



Digital marketing and participatory culture in the religious brotherhoods: an analysis of the Luis Gordillo case

Marketing digital y cultura participativa en el ámbito cofrade:
un análisis del caso Luis Gordillo

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Abstract

This study examines the intersection of memes, marketing, and religious culture within the Brotherhood of La Macarena, focusing on the use of Luis Gordillo's contemporary art for the 2025 Holy Week poster. Memes, beyond digital humor, function as marketing tools and as "cultural capital" in religious contexts. Through social media, as well as digital and print media, the study evaluates their impact on visibility, debates, and engagement with younger audiences. Using digital metrics on platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, the results reveal significant interaction and virality surrounding the poster. This demonstrates how memes can reinterpret religious symbols and enhance cofrade communication in the digital era. The research highlights

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their strategic value in religious marketing, proving that memes can serve as more than just entertainment—they are a transformative tool for communication and engagement in religious organizations. The study recognizes the ethical challenges of using memes in religious contexts, highlighting the importance of respectful and strategic treatment of these communication resources.

Keywords: cyberculture, religious communication, digital marketing, participatory culture, social media

1. INTRODUCTION

Memes have evolved from recreational use to functioning as semiotic and rhetorical tools that articulate political and social discourses (Arroyo-Almaraz and Díaz-Molina, 2021; Shifman, 2014), with an impact on politics (Cortazar, 2014), marketing (Muñoz, 2014), and movements such as 15M and Podemos (Ruiz-Martínez, 2018). Defined by Milner (2012) as cultural capital and exploited by brands such as Netflix (Arroyo-Almaraz and Díaz-Molina, 2021), this study transfers its analysis to the field of religious brotherhoods, focusing on Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de La Macarena (2025). Two objectives are proposed: OE1, to evaluate its impact on social media by analyzing hashtags and mentions; and OE2, to analyze its media coverage using tools such as MyNews and digital newspaper archives. However, it is emphasized that its use must be framed within respectful and ethical communication to prevent the humorous manipulation of religious symbols from being perceived as disrespectful.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Origin and evolution of the concept of meme: from biology to digital virality

In 1976, Richard Dawkins coined the term "meme" in *The Selfish Gene*, using the analogy of the biological gene to describe how ideas, customs, and behaviors are transmitted culturally. Like genes, memes are units of information that replicate and evolve in their social ecosystem. According to Dawkins (2004), these "genes of culture" explain phenomena such as cultural evolution.

Memes act as cultural elements that survive and reproduce in different groups, combining with others (Blackmore, 2000). They can be ideas, beliefs, languages, or expressions that spread like viruses through interactions and social networks. Their replication is key to their expansion, since, according to Dawkins (1976), memes endure as long as they can adapt to new contexts.

Dawkins (1976) establishes three core properties in memes: longevity (ability to remain over time), fecundity (ability to reproduce), and fidelity (transmission of their original form, although subject to mutations). Pérez et al. (2014) argue that memes replicate in two dimensions: cross-curricular (across different groups and eras) and longitudinal

(across generations). Their cultural diffusion is favored by psychosocial factors, consolidating them in the collective imagination.

The Internet recontextualized the concept of memes as viral content on the web (Bueno, 2021). Heylighen (1996) explored their evolution on the Internet and how this medium facilitates their global spread. Pérez et al. (2014) suggest that digital memes should be analyzed as cultural objects that reside in the minds of users and in the digital environments where they are replicated.

