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OUR FATHER, YOU WHO ART ON TWITTER

A multimodal analysis of the representation of Catholic belonging and identity through the official social media accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News.

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Abstract

The amount of people who proclaim themselves as belonging to a Christian community is declining in the western world, and a growing number of people are today defining themselves as non-believers or non-denominational. This thesis concerns religious identity making and belonging in relation to how religious identity is being represented in appealing for a sense of belonging on social media platforms. Social media has become an integrated way of communicating in today's society, not only for private use but also for sharing official statements and messages from Presidents, celebrities and religious leaders. This thesis will be thus be studying how the Catholic Church is trying to keep, retain and get new members into the Church through the official social media accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News on Twitter and Instagram. The research is accordingly focused on the following research question: *How is Catholic identity represented through the social media accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican? And how are these representations used in appealing for a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church in their online followers?*

The empirical data for this thesis has been collected on the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram with a primary focus on the tweets and posts of the official accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News. Due to the fact that all the data has been collected online, I have chosen to meet the data collection with a netnographical approach. In order to analyze the content of the tweets and posts, the methods of semiotics and discourse analysis will be applied in making a multimodal approach to the analysis. The research should thus reflect the wanted effects of the Catholic Church when posting a certain picture or writing a certain tweet in studying how these are helping in representing the Catholic identity and a sense of belonging.

The theoretical framework of the thesis will be based on identity and identity making as posed by Stuart Hall and James Mercia, the sense of belonging aspect as posed by Nira Yuval-Davis and the social media theory as posed by Nick Couldry and Tracy L. Tuten. These theoretical and methodological approaches will be used in the construction of the analysis.

The analysis of this thesis will be in three parts: 1) Twitter: A holy discourse, 2) Instagram: Digital icons and representation of Catholic belonging and finally 3) Hashtags: Spreading the word. The first part is concerned with the discourse posed by the Pope and Vatican News on Twitter, whereas the second part is focused on the Catholic imagery posted on Instagram, and the final part will

concentrate on the social media aspect of the distribution methods of the representations of Catholic identity and belonging. These parts will supplement each other with a specific focus on discourse in the first part, and semiotics in the second part, while multimodality will be applied through all three parts. These three parts of the analysis will be used in answering the problem formulation focused on how the Catholic Church is representing Catholic identity and using in appealing for a sense in belonging in online followers.

The study thus discovered that the Vatican News and Pope Francis work in concert in representing the Catholic identity. It was found that the Church used social media to represent their identity through a value laden religious discourse and images in trying to create a shared conceptual map in order to reach more positive connotations about the Church and thus create a sense of belonging. The study, concluded that the Church is presenting their conservative morals and doctrine in a positive way in representing the Catholic faith by arguing the belief in their divine authority and thus also represent the terms of belonging to the Catholic faith. It could be observed that the Church used these representations and hashtags in appealing for a sense of belonging and creating an online Catholic community where people can connect and identify through the tie that is the Catholic Church.

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Introduction

Social media have become a big part of most peoples' lives today. We use social media to connect with friends, family and co-workers, we use them for sharing music and funny videos, to watch the news or see how people react to the newest episode of Game of Thrones. As a means to reach out to as many people as possible, actors, musicians, artists, CEOs, organizations, politicians, presidents, almost everyone of fame is also using the social media platforms in one way or another. Social media

have become a major part of many people's lives that even religion is now attainable via social media such as Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook. You can join religious discussion groups on Facebook, learn how to study your Bible or Quran on YouTube, follow the Pope on Twitter or share pictures of your latest visit to the Church, Mosque or Synagogue on Instagram. Religion has, as such, like every other aspect of life become present for the 'show-and-tell hour' on social media.

Despite this growing presence of religion on social media, the number of people acknowledging themselves to the Christian faith is declining in the western world with more and more people recognizing themselves as non-believers or non-affiliated, and the Catholic Church is no different in this decline in members in the western world. The Catholic Church has, in particular, been exposed to several scandals especially with priests committing sexual assault against children. Despite these cases, many people still identify with the Catholic Church and thousands of people still show up to see the Pope when he is on official visits around the world. As such, the Catholic Church can often be observed to be present in many cultures around the world today.

The Church still has influence, however indirect, in many ethical issues across different nations regarding topics such as abortion, homosexuality, contraceptives etc. I find the aspect of religious identity and belonging to the Catholic Church in today's world interesting especially in a world where opinions against homosexuality, gender equality and abortion are becoming more unpopular.

In this project, I thus find it interesting to investigate how the Vatican and Pope Francis use the social media in trying to create a unity in shared identity and sense of belonging among people around the world, Catholics and non-Catholics alike. In relation to this, I will be investigating how the Catholic Church uses social media to keep, retain and acquire people to the Catholic Church. To do this, I will be looking at the official accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican (Vatican News) on the microblogging social media sites of Twitter and Instagram to make a multimodal analysis of how they through the use of discourse and semiotics try to create a sense of belonging in their followers on the social media, and see how this might be helping towards forming a common identity among Catholics. As such my problem formulation is:

How is Catholic identity represented through the social media accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican? And how are these representations used in appealing for a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church in their online followers?

Thesis Structure

This project will be structured so that I first discuss the current situation in the Catholic Church, after which I will present relevant theory which I will be using, as well as give a methodological outline of how the project will be conducted in relation to the problem formulation. As such, an analysis will be made followed by a literature review and finally a conclusion.

Firstly, I will give a basic account of the current situation in the Catholic Church with a specific focus on the statistics concerning the Catholic membership status, Papal administration and the social media and current topics within the Church. This will work as the informational background concerning the issues the Catholic Church is faced with today and how this might affect Catholics. This will also work as an insight when analyzing the difficulties and motivations the Church might have when issuing certain Tweets and posts on their accounts.

In the theory chapter I will be describing the three major theories I find relevant for this study, which will be identity and identity making, the belonging aspect and social network theory. I will use these three theories in order to investigate who the Church is communicating in order to further the sense of belonging in their online followers. Moreover, the theories will also be useful in studying how the Church is using social media in order to represent a Catholic identity. I will, moreover, also see how this identity making maybe helps to create a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church through the use of social media, and use the social network theory to see how the Church is advocating their message to others.

After this, I will be moving on to the methodology section, where I will be clarifying my research design, my ontological and epistemological considerations, my data sampling and my inclusion of the method of discourse, semiotics and multimodality. All these will be applied in order to research the problem area and answer the problem formulation.

From this, I move on to the analysis of the project. The analysis will be divided into three parts: 1) Twitter: A holy discourse, 2) Instagram: Digital icons and representation of Catholic belonging and 3) Hashtags: Spreading the word. Each chapter has two sub-chapters. While I take my point of departure in the platforms themselves (hashtags being a function within both platforms), I will be focusing on specific methods within each main chapter. While all of my selected theories will be present within all chapters, there will be a specific focus on discourse in the first chapter, semiotics

in the second chapter and multimodality in the final chapter, as I believe these platforms call especially for application of these three methods. My theories of identity, belonging and social media theory will be equally present within all three chapters.

After the analysis, I will continue to the literature review. The reason for placing the literature review after the analysis is that it was difficult to find already existing academic literature which covered the subject concerning the presence and effect of the Catholic Church on the social media. Through the analysis, I happened to find two articles *How Religious Communities Negotiate New Media Religiously* (Campbell, 2012) and *Twitter of Faith: Understanding Social Media Networking and Microblogging Rituals as Religious Practices* (Cheong, 2012) within the book *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture* that covers some of the aspects within the field of study of this project. As these sources only cover fractions of my research areas, and some of them are outdated, I have not been able to rely on already exciting literature throughout my analysis, which is why the literature review will be placed as a form of discussion after the analysis itself, where I will be discussing my findings against the content of these sources.

