the specific version of events that Abascal puts forth.

Advocating for relief from the ‘obligation’ to interpret the past in a particular way, Abascal also evokes, once again, the topos of burden. He accuses the PSOE of imposing a loaded account of the past that foregrounds the suffering caused by the dictatorship, while himself magnifying Republican violence before the war. The ‘freedom to opine’—that is, the freedom ‘to have opinions about our past as we understand it, as we so wish’ (lines 12–13)—liberates Vox’s members from readings of the past that serve the progressive left. Vox’s partial perspective becomes reinterpreted among its supporters as a monolithic version of the past, resonant with truth because of its genesis from outside a domain of political correctness. As Preston (2020:548–49) has observed, such practices essentially ‘recycle the basic theses of Francoist propaganda’ from decades earlier, as their advocates reject outright any form of critical historiography. Borrowing such chronopolitical tactics from the regime, Abascal signals Vox’s political commitments, including a

strong aversion to liberal democracy if not an outright embrace of authoritarianism (see Rama et al. 2021:120).

A TURN TOWARD THE FUTURE

Given the particularities of recent Spanish history, as well as Spain's history of dealing with its past, time is likely to remain a potent site for doing politics in the Peninsula. The populist radical right in particular shows no sign of easing its enactment of chronopolitics through strategies of argumentation that entail dimensions of time, driving their use of slogans, temporally confused rhetoric, and metapragmatic talk. On July 19, 2021, for example, the Council of Ministers approved the Law of Democratic Memory, marking the bill's last stop before it heads to the Courts for ratification. The following day Vox's official Instagram account posted a videoclip from Vistalegre Plus Ultra titled *Ya lo advertimos en 2019* ('We warned about it in 2019')—a reconfiguration of fragments from the speech that culminated in Abascal's remarks about muzzling historians and condemning grandparents. Since the party's formation in 2013, Vox's public discourse has been defined by such persistent messaging, drawing on topoi of threat and saviorhood to legitimize its claims to authority.

As I discuss at length above, Vox's chronopolitical tactics have proven effective through its leaders' various appeals to feeling—about Catalonia, liberty, or grandparents. But the party has also made strategic pleas to the mind. In March 2021, Vox spearheaded the publication of an edited volume called '*Memoria histórica*': *Amenaza para la paz en Europa* ("Historical memory": A threat to peace in Europe'; see European Conservatives and Reformists (2020). The tome includes fifteen essays penned by conservative historians and writers who, through recourse to 'data and facts', expose the 'fallacious Spanish memory movement'.¹⁵ Here, the radical right makes an intellectual claim to authority, brandishing terms of epistemological validity associated with sound scholarly research. Like other parties of its ilk, Vox has managed to 'graft conservative ideologies onto progressive vocabulary, thus reversing the semantics' of the opposition's terms (Borba, Hall, & Hiramoto 2020:4). Recruiting historians into such chronopolitical projects, the radical right throws into question conventional wisdom about the past, as well as the production of scholarly knowledge in general.

Indeed, Vox's public discourse reveals how a political party may galvanize a nationalist enterprise by, in the words of Hannah Arendt (1967:52), 'blurring the dividing lines between fact, opinion, and interpretation' with regard to matters of historical meaning. Authority is no longer generated through reference to official narratives, along with credible forms of knowledge about the past, such as archival documents and personal testimony. Instead, as Abascal has repeatedly insisted, the interpretation of history is necessarily contingent: 'to each their own', as he said at Vistalegre. Ognjenovic & Jozelic (2021:2) remark on the effects of such doctrine in the former Yugoslavia, where nationalist parties have 'succeeded in hijacking' a common historical narrative across the Balkan states, preventing any

rapprochement among them. Revisionist projects succeed in large part because they are sanctioned by institutional authorities that foreclose not only on the hope for reconciliation, but also on the very possibility of debate.