2.2 The Internet meme: a cultural tool in the digital ecosystem

Internet memes have established themselves as central pieces of "digital folklore" (Goriunova, 2011; Rey and Martín, 2025). They are understood as media units that spread rapidly and transform creatively (Shifman, 2014); also as "units of information" replicated in digital environments, collective and dynamic in nature, based on imitation and differentiation (Davidson, 2012; Lankshear and Knobel, 2007; Shifman, 2014). Their power lies in humor, participation, and ease of propagation, which promotes interaction, communities, and virality through irony and cultural references (Jenkins et al., 2013; Yang, 2022). This rapid dissemination influences social trends and discourses (Malodia et al., 2022; Ruiz-Martínez, 2018). In digital marketing, they generate engagement and bring brands and audiences closer together, especially when they use simple and accessible structures (Brubaker et al., 2018; Chuah et al., 2020; Csordás et al., 2017). Humor is key: four styles and seven techniques have been identified, and the combination of catchy phrases with visual templates drives virality (Bury, 2016; Taecharungroj and Nueangjamnong, 2015). However, its unpredictability and lack of control carry reputational risks for brands (Casey, 2018; Sharma, 2018).

2.3 Between the sacred, the popular, and the digital: religious memetics

In recent years, memes have burst onto the scene in various cultural and social spheres, including those where communication traditionally followed rigid and formal structures, such as religious brotherhoods and fraternities. This phenomenon is not only a form of playful or subversive expression, but also reflects a transformation in modes of social interaction, where the sacred, the popular, and the digital converge (Alonso, 2015; Cristófol et al., 2024; Cristófol, 2024) and are reconfigured in transmedia communication environments in line with Shifman's perspective (2014).

The viralization of images, religious symbols, and brotherhoods on social media shows how these elements are reinterpreted and given new meaning through humor and participatory Internet culture, as demonstrated in the work of Cristófol et al. (2024) entitled *"Art and controversy in Seville's Holy Week: The impact of Salustiano's poster."*

The aforementioned work on Salustiano's Seville Holy Week poster is a clear example of this dynamic: the conversion of religious and brotherhood elements into fertile ground for the creation of memes. This phenomenon transcends simple humor,

inserting itself into a complex dialogue between religious tradition and contemporary digital culture (Cristófol et al., 2024). More recently, Luis Gordillo's poster for the Macarena Brotherhood in 2025 has also sparked mixed reactions on social media (Luque, 2024), generating everything from controversy to humorous interpretations that turn brotherhood symbols into objects of pop culture (Ruiz-Martínez, 2018).

In this sense, Luis Gordillo's poster (Figure 1) is particularly illustrative. His artistic proposal, characterized by an abstract and minimalist aesthetic, sparked intense debate in the brotherhood community, with some sectors considering it a work of great conceptual significance and others dismissing it as incomprehensible or inappropriate (Márquez, 2025). However, what was initially a source of controversy quickly became a viral phenomenon. The digital community appropriated the poster, generating multiple memes on X, Facebook, and Instagram, in which its formal characteristics were exaggerated or transferred to other humorous contexts, facilitating its dissemination and reinterpretation (Gil, 2025). As Shifman (2014) and Phillips (2015) have pointed out, successful memes are not only shared but also modifiable, allowing for creative intervention by users. In this case, the reductionist aesthetic of the poster encouraged the creation of humorous versions on in which other symbols of Holy Week were represented using core and humorous strokes.

Figure 1. Luis Gordillo's "essentialist" poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena 2025 (source: Hermandad de la Macarena, February 25, 2025)



Beyond humor, memes articulate alternative discourses on religious tradition and brotherhood identity in the digital age (Campbell et al., 2014), as evidenced by the viral spread of Gordillo's poster, understood as a process of cultural reinterpretation between respect for the sacred and popular appropriation of symbols (Durkheim, 1912; Campbell, 2013). In the digital ecosystem, the boundary between the sacred and the profane is blurred, and sacred elements are humorously recontextualized without necessarily implying desacralization (Cristófol et al., 2024). However,