Finally, I will end the project by gathering my findings from the analyzed data to draw a conclusion on my finding.

The current situation in the Catholic Church

In this chapter, I will clarify the current situation in the Catholic Church with a focus on statistics concerning: membership in the Catholic Church, the development of the Catholic social media and on the current debates involving the Church. I will do so as I find it relevant to elucidate the problem areas of the Catholic Church and study what they are doing to prevent a decline in Catholic membership. Investigating these areas will be relevant in studying the motivation for the issued tweets and posts made by the Church and how they are approaching difficult ethical areas of opinion. The clarification of the Church's situation and opinion will work in understanding the wanted messages issued on the social media which will work as the basis for further analysis in the project.

Statistics

The Catholic Church has been a powerful institutional force in the construction of society in the western world and a prominent actor in politics and state matters for centuries. Historically, the

Catholic Church has been on the top of the hierarchy in many western countries but today the Church has lost its direct power in politics and other state affairs. It would, however, be naïve to believe that the Catholic Church has lost all its power and indirect influence on the politics in the world's countries. Due to the grand number of Catholics in the world, the Church still has influence on people's opinions on heated subjects such as abortion and homosexuality. The Catholic Church is the biggest Christian Church in the world (Barooah, 2017) and what is interesting to observe is that while the Catholic Church is growing worldwide, the Catholic membership in the western world is declining (Zenit, 2016). A report made by the Pew Research Center showed that as of 2010 there were 1.1 billion people worldwide who identified themselves as Catholics; this includes people belonging to the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church as well (Barooah, 2017). It is of importance to note that the Eastern Orthodox Church and their followers will not be investigated in this project, as they do not recognize the Pope as their leader. In this project, the focus will be on how the Pope and the Vatican is trying to reach people through social media; and as the Eastern Church and their followers do not consider the Vatican as a part of their Church, an inclusion of the followers of the Eastern Church will be irrelevant for this study.

The Pew Research report studied how the membership status of the Catholic Church has changed on a global scale since 1910 to 2010. The Catholics numbered in this research is those who identify as Catholic, but do not necessarily go to Church regularly or adhere to the Catholic sacraments (Barooah, 2017). The study showed that the biggest Catholic population could be found in Brazil, where 127 million people identify themselves as belonging to The Catholic Church. Italy, the Catholic Church's stronghold and home to the Vatican, is number five with 49 million members (Barooah, 2017). The 10 most Catholic countries in the world are in percentage, in order: Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, US, Italy, Colombia, France, Poland, Spain and Congo (see appendix). These countries are partitioned over five continents, which are South America, Asia, North America, Europe and Africa with the most followers in South America (Barooah, 2017).

The demographic status of the Catholic Church has changed from Europe being the stronghold of Catholics with 65% acknowledging themselves as Catholics in 1920, to only 24% in 2010, while the growth in South African and Asian countries has been fast. The numbers of Catholics in South and North America has been growing too, however more slowly than the other regions. While the demographics of the Catholic Church has changed, the overall world population of Catholics is

almost the same at 16% of the world's population in 2010 in contrast to 17% in 1910 (Barooah, 2017). The decline in believers occurs in many Christian denominations, especially in the western world as more and more young people acknowledge themselves as 'unaffiliated' or atheist (Gray, 2016). In 2015, CARA (The Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate), conducted a grand research on young Americans, who no longer identified as Catholics, as they saw a decline in young Catholics (Gray, 2016). In the research they found that one of the main reasons given as to why they were no longer members, were that they 'needed proof' or simply that what they learned during their education lead them to the conclusion that science and religion could not coexist (Gray, 2016). CARA thus investigated the numbers of millennials who had received education on Catholic schools, which showed that there was a rapid decline in Catholics who attended Catholic based schools. This study showed that 42% of American Catholics did not attend Catholic based education, as opposed to only 24% in between 1961-1981 (Gray, 2016). CARA thus concluded that the Catholic Church had to reach out to people in another way than through the school system.

Papal administration and the social media

The 13th of March 2013 Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now known as Pope Francis, became Pope of the Catholic Church (Guardian, 2018). He took over from Pope Benedict who resigned to 'Pope Emeritus' because of health reasons. This was an uncommon practice in that the tradition states that a Pope should keep office until death. Pope Benedict was born in Germany, and was as almost all of his predecessors European (Levs, 2013). At the resignation of Pope Benedict, people started to express their hopes for a non-European Pope. Because of the big Catholic population in other continents such as in South America, people found it only relevant that the Church should install a non-European Pope (Levs, 2013).

Pope Francis is born and raised in Argentina, and as such, he became the first non-European Pope in a long time (Levs, 2013). The previous Pope Benedict was considered conservative and he was criticized for putting a stop to the development in the Catholic Church (Pullella, 2013). Pope Benedicts' time as a Pope, 2005-2013 (Guardian, 2018), was much affected by the many child abuse cases within the Church. In spite of his traditional ways, Pope Benedict did become the first pope ever to use the social media, which he did on the 12th of December 2012 with a message on Twitter. The Pope did, unlike Pope Francis, not become a frequent user of the social media, but he did talk

about the media platform in positive terms, calling it a 'New Language' to evangelize the Catholic message with the world (McDonald, 2013).

Pope Francis took over the Twitter account, @Pontifex, and in 2016 he also joined Instagram with the account @fransiscus (Stack, 2016). In December 2017 the Vatican created a new brand and logo and connected all their social media platforms and in January 2018, they could count four million followers of Vatican News on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube (Harris, 2018). The Church's focus on the use of social media began in 2014 when Pope Francis created a commission to examine the most recent developments on social media and come up with ideas on how the Church should communicate on the internet. In 2015 this led to the start of the Secretariat of Communication whose job it is to show the Church's presence on social media, and as such work as a link between the Church and the Catholics around the world (Harris, 2018). Another aspect they changed was that all the news coming from the Pope and the Vatican became available in multiple languages, usually: Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and sometimes Polish (Harris, 2018). The Church argues that this action was made to create a uniformity to the Church, where all Catholics can find news about the Catholic Church on the same page despite language differences. Pope Francis has over 44 million followers on his Twitter profile and more than five million followers on Instagram, which are all communicated through nine languages (Harris, 2018). At the 50th World Day of Social Communications, the Pope praised communication via Social Media by saying that:

"It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. Communication, wherever and however it takes place, has opened up broader horizons for many people. This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility. I like to refer to this power of communication as 'closeness'."

(Herald, 2016)

The Pope, however, warned that while the social media can be a good thing and bring people together, it could also divide and create 'unfair attacks' (Harris, 2018). This message of the social media was made one year before the launch of the now uniformed 'Vatican News', made to avoid polarization of Catholics on social media (Harris, 2018). The Church argues that social media can work as a way of evangelizing the word of God to more people and by having their followers 're-

tweet' and share the content of Pope Francis' or the Vatican's posts, the people belonging to the Catholic faith will become more visible in the world of social media. One could argue that if the Church can make people who identify as Catholic more visible in the social media world, they could also have an impact on others as well, so that the Catholic Church can regain some of their lost members. This aspect, however, will be analyzed further in the analysis.

The current topics in the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has often been included in debates over grand moral values such as; homosexuality, abortion, pedophilia and preservatives. One of the reasons for this is that the Catholic Church and the Pope functions as a stronghold for many Catholics as their moral compass for ethical issues. As mentioned, the papacy of Pope Benedict was heavily concerned with the many cases of pedophiles within the clergy of the Church. Even though the subject has been present during Pope Francis' papacy, it has not been the main topic of the Holy See. Some of the more reoccurring debates in the Church are those of homosexuality, the marriage position of the priests, abortion and contraception in third world countries. In this section, I will shortly describe some of the most current issues in the Catholic Church. I will do this to show where the Church stands on big important moral issues and how these, arguably, 'old-fashioned' opinions are shaping the way people are looking at the Church. As these issues are approached on the social media of both the Pope and the Vatican, I find it relevant to map out the basics of the issues here.