Populist radical-right movements exploit, to great effect, the ‘generally weak sense of historiographical consciousness’ in most contemporary societies today (Richards 2013:357). Their relentless revisionism calls for an urgent response: a concerted intervention into the realm of public education. In Spain, for example, the current Law of Democratic Memory includes a specific provision about updating and standardizing curricular content in secondary schools with regard to the war and Francoist repression. This does not mean, as the radical right argues, indoctrination through the progressive left’s ‘sectarian vision’ of the past, but rather, ideally, nuanced engagement with a complex historical record and an introduction to the tools of critical historiography. Vox’s unique popularity among younger voters, as Rama et al. (2021:108) remark, bodes well for the party’s longevity and thus ‘signals troubling times ahead for those who defend socio-liberal and cosmopolitan values’ in Spain. An early and persistent presence in the educational lives of Spanish youngsters, however, could prove an effective response to such a grim prognosis. Although the demographics of far-right adherents elsewhere may differ from those in the Peninsula, such an admonition surely applies.

NOTES

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¹A video recording of this event, titled *Discurso de Santiago Abascal en Vistalegre Plus Ultra*, is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDOvL1CDZeo>; accessed April 10, 2022.

²For exceptions, see López-Rabadán & Doménech-Fabregat 2021; Rama, Zanotti, Turnbull-Dugarte, & Santana 2021; Turnbull-Dugarte 2019a,b. For scholarship on leftist populism in Spain, see, among others, Sola & Rendueles 2018.

³See voxespana.es; accessed April 10, 2022.

⁴Bakhtin (1981) first articulated the concept of chronotope to describe the representational ground of time, space, and voice that governs literary discourse, making it identifiable as a particular genre. Sociocultural approaches to language have since used the concept to illuminate the ways that individuals create and interpret meaning in everyday encounters (see, first, Agha 2007).

⁵Of course, this is an incomplete history. I have tried to distill the main political events and processes since the civil war that, today, most often get taken up in chronopolitical rhetoric.

⁶Paul Preston (2012), a well-known British historian and specialist in modern Spain, acknowledges that there remains some debate over these statistics. He also points out that, significantly, both sides

participated in the violence. Republican factions tortured and killed army officers and Catholic clergy, totaling approximately 50,000 of the victims of direct warfare. Nevertheless, their acts were impelled more by outrage than determined by deliberate policy, and they waned considerably as the war raged on.

⁷At the time I am writing in early 2022, this proposed law has yet to be officially approved.

⁸The official Vox hymn can be heard on YouTube, *Vox – Himno electoral 2019*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KApLvLP7MxE&t=100s>; accessed April 10, 2022.

⁹Given the monologic nature of these excerpts, I have broken them up into rhythmic units that correspond more or less to distinct ideas. This is meant to organize and facilitate comprehension of my analysis. In my transcripts I use double parentheses (()) to indicate the audience reaction of applause; I use brackets [] for clarifying information that was not uttered.

¹⁰A pdf of this manifesto is available at <https://www.voxespana.es/noticias/100-medidas-urgentes-vox-espana-20181006>; accessed April 10, 2022.

¹¹Such a reference presumes an average age of around forty or younger among members of the audience. In fact, Rama et al. (2021) describe the typical profile of Vox supporters (in contrast to those of many other populist radical right parties) as male, not necessarily educated, and sometimes young.

¹²Interestingly, this is not a direct quotation from the speech but rather a reconfiguration of various fragments to fit the medium of Instagram.

¹³This photograph was included in an article titled *Abascal a los pies de Don Pelayo* ('Abascal at the feet of Don Pelayo') on *El Español*, an independent online newspaper, published on April 12, 2019. See https://www.elespanol.com/espana/politica/20190412/abascal-don-pelayo-espana-cuestionada-separatistas-islamistas/390461839_0.html; accessed April 10, 2022.

¹⁴The YouTube video of this speech no longer exists. At the time I am writing, it is already three years old—an eternity in the hyper-charged mediasphere in which Vox and its peers operate. Here, I am using a transcript of the speech that I made when the video was released in 2018. Unfortunately, I did not measure the duration of the applause breaks.

¹⁵These quotations appear in a press release that was published on Vox's official website on March 18, 2021. The release is titled *Hermann Tertsch nos presenta el nuevo libro 'Memoria histórica': Amenaza para la paz en Europa* ('Hermann Tertsch presents to us the new book "Historical memory": A threat to peace in Europe'); see <https://www.voxespana.es/noticias/hermann-tertsch-nos-presenta-el-nuevo-libro-memoria-historica-amenaza-para-la-paz-en-europa-20210318>; accessed April 10, 2022.

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