religious/brotherhood memetics carries risks: unpredictability and lack of control can cause discomfort, as in the case of RTVE's 2025 New Year's Eve countdown with the meme that combined the Gran Prix cow and the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Casey, 2018; Sharma, 2018; Batalla, 2025). Overall, there is a hybridization of the religious and the popular, where humor and intertextuality redefine symbols; memes can be both social criticism and identity reaffirmation depending on context and intention (Campbell et al., 2014). For Holy Week, this places brotherhoods and confraternities in a new communicative scenario governed by virality, to which confraternity marketing responds with digital strategies aimed at visibility and *engagement* (Alonso, 2015). In this context, Luis Gordillo's work for the Brotherhood of La Macarena serves as a case study of the interaction between sacred art and digital culture: its controversy and virality show how memetics amplify dissemination and position the Brotherhood in the debate on the modernization of the confraternal imaginary. This forces us to reflect on the boundaries between communicative innovation and respect for religious tradition. This work does not seek to trivialize the sacred, but rather to analyze how participatory culture processes affect religious communication from an academic point of view.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study combines content analysis and digital tools to measure the virality and impact of the memetic phenomenon on social media and other media. Content analysis is defined as a systematic and quantitative technique for identifying patterns in media messages and social networks (Wimmer and Dominick, 2013), and is presented as a robust method for assessing brand strategies in digital marketing and organizational communication (Sarmiento-Medina et al., 2019). In digital environments, its validity for studying interactions and virality processes is supported by the literature (Cuevas-Molano et al., 2019; Krippendorff, 2018). The case analyzed is Luis Gordillo's poster and its impact on Holy Week 2025, delimiting a window from publication to five days later, with monitoring of mentions and emerging trends. Given that memes are sustained by interaction dynamics on platforms, the study requires parameterization and data assessment (Shifman, 2014; Burgess and Green, 2018). To this end, key metrics such as reach, engagement, and media impact are incorporated and applied to the poster and the derived memes (Phillips, 2015).

- FanpageKarma: used to monitor Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X and extract interactions (likes, comments, shares), publication frequency, organic reach, and mentions related to the poster and its dissemination; its usefulness for measuring organizational engagement is well documented (Cristófol et al., 2024).

- MyNews: allows the media coverage of Gordillo's poster to be quantified and the narrative about the Hermandad de la Macarena in the print and digital press to be analyzed, identifying discursive trends and impact on public perception based on searches for "Hermandad de la Macarena," "Luis Gordillo," "viral poster," among others.
- Google Trends: evaluates search trends for the poster and its memes during the period studied and contextualizes interest in it by comparing it with other religious events.

This approach seeks to understand how religious marketing, the figure of Luis Gordillo, and transmedia strategies can revitalize visibility and connection with new generations without losing the essence of religious traditions. The analysis focuses exclusively on visibility and virality metrics, without making value judgments about the artistic or religious relevance of the memes generated.

In addition to digital metrics, the content analysis included a core classification of the materials according to their textual component (messages, hashtags, and communicative tone) and visual component (graphic and symbolic elements of the memes linked to the poster). This distinction, inspired by previous approaches to memetic analysis (Shifman, 2014; Krippendorff, 2018), made it possible to contextualize the indicators of virality with the discursive strategies present in the publications, reinforcing the coherence between the quantitative data and the cultural dimension of the phenomenon.

Table 1. Media in which the impact of Luis Gordillo's pictorial work for the Hermandad de la Macarena in 2025 is analyzed (source: own elaboration)

Media analyzed	Description of the analysis
Facebook profile of the Brotherhood of La Macarena (https://www.facebook.com/HermandaddeLaMacarena/?locale=es_ES)	Number of posts and analysis of the interaction and transmediality of corporate posts
Instagram profile (@lamacarena_hermandad)	Number of posts and analysis of interaction and transmedia of corporate posts
Official X profile (@lamacarena_hermandad)	Number of posts and analysis of interaction and transmedia of corporate posts
Official TikTok profile (@hermandad.de.la.macarena)	Number of posts and analysis of interaction and transmedia of corporate posts

Google Trends	Search trends for keywords related to Luis Gordillo and La Macarena
MyNews	Number of news articles published using the keywords "Hermandad de la Macarena" and "Luis Gordillo" in online and print media.

4. RESULTS

The various social media accounts of the Hermandad de la Macarena registered up to 139 posts, although only 12 were dedicated to Luis Gordillo's work for the brotherhood itself. All of them were made between February 25 and 26, although the analysis period extended until March 2, 2025. The distribution of posts was uneven, with a marked concentration on platform X, where the official profile published 7 of the 12 posts related to the work. The official Instagram and Facebook profiles recorded only 2 posts each, while the YouTube profile only disseminated one post through the Macarena TV broadcast.