Married men and women as priests?

The Catholic Church is not only loosing members but they are losing Clergy as well. The number of men who choose to live as a Catholic priest is falling every year. In France the average age of priests is 60 years old and in Ireland, known for its Catholic population, only six men admitted themselves to the priest seminary in 2017 (Brown, 2017). The problem of missing Clergy to attend to the Catholic members is a worldwide problem, especially in Brazil. Pope Francis has stated that he wants to put an end to the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood (Brown, 2017). While this is welcomed and supported by many Catholics, the Clergy within the Church is in conflict on the matter. Bishops have argued that the Catholic Church simply cannot afford to pay for a priest and his family who is serving the Church (Brown, 2017). Bishops from Brazil, however, are supporting the Pope in his suggestion in that they are seeing more and more people turning to the evangelical Church where men are allowed to have families. This is a very current and important issue in the Catholic Church, as it puts

the Pope against the Catholic Clergy, something which makes him popular with the Catholics around the world, but shakes the ground for the Church itself. The Church and the Pope, however, stands firm on the prohibition of women being ordained priests, much to the disappointment of feminist Catholics (Kirchgaessner, 2016). Pope Francis was asked this question in relation to the need for Catholics priests where he stated that the inclusion of Catholic priestess was not possible (Kirchgaessner, 2016). The dissatisfaction of some with not allowing women within the Clergy could have an effect on the Catholics around the world, and as such the position of women within the Church will be discussed within the analysis.

The Church's view on LGBT and contraception

The Catholic Church is often faced with questions about its position on homosexuality and the LGBT community. In the last 25 years, the Church has developed a more open dialogue towards the LGBT community. In his 1992 Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II stated that homosexuality and homosexual tendencies as being 'objectively disordered' (Merritt, 2017). This statement has received criticism in that it categorizes homosexuality as a disorder. However, in 2013 Pope Francis took the first step towards the LGBT community as he answered "Who am I to judge?" when asked about the Church allowing gay priests (Merritt, 2017). Since then, Pope Francis has argued that the Church should meet the LGBT community with respect and dignity. He has, moreover, also stated that the Church needs to be more visible in the battle against the discrimination of sexual minorities (Merritt, 2017). In 2017, the Catholic Priest and author of the book: *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community Can Enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity*, James Martin, was chosen by the Pope to be a consultant to the Vatican's Secretariat for Communication. James Martin states that his place is to find a way in which the Catholic Church can meet the LGBT community, not only with tolerance but with acceptance and welcome (Merritt, 2017). He states that the focus should not be on a person's sexual orientation but whether or not the person loves Jesus. This openness towards the LGBT community is not popular among all the Church clergy, where some argue that people like Martin furthers the acceptance of 'sinning behavior'. The Church, however, still holds on to the decision not to marry homosexual couples, as the Bible states marriage should be between a man and a woman.

The final recurring issue of the Catholic Church that I am going to touch upon, is that of the use of contraception. Catholics have in popular culture often been labeled as having families with many children as the Church does not allow contraception. The Catholic Church argues that the use of e.g. condoms is immoral and promotes immoral behavior (Wynne-Jones, 2010). The issue has been reoccurring because of the HIV/AIDS situation especially in African countries, where the spreading of these diseases could be prevented if the Pope gave his permission for people to use it (Wynne-Jones, 2010). In 2010 Pope Benedict addressed the matter and loosened the Church's standpoint on contraception, saying that *'the use of prophylactic when the sole intention is to reduce the risk of infection from AIDS is acceptable'* (Wynne-Jones, 2010). Pope Benedict, however, still argued that the Church did not see it as a moral solution, but necessary in critical cases, such as the AIDS issue. He argued that the reason why the Church was against condoms was because it did not preserve life, but in the case of AIDS, it would not preserve life to have unprotected sex, and as such condoms were permissible (Wynne-Jones, 2010). In relation to the current project, it might be seen that keeping a life in either celibacy or taking the risk of getting pregnant, is hard for many people. Therefore, I will be analyzing some posts and Tweets issued by the Pope and Vatican News how they approaches these problem area.

Theory

Identity and identity making

In this project, there will be a pronounced focus on identity, identity making and representation of identity in Catholics through the use of social media. By taking my point of departure in Stuart Hall's notion of identity and James Marcia's theory of identity making, I will be able to describe the concepts of identity and identity making. In addition to these theories, I will also be focussing on the connection between identity making and the representation of self from the perspective of Hall and Marcia. I will thus be implementing the theoretical concepts of identity and representation in the analysis with a focus on how the Catholic Church is trying to help enforce or regenerate a shared Catholic identity in Catholics around the world through the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram. The representation aspect will be taken into account in relation to how the Catholic Church represent Catholic virtue and values via social media.

When defining the concept of identity, we might think of an already fixed set of morals and values printed within a person which depicts his or hers cultural background. If we believe the identity of

a person to be a fixed state of mind, we would not only be able to deduct that person's past but also be able to predict possible future choices of that person based on the given cultural identity. Hall, however, argues that identity is not a fixed set of values, nor it is something that is ever completed, but it is a continuous development of the self (Hall, Cultural Identity and diaspora, 1990). Hall talks about identity as a production and permanent ongoing process of creating identity within the given person (Hall, 1990). As such, Hall does not regard identity as a universal life force within us, which is based on a shared cultural background. Rather, Hall argues that the construction of identity is through the means of narration and shared discourses of culture and history, which will also be touched upon later in the project.

In this project, identity will not be grounded in that of national identity, but in the religious identity of the Catholic Church. When studying the Catholic identity, it can be found that the Catholic identity is integrated in the narratives of many different national cultures e.g. the national identity of the Irish, the Italians and the Brazilians. Catholicism is, as such, a part of the narrative of many different national identities. In this project, it will be investigated how the Catholic Church represents itself and its values and how it tries to represent a shared Catholic identity across different national identities with a focus on how the Church is trying to keep Catholics. As I am going to be studying the effects the Catholic Church attempts to have on people through the social media, I find it relevant to include James Marcia's aspects of identity development. I will use this as a way to understand the identity making and representation of identity made by the Catholic Church. When studying the identity process, Marcia argues that the identity resolution is based on the degree to which the person has experienced and committed to a specific identity in different areas such as sexuality, profession, morality, religion etc. When a person tries to achieve a self-constructed identity, Marcia states that there are two parts to creating an identity, which are crisis and commitment (Marcia, 2012). In the state of crisis, the young person evaluates the lived experiences and previous values installed from childhood. In this crisis, the person can either 'return to base' or construct a new identity. When the person has undergone the crisis of identity, he/she will reach the stage of commitment, where the person has evaluated his morals and values on their own (Marcia, 2012). This does not mean that once the commitment has been made that it is not changeable. As Hall argues, identity is something which is always fluid and changeable, but the concept of identity making in relation to a person's cultural background is particularly relevant in

the study of how the Catholic Church might be trying to reach out to Catholics in the pursuit of trying to make them continue to define themselves as Catholic.