Table 2. Distribution of social media posts by platform, number of likes, number of comments, number of reactions, comments and shares, and interaction rate (source: own elaboration)

Date	Message	Social Network	No. of likes	No. of comments	No. of reactions, comments, and shares	Interaction rate
February 25, 2025	Luis Gordillo visits the exhibition commemorating the centenary of the kissing of the hand of the Virgin of Hope at the CajaSoul Foundation hours before presenting his poster for our Brotherhood. The painter was accompanied by the bullfighter José Tomás. #hermandaddelamacarena #lamacarena	Instagram	3856	86	3942	7.03
February 25, 2025	This evening (8:30 p.m.), Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena will be presented at the Basilica. This is a milestone in the career of the Seville-born painter, an artistic reference point for generations of creators, as it will be the first work dedicated specifically to a brotherhood. #hermandaddelamacarena #lamacarena #art #luisgordillo	Instagram	1020	30	1050	1.87

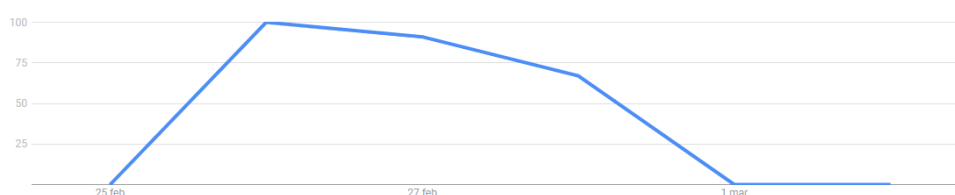
Februario 25, 2025	Luis Gordillo paints two posters for the Hermandad de la Macarena featuring an "essentialist" Virgin of Hope. The works reflect the artist's "first impression" upon seeing a photograph of the Virgin through Gordillo's own expressive language. https://t.co/s7FUWTIRmu	Twitter	265	1	737	1.01
Februario 25, 2025	Luis Gordillo visits the exhibition commemorating the centenary of the kissing of the hand of the Virgin of Hope at Cajasol hours before presenting his poster for our Brotherhood. The painter was accompanied by the bullfighter José Tomás. Alejandro Ochoa	Facebook	313	51	475	0.52
Februario 25, 2025	Introduction of Luis Gordillo's poster for the Brotherhood of La Macarena	Facebook	91	106	322	0.35
Februario 26, 2025	Introduction of the poster by Luis Gordillo - Brotherhood of La Macarena Introduction of Luis Gordillo's poster for the Brotherhood of La Macarena	YouTube	33	14	47	0.2
Februario 25, 2025	Luis Gordillo visits the exhibition commemorating the centenary of the kissing of the hand of the Virgin of Hope at @Cajasol hours before presenting his poster for our Brotherhood. The painter was accompanied by the bullfighter José Tomás.	X	37	4	51	0.07
Februario 25, 2025	This evening (8:30 p.m.), Luis Gordillo's poster for the Macarena Brotherhood will be presented at the Basilica. This is a milestone in the career of the Sevillian painter, an artistic reference for generations of creators, as it will be the first work he has dedicated specifically to a brotherhood.	Twitter	38	3	50	0.07%

Februario 25, 2025	Teacher Gordillo recognises that "this is very difficult for me, I was very afraid to take on this task; for an avant-garde artist like me, it put me in a bind to make a poster for La Macarena."	Twitter	30	1	45	0.06
Februario 25, 2025	@Alvaro_Heras_ "To say Macarena is to say Seville, and to say Luis Gordillo is to say Macarena. Thank you for leaving us Luis Gordillo's Macarena. Thank you to the Brotherhood of Macarena for putting Seville and its Holy Week at the forefront," Manuel Alés.	Twitter	24	1	29	0.04
Februario 25, 2025	@Alvaro_Heras_ "The Brotherhood has Luis Gordillo's Macarena. God bless you, Luis," Brother Mayor.	Twitter	20	0	22	0.03%
Februario 25, 2025	Follow the live introduction of Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena 2025 on our channel #MacarenaTV	Twitter	6	0	7	0.01