Marcia argues that there are three aspects of identity: structural identity, phenomenological identity and behavioural identity (Marcia, 2012). Structural identity is something which is created at a specific time of life, so that you develop certain areas of identity at a certain age, at different stages throughout life. The phenomenological aspect of identity is more concerned with the individuals forming and constructing an identity based on lived experiences. Here Marcia talked about the difference between the formation and the construction of identity. The formation of identity is where the person becomes aware of his or hers background and position in society, e.g. are my family and I Catholic? Am I high class, low class, middle class? And so on. Whereas the construction of identity is where the individual reflects upon the status of his or hers social position in the world and begins to make active decisions about if he or she wants to change from the already formed childhood identity. Finally, there is the behavioural identity, where the person has committed to an identity and practice it openly (Marcia, 2012). One of the more pronounced examples of this would be if a person identifies with the Goth community and thus wears black clothes, dark make-up and facial jewellery to show his identity. However, in most cases it can be less visible than that; in relation to the Catholic behavioural identity we might see that the person chooses to wear a cross necklace, religious pendant or have religious icons at home. The behavioural identity is not only shown but it is also practiced, e.g. a very faithful Catholic might wait to have sex before marriage or choose to go to Church on Sundays, pray the rosary often etc. Behavioural identity is thus what can be observed by others, and is as such a way for the person to perform and create his/her own identity (Marcia, 2012). These behavioural actions and use of images would work as signifiers to show others one's identity. The scope of this project will thus be to investigate how the Church might be appealing for an identity commitment and behavioural actions in identifying and belonging to the Catholic Church. The concept of belonging and signifiers will be discussed in greater depth later on. The aspect of identity will work in investigating how the Church is representing and creating its own identity, but also how they are trying to make other people adopt a Catholic identity as well.

The idea that identity has a behavioral aspect can be connected with Hall's idea that identity is represented and constructed through the use of language. Hall thereby observed identity as

something which creates a form of meaning making through the use of language. The creation of identity is then based on language, representation and meaning and can thus be described as a development where identity is created in between people within a given culture (Hall, 1997). These notions correlate with that of Marcia's notions on construction and formation, as well as behavioral action in the creation and expression of identity.

According to Hall, there are two systems of representation: One is that of the mental representation, while the second works on the concept of representation through the use of language. Hall claims that if a community or group has the same cultural background, they would interpret certain elements to have the same meaning based from their shared cultural background, and as such have a shared conceptual map based on their formed identity (Hall, 1997). Just as identity, representation is something that is ever changeable and is a process of producing not only meaning but also culture, which is why the concept of identity and representation are so closely connected in that we create and observe identity through the means of representation (Hall, 1997). In terms of representation of identity through language, Hall states that for people to be within the same culture they must have matching 'cultural codes'. Cultural codes are defined as having the same viewpoint on specific topics (Hall, 1997). What will be interesting regarding this project is that I talk about the Catholic Church as a 'sense of belonging' and an 'identity', while Catholics come from around the world and do not share the same national identity or cultural codes. Can one even talk about a 'Catholic language' or a 'Catholic cultural code' that would connect Catholics around the world, despite their differences? This will be investigated further in the analysis.

Catholic identity

In this section, I will clarify what might be perceived as specific traits of the Catholic identity and how this is expressed and defined in the world today. This section will work as an extension of the identity section.

In the book: *Catholic Identity or Identities?: Refounding Ministries in Chaotic Times*, the author Gerald Arbuckle argues that Catholic identity is firmly rooted in the action of storytelling. Arbuckle states that the practice of storytelling has been important for the development of the Church since Jesus Christ. Narratives do not only to create identity, but they also show and express one's identity to the world. Arbuckle acknowledges this and stresses the importance of the telling and retelling of Catholic narratives in the continuation of an active Catholic identity (Arbuckle, 2013). One of the

issues presented as the difficulties in maintaining a Catholic identity in the world today, is the pluralistic approach to faith. It can be argued that in a world with many different religions and paths within Christianity itself, and with a consumer approach to religion, it becomes more difficult for the Catholic Church to hold on to their members. Arbuckle argues that it is hard to make people with no or very little faith believe in the teaching of the Catholic Church, such as the sacraments, papal infallibility, confession etc. if people have not exposed to it growing up. Since the Catholic Institutions such as hospitals, schools, retirement homes etc. are becoming less Catholic and with a decline in users, it is important to hold on to the narratives of the Catholic identity and show one's identity e.g. through the use of social media and that Catholics should lead by example.

The Church has been working as a 'top-down' organization in relation to Catholic teaching and while this is still the case, a more dynamic power change can be observed within the Church, where they have looked at the wants and desires of their followers in order to be a more 'living Church' (Arbuckle, 2013). Taking from Hall, Marcia and Arbuckle, one could argue whether one of the major reasons in the apparent decline in members in the Catholic Church in the western world could be that of the lack of retelling of narratives in relation to the belonging to the Catholic faith. In a Church that has faced many scandals shared by the mass media, it can be perceived as hard to define what one believes; what does it mean to be a Catholic? Am I pro contraception or against? What is a woman's purpose in relation to the faith? Etc. As such, it can be argued whether the Church might be trying to unify and strengthen the Catholic identity through social media, where Catholic narratives and expression of identity classification can be shown and discussed. This will be investigated further in the analysis.

Belonging

In this section, I will explain the theory of belonging. I will do so as I find the theory concerning the belonging aspect relevant in terms of belonging to the Catholic Church. I will be drawing on the theoretical standpoint of Nira-Yuval Davis. The concept of belonging will be implemented in the analysis of how the Church tries to represent themselves in creating a sense of belonging in their follower and how this belonging is expressed through social media.

Professor Nira Yuval-Davis has been focusing much of her research upon the theoretical concept of belonging. According to Yuval-Davis, people can belong in many different ways to different things, which can be everything from something concrete as a nationality, to something abstract like a

philosophy or religion. As such, belonging can work as the identification of self in relation to others. In her article 'Belonging and the politics of belonging', she distinguishes between three concepts of belonging; which are: *Social Locations, Identification and Emotional Attachment* and *Ethical and Political values* (Yuval-Davis, Belonging and the politics of belonging, 2006). These three notions will work as different analytical stages when investigating the belonging concept. The different levels of belonging should be seen as interrelated and should not stand alone in a thorough analysis of the concepts (Yuval-Davis, Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging, 2011). The three levels of belonging should be observed as intertwined concepts fulfilling each other rather than opposing each other. The social locations are coined with a person's identification and emotional attachment, which also creates ones ethical values. These three levels of belonging will be used in the analysis of the belonging to the Catholic Church.

Social Locations

When talking about belonging to a social location, Yuval-Davis states that the social location of a person is based on different 'groupings' such as: gender, class, age, sexuality, race, religion etc. (Yuval-Davis, 2006). A person belongs to several of these social locations. An example to this is for instance that a woman is not just a woman, she could be a white Christian middleclass gay woman in her 40ties, and as such she belongs to several social locations. Most people, however, focus on a few of their social locations in identity making, focusing on the locations they think are most important in defining who they are. The scope in this project is to investigate how the Catholic Church is trying to represent themselves as being the most important social location there is. Yuval-Davis argues that the social locations of a person should not all be understood a fixed arenas in which the person cannot change from, but rather as fluid positionalities which can be changed at the persons will or ability to do so (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This idea connects well with Hall's concept of identity as something which is fluent.

Yuval-Davis stresses the importance of applying an intersectional approach in the studying of a person's social locations. Intersectionality works by observing and studying how the different social locations are intertwined within an individual or community (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Yuval-Davis argues that an intersectional approach to the social locations of belonging is of great importance because a persons' belonging '*are virtually never constructed along one power axis of difference, although official statistics*/as well as identity politics*/often tend to construct them in this way.*' (Yuval-Davis,

2006, p. 199). As such, the different social locations should not be considered isolated factors, but rather as elements which organize each other. The aspect of social locations can be seen as the 'first level' in analyzing the concept of belonging, as the social locations of person or a group is considered in both the emotional attachment and identification, as well as the politics of belonging; which will be looked into in the next paragraph.