Instagram stood out as the network with the best results in relation to Gordillo's work: Luis Gordillo's visit to the exhibition commemorating the centenary of the kissing of the hand of the Virgin of Hope at the Cajasol Foundation, hours before presenting his poster and accompanied by José Tomás, received 3,856 likes, 86 comments, and an interaction rate of 7.03%, demonstrating the excitement generated by the Brotherhood's commitment to an internationally renowned contemporary artist. Similarly, the second post with the best metrics was the announcement of the introduction ("This afternoon (8:30 p.m.) Luis Gordillo's poster for the Brotherhood of La Macarena will be presented at the Basilica... #hermandadellamacarena #lamacarena #art #luisgordillo"), with 1,020 likes, 30 comments, and an interaction rate of 1.87% on the Brotherhood's official Instagram profile; this post ranked as the image with the best interaction rate among the 139 analyzed. After the introduction, the best data on X (the Brotherhood's official profile) came from the post "Luis Gordillo paints two posters for the Brotherhood of La Macarena featuring an 'essentialist' Virgin of Hope...", which recorded 1.01% interaction and 747 comments, reactions, and shares. In terms of hashtags, #luisgordillo and #art served as vectors of dissemination and visibility, both with 1.87% interaction. The analysis of the visibility and virality of the work, owned by

the Brotherhood of La Macarena, was carried out using Google Trends and My News, allowing its impact on searches and the press to be contextualized. In Google Trends, the terms "Macarena" and "Gordillo" reached a value of 100 on February 26, 2025 (Figure 2); on the tool's 0–100 scale, this peak indicates the highest relative volume of searches for the period/location analyzed, attributable to media coverage, high-impact events, digital campaigns, or spontaneous public interest. The literature has shown that these search trends often reflect shifts in public opinion and cultural dynamics (Lorenz et al., 2022).

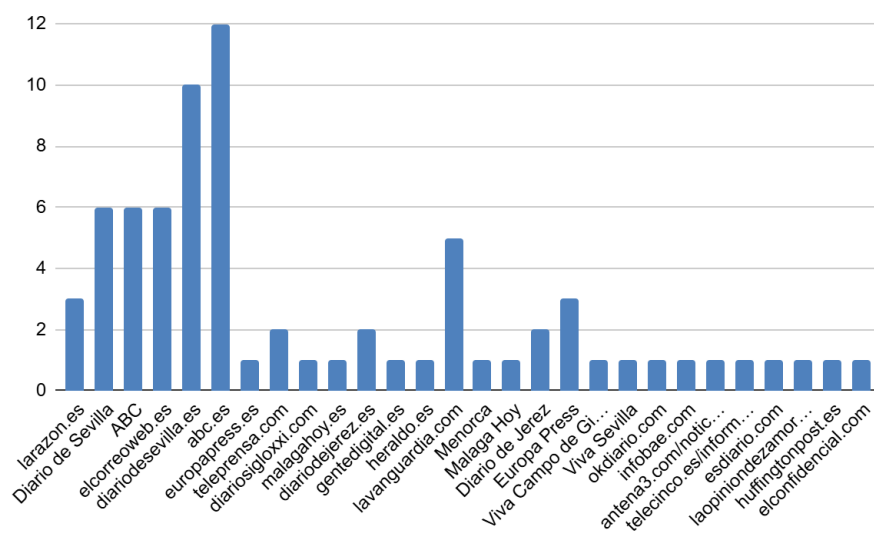
Figure 2. Interest over the period analyzed in searches for the terms "macarena" and "gordillo" on Google (source: own elaboration)



For its part, the Mynews digital newspaper archive has recorded a total of 76 publications related to Gordillo's pictorial work for La Macarena in the period analyzed, spread across 29 media outlets. It should be noted that most of the publications have been digital and all of them correspond to the national scene.

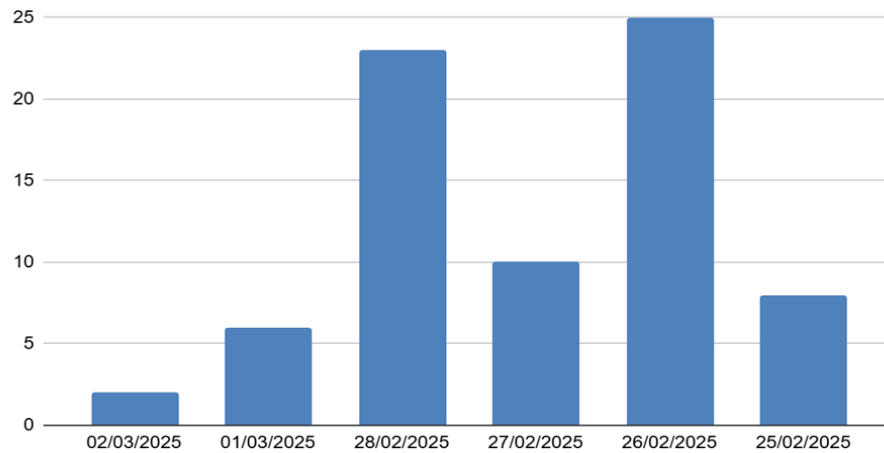
The media outlet with the most coverage was ABC de Sevilla, a portal specializing in the province of Seville. This media outlet dedicated 18 publications between its print version and its online version to Gordillo's poster, consolidating itself as the main disseminator of the news, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Distribution by publication of news items during the period analyzed on Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de La Macarena 2025 (source: own elaboration)



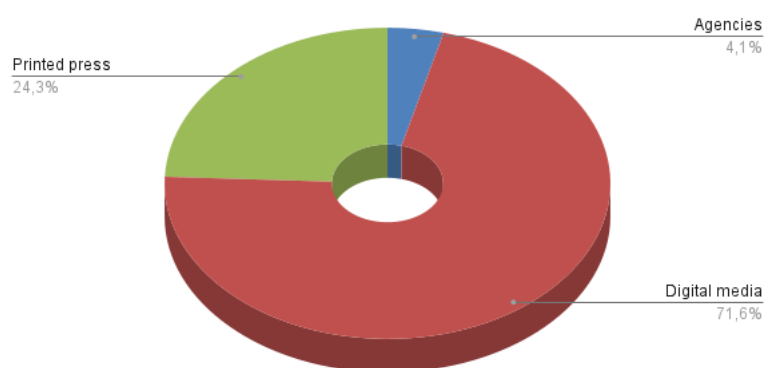
News coverage of Luis Gordillo's poster has been uneven, with peaks of greater coverage on key dates (Figure 4). The period with the highest concentration of publications occurred between February 26, the day after the poster was unveiled, and February 28, when the debate reached its peak of social interaction. These first two days accounted for 65.78% of all news coverage.

Figure 4. Distribution by publication date of news items in the period analyzed on Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de La Macarena 2025 (source: own elaboration)



The analysis of the data detailed in Figure 5 reveals that media coverage was dominated by the digital press, accounting for 71.6% of total publications, followed by the print press (24.3%) and news agencies (4.1%).

Figure 5. Classification of published news according to the type of media outlet for news items during the period analyzed on Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de La Macarena 2025 (source: own elaboration)