In the analysis, it would be of importance to consider the different elements of social locations in the identity making process. It could be argued that some social locations of a practicing Catholic might be of greater importance for a non-believer in that one's gender and sexuality for instance changes the status of the Catholic in relation to the morals and values of the Catholic faith. In order to answer the problem formulation, it will be relevant to consider the social locations and divisions of Catholics when searching for a sense of belonging. One of the ways this will be investigated is by looking at how the Church via the social media is trying to include people belonging to different social locations. When considering the aspects of social location, it will be possible to understand the concept of belonging to the Catholic Church and how the Church tries to further the sense of belonging in their followers.

Identifications and emotional attachments

Identification is often created through the use of narratives, narratives and stories that we tell about ourselves or that other tell about us (Yuval-Davis, 2006). People use narratives in defining and explaining to others and themselves who they are and to what group they belong. While the outcome of the telling of a narrative is often subconscious, it is still crucial in the identification of self and in defining one's belonging. While most personal narratives are concerned with the classification of a persons' belonging to a group, the narratives of personal stories defines one's individual belonging to e.g. Sexuality, abilities and so on, are just as important.

A narrative can be a way to describe one's, and sometimes others', understanding of what it is like to belong to that group or community and what that might mean (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Narratives concerning a certain group might vary depending on who is telling the story as that person chooses the parts he finds most representative of the community or group. As such, a narrative is constructed and reproduced from person to person and from generation to generation (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The way one person might identify with the Catholic Church might be completely different

from another. In this way, a person does not only define the criteria of belonging for oneself but also states the criteria for belonging to the group for others (Yuval-Davis, 2006). These identity narratives work in the aspect of belonging in the fact that they constitute what is needed to belong to certain communities; they can relate to your need for a common past, act in a certain way in the present or how you should live now and in the future (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, it will be investigated how the Church is using these identity narratives with a focus on a common past, present and future in appealing for a sense of belonging in their followers. Belonging can be observed to have performative dimensions, where you need to act in order to belong to a certain group. This notion of performativity is comparable with Marcia's concept of behavioral identification. In relation to Catholicism, the performativity of belonging include going to mass, having a rosary, having Icons in your home, participating in the sacraments etc. Yuval-Davis states that the behavior of an individual and/or collective, '*are crucial for the construction and reproduction of identity narratives and constructions of attachment*' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 203). These performative acts are not just acts of identification, but also of emotional attachment (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

So what does it mean to be a member of a religious group such as Catholicism? Are there any criteria? In England in 2001, a study was made to find out how many people acknowledge themselves as Christians and believers. The study interestingly showed that while 72% of the British people labeled themselves as Christians, only 35% said that they believed in any sort of deity (Antonsich, 2007). This was an interesting outcome in that it would be fair to believe that the numbers of believers and Christians would be about somewhat the same. So, what this information gives us is the clarification of the importance and need to belong, however passive this belonging may seem, it works as a way which fits the narrative of self (Antonsich, 2007). Why people describe themselves as Christian without the belief in a God, may be because of the cultural practices we have assigned to the faith. In the UK, as well as the western world in general, they celebrate Christmas, Easter, sing hymns at special occasions, get married in Church and many other practices involving the Christian Church. Antonsich states that we have a majority of people who are belonging without believing (Antonsich, 2007). From this it can be observed that people might identify with a certain sense of belonging because of their emotional attachment to the community, while they may not fulfill the apparent 'requirements' for belonging to that specific group. The

difficulty for the Church is to try and make people active in their religious life in order to be full members of the Catholic Church. People can be said to have a yearning to belong to communities and that people produce their identity through the development of being, becoming and belonging (Yuval-Davis, p. 202).

Ethical and Political values of belonging

A final, yet important, level in the concept of belonging is that of the ethical values and politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The previous two parts of the belonging aspect, social locations and emotional attachments, are mostly concerned with the identification of self, where this part is more focused on the reaction to a person's/institutions' positioning in society. At this level, the focus is on how a person or community is valued and judged by others. Yuval-Davis argues that people with the same social locations might be identifying with the same group, but not have the same definitions as to where the boundaries of belonging to that particular group should be drawn. One might not value a particular location as important, but may perhaps be valued by other communities as something which is good or bad; homosexuality for instance, which leads us onto the politics of the belonging aspect. The politics of belonging is as described by Yuval-Davis:

"a comprise of specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies which are themselves being constructed in these projects in very specific ways and in very specific boundaries (i.e. whether or not, according to specific political projects of belonging Jews could be considered to be German, for example, or abortion advocates can be considered Catholic). (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 4)"

Much relevant for the study of the Catholic Church is the notion set by Yuval-Davis, that citizenship should not just be understood as being a member of a specific nation, but that the citizenship of a person is multi-layered in the way he or she participates in being a member. Being an Italian Citizen is just not seen on the fact that he or she has an Italian passport, but if that person participates in the cultural aspects of what being Italian is. Does he speak Italian? Does he know the cultural practices? Is he a Catholic? And so on. The politics of belonging can thus be seen as the boundaries which parts people and groups into an 'us' vs. 'them' situation.

Social Media

In this subchapter, I will look at social media in relation to how it is used and see how the Catholic Church navigates within the social media field in order to reach their followers.

It will be interesting for the study to include the aspect of social network theory, and see if the Church is trying to promote their religion as a product through the use of social media. Firstly, I will describe the social network theory. Secondly, I will clarify the two social media platforms chosen for specific analysis in this project and finally, I will clarify some of the tendencies observed on religion on the social media. It is important to state that this project will not be focusing on analyzing the technicalities of social media, but rather how the Catholic Church uses social media in order to represent Catholic identity and appealing for a sense of belonging in online followers.

Social Network Theory

Social media can be described as the online communication connecting communities, organizations and people. Professor Nick Couldry argues that the definition of social media complex as '*social media exist within a complex and rapidly advancing environment*' (Couldry, 2012, p. 33). What might be relevant for this project regarding social media, may not be relevant in 10 years. So, how do we go about theorizing the social media of today?

Going only 20-25 years back, media was a 'one way' form of communication. You would hear something in the news or you would read an article in the newspaper and thereby be a consumer of the media. It was, however, possible, to phone a radio show, Tv distributor or write an article back in response to what you were hearing through the media, but it was far more difficult and time-consuming to have a 'two way' form of communication with the media then. Today, social media all work with several forms and levels of communication. With the rise of social media, people are not just consumers of media anymore but also creators of media with no difficulties in directly reacting to the information given by the media. As such, the media today appeal more than ever to action and interaction (Couldry, 2012).

Since the use of media through the internet has increased explosively within the last 10 years, society can no longer be limited to that of national boundaries (Couldry, 2012). Couldry argues that the way we conceive society and the mere concept of society, has been reevaluated. Couldry comments that because social media has become such a big and normalized part of our everyday lives, the consequences of the use of them are hard to define and detect. In this project, I will be trying to uncover the intentions the Catholic Church and how these intentions are communicated on social media. Social network theory works with the notions of 'nodes' and 'ties'. The word 'nodes'

is used to describe the people/actors within a network and 'ties' is used to describe the relationships between these nodes (Roby, 2014). Specific for social network theory is that it focuses on the relationships and ties within the different social media networks, where there is less focus on the outcome for the individual (Roby, 2014). Using this theory together with the theory of belonging and identity, I will be able to fully analyze both the outcome of the presence of the Catholic Church on social media and its relations and ties within social media, and *also* be able to investigate the wanted outcomes these relationships have on individuals in relation to faith.