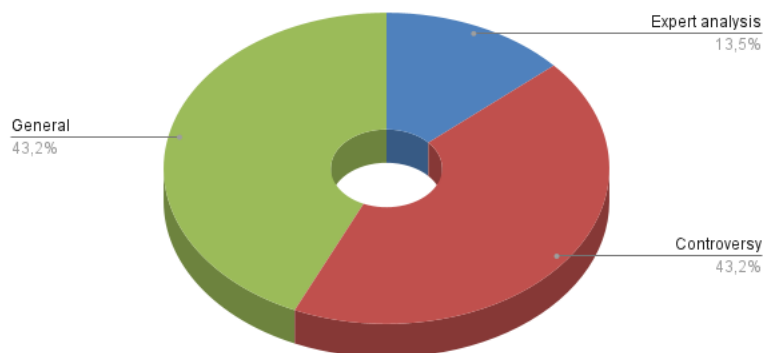


Finally, the subject matter of the news in the media, detailed in Figure 6, shows how the predominance of digital media highlights the viralization of the topic on online platforms, where the speed of information dissemination has been decisive in amplifying the debate. The print media, on the other hand, has approached the news from a more analytical perspective, with articles published in newspapers such as ABC, Diario de

Sevilla, and Málaga Hoy. These media outlets have focused on the relationship between the poster and the debate on the coexistence of contemporary art and religious tradition. News agencies, such as Europa Press, have played a core role in the distribution of information, allowing the news to reach a national audience and a greater number of media outlets.

Overall, Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena has not only generated widespread media coverage, but has also opened up a debate on artistic representation in the religious brotherhood sphere, achieving significant dissemination in various press formats.

Figure 6. Topics covered in the news about Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de La Macarena in the media (source: own elaboration)



5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study confirms that memetic strategies in the digital communication of brotherhoods and religious orders have an impact on engagement and operate as a key tool in religious order marketing (Cristófol, 2024). The analysis of metrics and media impact of Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena in 2025 shows how digitization enhances its reach; memetic logic amplified its national projection through humorous formats and comparative techniques, personified or exaggerated, in line with what was described by Taecharungroj and Nueangjamnong (2015).

The controversy that arose was articulated in a polarized debate on platforms such as X (Twitter) between those who defended the work as a valid artistic expression and those who considered it a digital reinterpretation of religious and brotherhood values. The central point of friction was the abstract representation of the Virgin, which generated diverse perceptions regarding its artistic and symbolic appropriateness. This rejection was reinforced by the usual reception of contemporary art, accused of hermeticism, elitism, a break with figuration, or a lack of "beauty," criticisms that David Freedberg (2017) identifies as recurring in *Iconoclasm*.

The study's hypothesis argues that the viralization of the poster and the online debates, far from threatening tradition, may favor its preservation, reinterpretation, and projection into the 21st century by extending interest in Holy Week beyond religious circles and incorporating young audiences. Although the analysis of the youth impact focuses on social media, the phenomenon transcends the digital realm: the controversy spread to traditional media, everyday conversations, and symbolic acts of protest; there is even mention of the intervention of the face of the Virgin of Macarena, showing that youth participation goes beyond "likes" and translates into appropriation and reinterpretation of symbols.

To gauge the negative reaction, the study refers to the role of images in religion and their intersection with contemporary art: iconoclastic debates about the representation of the sacred are historic. In Christianity, devotional images function for many believers as a window to the sacred; when contemporary art bursts in with different and sometimes provocative aesthetic codes, it can be perceived as profanation or trivialization (Freedberg, 2017).

Finally, digital culture complicates and accelerates this intertwining: it democratizes dissemination and debates, but immediacy and virality amplify controversies. The Gordillo case exemplifies how historical debates about religious imagery and criticism of contemporary art are reconfigured in the digital environment, generating new forms of interaction, participation, and conflict around popular religiosity (Taecharungroj and Nueangamnon, 2015; Freedberg, 2017; Cristófol, 2024).

In line with these results, it can be said that the memes associated with Gordillo's poster acted as vehicles for the symbolic reinterpretation of the brotherhood tradition, articulating humor, emotion, and debate around the sacred. As argued by Milner (2012), and Campbell and Sheldon (2021), memes not only disseminate content, but also create spaces for dialogue where communities negotiate cultural meanings. In this sense, the viralization observed did not necessarily imply irreverence, but rather a form of devotional participation mediated by digital culture, where popular creativity amplifies institutional visibility and reinforces brotherhood identity on social media.