Tuten states that social network theory regards social media as a '*set of socially relevant nodes connected by one or more relations*' (Tracy L. Tuten, p. 104). Tuten stresses that there are many forms of connections within a given community which often has a chain effect on the members, where they can go from shared experience, to online relations, to friendship. What is similar in both online communities, as well as physical communities, is that the members of a community need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance within that specific community. People value themselves and others through the definitions of belonging, created in relation in to the group criteria. As mentioned, the sense of membership within a community through connections such as hobbies, religion, music, politics etc. is important, as the members should feel a sense of belonging within the group through behavioral actions. This concept of a community's need for commonality is also called social object theory (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017), which works as an extension of social network theory. In social object theory, the object is observed as the common interest of the social network community. The object as such functions as a way to mediate interactions, ties, between the different nodes in the community. Some social media platforms, such as Instagram, are more focused on creating a community through the use of visual objects such as in pictures. The picture, thus, becomes the object which creates meaning to the platform. By sharing and focusing on the object of a specific group such as Catholicism, the group becomes specialized in that field, confirming each other in the identity formed which creates a sense of belonging based on the interaction between nodes within the social network (Couldry, 2012).

Tuten argues that when you are on social media you function as a 'node' who communicates with other 'nodes' within the same field. When several nodes are interacting, it creates a 'flow' which is described as '*exchanges of resources, information, or influence among member of the network*' (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017, p. 103). These flows can work in many different ways, and they can cross

across different social media platforms. What might be discussed on Twitter, about the Pope's visit to Brazil, may through re-tweeting and hashtags also reach Facebook, Instagram, YouTube etc. This effect is by Tuten called media multiplexity.

The social network theory stresses the importance of participation within the community for the community to thrive. Tuten argues that there are four levels a social media community needs to function properly. These are: the content of the group, the feedback it gets from others in the group, the distribution which is made within and outside the group, and finally feedback through other groups in the social network in general (Tracy L. Tuten, p. 112). In relation to the Catholic Church, they would have to share posts with good content for people to give feedback and likes because if they do not get feedback, it is not likely they will have their posts distributed either, and if they are not distributed outside the group, other groups and communities on the social network will not hear about them either, and the evangelization on the social media will come to an end. If we take the case of a virtual Catholic network, the level of participation within the virtual community and the connection with the other nodes in the group can, if strong enough, lead to the other level – that of physical participation when meeting with others (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017). This may be one of the major goals in Catholic groups, to get people from being active on the social media network to carrying out their religious practice in real life. This will be investigated further in the analysis.

Twitter and Instagram

There are many different social media platforms in which to navigate, but in this project I will be focusing on the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram. Twitter is a popular social media site which was founded in 2006 (Zarrella, 2009). On Twitter people can write small messages with a maximum of 140 characters; which is described as microblogging (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017). Blogs are webpages which are maintained by individual people who often calls themselves 'bloggers'. They can be private people, famous people, organizations etc. Common for all blogs is that they are created on a specific subject, whether it is sports, religion, motherhood or fan pages. The traditional bloggers write articles and blogs with no limit to the number of character, and entries can therefore be quite long. Microblogging is also hosted by individuals or organizations, and while they can also be based on a specific subject, they are much shorter than a blog. These short messages are also known as 'microsharing'. The regulation of leaving people to write short messages is somewhat unique to the medium. Even though Instagram allows more characters than Twitter, however, it is

also defined as a microsharing media. On the Instagram platform, people post a picture with a 'caption' underneath, describing what is happening on the photo, why it was taken, or why they are showing us the photo. This caption is often followed by hashtags. The hashtags are often used on Instagram to help people find more posts within the same category and as such widening their horizon in the field and find more people to follow. The limit of characters can pose both positive and negative effects. The positive effect could be that companies and organizations can get down to the point and people would not tire of reading long posts and loose interest. Many companies have through the last decade begun to use different social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook in their campaigns. Some of the reasons why more and more companies have begun to use the social media as opposed to TV or newspaper for advertising is, most of the time, free. Moreover, with less money they can reach more people through the use of e.g. Instagram. With the use of hashtags, 're-tweeting' and the sharing of posts an organization can promote their message, commercial or brand and have them spread quicker than through radio or TV. When using social media, companies and organizations can form their social media pages with their company colors, logos, representing pictures and so on. By using hashtags, and if they are successful in having people 're-tweet' their content, their product or message may reach out to more people and be more recognizable to people in general, also described as 'The power of the Tweet' (Zarrella, 2009). The negative effect, some might argue, would be that the level of communication within social media such as Twitter would be somewhat shallow, without any depth with the use of so few characters. Despite the cons, Twitter is one of the most prominent social media sites when it comes to 'celebrity users'. In the analysis, it will be studied how the Pope and Vatican News are navigating in these microblogging sites in advertising their messages and see how they adopt the tools such as the hashtag in distributing these messages.

Digital Religion

Belonging to a religion is usually practiced by going to a Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple etc. and by living by example, but today as there are other fields in which to show ones religious belonging. People often meet on social media because of a shared interest, and religion is one of the 'interests' that connect people on social media. The way people connect in relation to discuss and practice their religion is very different depending on the social media site. On Facebook, the platform encourages people to use 'groups' where they can confirm or discuss their beliefs with

longer conversations. Twitter allows people to make short statements about their faith, where people can comment with text or a picture. These messages are usually short and direct, whereas the discussions on Facebook might be longer and detailed. On Instagram people use pictures to catch people's attention, these could be religious imagery or a photo that first gets its religious meaning from reading the caption or hashtags attached. On Instagram people create their religious 'following-base' on related hashtags. Most all religions are represented on social media, and Pope Francis and the Vatican are no different with a presence on almost all social media platforms. The presence of especially Pope Francis on social media is particularly important for many Catholic users of social media. Pope Francis is the most prominent figure in the Catholic Church and can be describes as an 'opinion leader'. An opinion leader is someone who has influence or power, and someone who other people look to for guidance and knowledge (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017) To be an opinion leader, they need a community of followers who can acknowledge and spread their 'product' or message. Five characteristics describe opinion leaders which are: activists, connectors, impacters, active minds, and trendsetters (Tracy L. Tuten, p. 117). While the notion of opinion leader are usually used on organizations and companies, I think the concept can be well translated into the 'distribution' of faith and belonging to the Catholic Church via social media. While the Pope might not be trying to sell products for a company, he is 'selling' salvation to those who follow the criteria of the Church. The pope is often approached by different groups and nations to give his blessing to their politics on e.g. bullfighting in Spain, use of contraceptive in African countries, the refugee crisis etc. As such, the Pope can be seen to concern himself with issues based on morals rather than products.

Method

In this chapter, I will clarify the methodology which will be used later in the analysis. I will start the chapter by describing my selected research design and limitations as well as the ontological and epistemological considerations. From then, I will move on to 'netnography' which is the method I will use for collecting data, and as such also touch upon the strategies of observational vs. participant observational research. I have found it relevant to include the method of netnography in order to analyze the activity within the social media platforms via the official network accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican. Netnography will thus play an important part in creating a relevant data sample which will be illuminating some of the difficulties the Catholic Church is faced with

within the social media field. Finally, I will be describing the method of discourse, semiotics and multimodality which will be my main methods for analysis in my project. The multimodal approach will be used in analyzing the content of the posts and Tweets from Pope Francis and Vatican News. By using multimodality and the netnographic approach, I will thus be able to study why the Catholic Church issues specific posts and how the content of these posts are helping in order to create a common Catholic identity and sense of belonging to the Catholic Church.

Research design and limitations

In this project, I have chosen to approach the problem area by focusing on one case which is that of the external communication made via social media from Pope Francis and Vatican News. I have chosen to conduct a case study as my research design in order to do an in-depth analysis of the case in question. In order to answer the problem formulation, the application of different methods and theories, which I have found relevant to the research area, will be used to analyze the multimodal discourse and study how these are used in order to appeal for a sense of belonging and creation of identity in the Church's followers. Alan Bryman states that case studies usually involve the investigation of a single community, organization or person and argues that *'the term 'case' associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organization (Bryman, p. 67).'* In this case, I will not be focusing on the internal organizational structure or communication of the Catholic Church, but rather on the discursive and multimodal strategies made by the Church in order to reach a wanted effect of the people on social media.

The Catholic Church is an institution which is very complex as it has a long history and is a grand and complex area of study, which is why I deem it admissible to focus on a single feature of the grand institution that is the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church has many locations, but in this project the location in question will be that of the online location. As such, I have not chosen to focus on smaller local communities or bigger communities such as Irish Catholic, Brazilian Catholic Church etc. but have chosen to analyze the discursive and semiotical traits which have been used in the posts and Tweets issued on Twitter and Instagram by Vatican News and Pope Francis. In this way, the case of my project is that of the external multimodal communication of the Catholic Church through social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram. As such, I am limiting my research area to the most profound accounts from the Catholic Church. As an effect, the study will be limited to these platforms and not include YouTube, News Papers or other Catholic media which would/could have

other findings in them. As such, my case study is limited to that of a multimodal discourse analysis of microblogging by Vatican News and Pope Francis on the social media platforms Twitter and Instagram.

Defining a piece of research as a case study or a cross-sectional study is a question involving many details. The scope of the case study is to use an idiographic approach. This feature means that the researcher is interested in showing the traits which is unique to the case in question (Bryman, p. 69). In a cross-sectional approach, the researcher's aim is of a nomothetic nature *'in that they are concerned with generating statements that apply regardless of time and place (Bryman, p. 69)'*. While I do use a case study which would entail the idiographic approach, i.e. which would conclude something which is unique to the case, Flybjerg argues that this would be a simplification of the matter. Contrary to Bryman, Flybjerg argues that case studies can bear traits of generalization (Flybjerg, 2006). This means that while a case can be seen a unique with qualities and traits only present in this particular case, the case can be an object for exemplification in other cases. While my research is primarily idiographic, as the Catholic Church is a pretty unique institution with a unique discourse, I believe that my findings will have some elements of a nomothetic approach, as some traits within the Church might be used in other cases as well. My study will thus not be nomothetic in that is that my findings will arguably not apply regardless of time and place. My data derives from social media platforms which are ever changeable, and what might be a relevant form of communication, e.g. the use of hashtags, today might not even be present in 10 years' time. However, I do believe that some of my findings which are based on persuasive religious discourse online can be applicable within several religious groups on social media, and in that way my study will also have traits of a nomothetic nature.

When conducting a case study, it is of importance to consider what kind of case that you are working with. According to Yin there are five ways of defining cases: a critical case, an extreme or unique case, a representative and typical case, a revelatory case and a longitudinal case (Yin, 2009, pp. 47-49). In my project, I have chosen to work with a case which I would argue has elements from both a unique case and a representative case. I believe that my project concerns a somewhat unique case in that it focuses on a specific religious community with a specific multimodal way of communicating on specific social media platforms. While some of my findings are unique to the Catholic Church, I do believe that traits from the findings can be used as representative/exemplifying measures in

investigating religious discourse on social media in general. Flybjerg states that any case study is significant to any theory and that case studies are valued suppliers of insight to the social sciences (Flybjerg, p. 124). In this analysis, I will thus be focusing on the multimodal discourse analysis in order to analyze how the Catholic Church represents themselves and their values and how these strategies are used in persuading their audience.

Netnography

Netnography is a method of data collection developed from ethnography. In order to understand netnography I would first, briefly, describe ethnography. Ethnography takes its' point of departure in an anthropological approach and is especially used within the fields of sociology, cultural studies, marketing etc. (Kozinets, 2010) . According to Kozinets, the purpose of an ethnographical study is to analyze: *'the behaviors of people belonging to almost every race, nationality, religion, culture and age groups'* (Kozinets, p. 29). Hobbs explains that in order to understand cultural practices and social locations it is of importance to the ethnographical study that the researcher meets with the subject (Hobbs, 2006). As such, the primary research method of the ethnographer is often that of participant observation. While this may be the most upfront way of conducting an ethnographical research, the netnographic research can also *'include other elements such as interviews, descriptive statics, archival data collection, extended historical case analysis, videography, semiotic analysis etc.'* (Kozinets, p. 59). The question of the importance of implementing a participant observation to the netnographical study will be discussed in the next methodology sub-section.

Netnography is, like ethnography, flexible in its approach to research (Kozinets, 2010). Netnography is based on observational and participant-observational research, but in contrast to usual standards of ethnographical research, the netnographical researcher is not having any face-to-face encounters with the subjects but base their research on online communication (Kozinets, 2010). As such, the netnographer 'meets' people online and studies the action and interaction between the ties and nodes (nodes being persons) on online platforms. (Costello, 2017). When using netnography in collecting data from the communication within the field of social media one can *'arrive at the ethnographic understanding and representation of a cultural or communal phenomenon'* (Kozinets, 2010, p. 60). The inclusion of a netnographic approach will be relevant, as I will be investigating the representation accessible from the official online accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican. Netnographic research is arguably also faster, simpler, and in most cases, cost free (Kozinets, 2010).

Like ethnography, netnography uses the same six stages of ethnography which is: research planning, entrée, data collection, interpretation, ensuring ethical standards, and research representation. Kozinets, however, has simplified these steps into five steps, which is:

1. *Definition of research Questions, Social Sites or Topics to Investigate*
2. *Community Identification and Selection*
3. *Community Participant-Observation and Data Collection (Ensure Ethical Procedures)*
4. *Data Analysis and Iterative Interpretations of Findings*
5. *Write, Present and Report Research Findings and/or Theoretical and/or Policy Implications (Kozinets, 2010, p. 61)*

As such, I have in this project also, to some extent, followed the five steps of the netnographic research flow. I will, however, be focusing on points 2 and 3 in relation to the method of data collection, whereas I also include inspiration from other approaches in establishing my research question (Kozinets' point 1) and in analyzing and reporting my findings (Kozinets' points 4 and 5). Within the third step of the netnographic research method, Kozinets argues that what is unique for the study of online communication is that of: alteration, accessibility, anonymity and archiving (Kozinets, p. 60). In relation to my needs, I will be using netnography as a method of data collection rather than method of analysis.

Alteration is the way we communicate within online databases which differs from the way in which we interact face-to-face (Kozinets, 2010). There are both new possibilities and difficulties of communication within the online communities. One of the difficulties, is that the conversations through social media are more fragmented than that of a conversation happening face-to-face (Kozinets, 2010). When you have an online conversation, you can leave the conversation for hours and come back to the conversation later, making the conversation more fragmented and different from face-to-face conversation. Another aspect which is altered on some online sites is the use of keystrokes (Kozinets, 2010). I will especially have a focus on the microblogging and microsharing sites of Twitter and Instagram, where the number of keystrokes is limited. Having a limited number of keystrokes alters the way in which people communicate, making the messages more direct and

short, leaving less space for deeper explanation and discussion. Specific codes and phrases may be used by avid users to use less space when creating a message, only to be understood by the other users of that particular media, such as, say Twitter.