The study complies with OE1 by evaluating the impact of Luis Gordillo's poster in terms of visibility and engagement through hashtags and mentions: Instagram led the interaction with a rate of 7.03% in the most prominent publication, confirming its effectiveness for visual communication of brotherhoods (Alonso, 2015; Cancelo et al., 2015; Cristófol Rodríguez, 2024), while X remains a key channel in the brotherhood ecosystem (Cristófol and Ramos-Ruíz, 2024; Cristófol et al., 2024).

With regard to OE2, analysis of media coverage using MyNews and newspaper archives shows that 71.6% of news items about the poster appeared in digital media, reinforcing the transition of brotherhood memetics to online media and its translation into media narratives about Holy Week; a pattern comparable to that observed in fashion and politics during digitization processes (Casey, 2018; Sharma, 2018). This highlights the

advisability of applying corporate communication and digital branding; as was the case with the Salustiano poster, a well-designed strategy turns the traditional into a digital phenomenon with media impact, although it requires proactivity beyond spontaneity (Cristófol et al., 2024).

On Twitter/X, despite a higher volume of posts, interaction rates were low (<1.01%), so its value lies in generating conversation and debates, in line with previous findings on participatory culture and the formation of brotherhood opinion during the pandemic (Cristófol et al., 2024).

Finally, the viralization of the poster (Figure 7) followed the pattern of memes as participatory cultural discourse: ease of reproduction, ability for modification, and connection with pre-existing narratives (Shifman, 2014). In brotherhood marketing, incorporating these elements can maximize impact on social media (Arroyo-Almaraz and Diaz-Molina, 2021).

The media impact of the poster confirms the digitization of brotherhood journalism, with online media at the forefront: immediacy, interactivity, and conversation on social media are now essential for institutional relevance, forcing brotherhoods to adapt their strategies to these dynamics (Bellar et al., 2013). In this environment, religious memes shape perceptions of faith by simplifying and popularizing content, and function as cultural units that are transmitted and adapted to different contexts, a fact made visible in the recent evolution of religious brotherhood communication (Bellar et al., 2013; Campbell and Sheldon, 2021).

Figure 7. Several memes that were developed after the introduction of Luis Gordillo's poster for the Hermandad de la Macarena 2025 (source: WhatsApp)



Integrated into a vision of religious brotherhood marketing, digitization expands the reach and enables new forms of interaction with the faithful, generating immersive and participatory experiences (Berraquero-Rodríguez and Cristófol, 2025). The exploration of interactive formats, such as augmented reality, opens up avenues for the faithful to interact with posters and works, adding an innovative dimension to traditional iconography (Burgos-Goicochea et al., 2024). At the same time, the integration of branded content into digital narratives reinforces the bridge between tradition and contemporaneity and brings brotherhood culture closer to young audiences (Sánchez et al., 2021).

Recent cases, such as the viralization of Salustiano García's poster for Seville's Holy Week 2024, show how memes amplify the reach and generate new cultural readings of the brotherhood tradition (Gallego, 2024). Far from trivializing, these representations keep the conversation about popular religiosity alive and connect with new audiences. Looking ahead, the ability of brotherhoods to adapt, incorporating elements of the memetic phenomenon and innovative communication strategies, will be decisive for their relevance and reach. La Macarena's experience with Gordillo's poster shows that virality, far from threatening tradition, can be an ally for its preservation, reinterpretation, and projection into the 21st century.

5.1 Ethical considerations

The use of memes in religious contexts raises significant ethical challenges. While they are a powerful tool for digital communication, it is necessary to avoid trivializing sacred

symbols. This study highlights the importance of brotherhoods framing these practices within an institutional respect for tradition, using participatory culture as a bridge to new audiences and not as an element of irreverence.

6. AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT ACCORDING TO CRediT TAXONOMY

Diego Berraquero Rodríguez: conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; research; data curation; original draft writing; writing-revision and editing; project management.

Francisco Javier Cristòfol Rodríguez: software; validation; research; resources; visualization; supervision.

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