Anonymity is the second trait for the netnographic study. This trait can be argued to have changed since 2010 where Kozinets made this claim. Some of the traits are, however, still relevant. Costello argues that '*Netnography is particularly well suited to dealing with personally or politically sensitive topics*' (Costello, 2017, p. 3). By using online sites to communicate this anonymity also gives the node a freedom and possibility to play with one's own identity and representation of self. While I do agree that there is a certain level of anonymity on social media, it can be observed that many people have usernames either exactly as their own legal names or closely related. I argue that this anonymity is no longer as present as in the early days of online interaction, where you would have fake names and avatar photos. In the analysis, I will be investigating one 'personal' profile, where it can be observed that she uses her full name as her profile name and is therefore, not anonymous in any way. The accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News are also non-anonymous.

Accessibility and *archiving* are the last steps within the netnographical study. Doing netnographic study is, opposite some ethnographic studies, easily accessible. Most accounts on social media are open for access to all, and it is not difficult to get access to most social media accounts. In relation to this study, I have had to create an account on Twitter in order to follow Pope Francis and VaticanNews' activity on Twitter, but once I had an account I was free to follow as I pleased. The same was the case with their accounts on Instagram. I could, however, observe that when following hashtags on Instagram I found more 'closed' accounts where you had to ask permission of the account holder before gaining access. While open access can be a positive thing, it also carries something negative with it. With the 'open for all' politics of most social media sites, these sites sometimes, depending on the size or importance of the group, get mass-memberships. As such, Kozinets argues that this mass-membership can create fragmentation within the group, making it impersonal and less communal.

Archiving is also much less difficult when doing netnographic data collection. Online activities are, almost always, saved within the databases, and you have the possibility of going through all the

tweets and posts on different social media. I have, however, been taking screenshots of the most important tweets and posts just in case the account holders should choose to delete these later on.

Finishing this chapter, it is of importance to mention that Kozinets often takes his point of departure in marketing and consumption structures in relation to netnography. I will not be doing a marketing or branding analysis in this project, as I will have my main emphasis on the representation of the Catholic identity through the social media accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News.

Observation vs. Participant Observation

In this section, I will be explaining how I will be implementing the method of observational and minimal participant observational research, as I have chosen to approach Kozinets' methodology with some critical aspects in relation to the application of observational vs. participant observational research methods.

Throughout his book (Kozinets, 2010), Kozinets argues for the use of a participant-observational research method when doing a netnographic study. He stresses that by *'removing the participative role of ethnographer from netnography also removes the opportunity to experience embedded cultural understandings'* (Kozinets, p. 75). Kozinets thus argues that in order to understand the communication within the social media field, one must simply participate and not just observe. While I agree with this statement, I do, however, not find a fully participant-observational study relevant nor necessary for every type of netnographic study. In my study, I argue that you can apply netnography with the use of an observational or 'minimal participant-observational' method if it fits with the problem area of the study. Kozinets does, however, also argue that several other researchers have been arguing for and using an observational or minimal participant-observational approach in their studies *'asserting that 'covert studies' of online communities are sometimes desirable'* (Kozinets, p. 74). Bryman describes a minimally participating observer as someone who *'observes but participates minimally in group's core activities. Observers interact with group members but observation may or may not be the main source of data.'* (Bryman, p. 443). In my study, I will be working in between using an observational method and a minimally participant-observational method. The reason why I have chosen not to make a fully participant-observational study, is that my problem area is to observe and study how the Catholic identity is represented on the social media accounts of Pope Francis and the Vatican. As such, the question does not lead to a necessary participating aspect within the field of study. If I were to study how Catholics interact

among themselves within the social media field, I would find it more relevant and crucial to participate, just as suggested by Kozinets.

The way in which I will be applying the minimally participant observational method in my study is by having created a Twitter account and used my already existing Instagram account to follow not only Pope Francis and Vatican News social media accounts, but also some of the accounts of Catholic content and Catholic individuals. While Facebook is not my media of study in this project, I have also joined Catholic discussion groups on Facebook, where I have had unofficial conversations with some of them. I have also been using some of the hashtags created by the Church to investigate how many people use these hashtags and how they are used in creating a Catholic identity and sense of belonging. As such, it can be argued that I participate minimally within the community. When participating in a group or online, one also has to be careful not to shape the conversations, actions or relations within the group to fit one's own agenda for a research study. While I do not follow the fully participant observation role as Kozinets argues for, I do recognize his stance on the fact that the netnographic study should deliver a good description based on the continuous observation and/or involvement of the researcher within the online community made on a daily basis (Costello, p. 4).

While I argue that I use a minimally participant observational method in relation to netnography, I do believe that my problem formulation is leading to the use of a predominantly unstructured observational study. Unstructured observational method is described by Bryman as follows: *'Unstructured observation does not entail the use of an observation schedule for the recording of behaviors. Instead, the aim is to record as much detail as possible the behavior of participants with the aim of developing a narrative account of that behavior... the term unstructured observation is usually employed in conjunction with non-participant observation'* (Bryman, p. 273). In this project, I will not find it beneficial to be making a structured observation in my research, as I find it more relevant to apply an unstructured minimally participant observation to my research area. The unstructured minimally participating observational method will also be used in relation to the investigation of the discursive and semiotic framework of the content of the posts issued by the Church.

Discourse

In this sub-section, I will be describing how I will be using discourse analysis in my project and why I find this relevant for my study. In addition to this, I will also investigate how I am going to be making a multimodal discourse analysis in order to answer the problem formulation. This aspect will, however, be touched upon in the later sub-section specifically about multimodality. In order to study the content of the posts on the social media issued by Pope Francis and Vatican News, I will be combining the methods of discourse and semiotics in order to create a multimodal analysis. As such, the implementation of the concept of discourse will be relevant in relation to resolve the problem formulation in this project.

Discourse is a complex concept to describe in that it is used within many different fields of study such as: historical discourse, racist discourse, popular discourse, gendered discourse, political discourse, religious discourse and so on (Wodak, 2008, p. 1). Within these different areas of discourse is the object of analysis, which can be: narratives, written texts, videos, political strategies, conversations, speeches, etc. (Wodak, 2008). Discourse can thus be used in both quantitative as well as qualitative research areas, however, discourse analysis is most often pushed forward to a qualitative research as it is difficult to measure and calculate discourse, rather than evaluate the quality of a speech, a talk, a text etc. (Bryman, 2012). The study in this project will be, as mentioned, of a qualitative nature, analysing the content and purpose of the posts and tweets issued by the Vatican News and Pope Francis via social media platforms.

The technicalities of discourse are in its' most pure form something which is often categorized as *'the way in which linguistic elements are conjoined as to constitute a structure of meaning larger than the sum of its parts'* (Wodak, p. 4). Discourse can thus be argued to concentrate not only on what is said, but also on the manner in which it is presented, and as such it studies the reasons why it is said and presented in a certain way (Sedgwick, p. 96). This fits well with the notion of the identification via language which has been discussed in the previous theory chapter. As stated in the theory chapter on identity and identity making, language is, according to Hall, of great importance in the sense of creating and representing one's identity. In this project, the concept of discourse will thus work in relation to observe how the Church is using: interdiscursivity, inclusion-exclusion, actions, categories, identities, vocabulary etc. (Bryman, 2012) as a way in which to communicate

their messages to the online followers. By focussing on these tools I will be collecting the primary data in order to make a qualitative study.

While I am having a focus on studying the discourse within a certain religious frameset, it is important to remember that the discourse I am studying is not a naturally occurring or casual discourse, but rather the discourse of very 'thought through' constructed organized messages sent to work as the representation of the values and morals of the Catholic Church to the Catholic followers. As the messages are reaching millions of followers, non-followers, Catholics as well as non-Catholics, it is important that nothing is left to coincidence in creating the messages which are sent out, and the collected data should therefore be treated as a structured discourse. According to Potter, discourse analysis '*emphasizes the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse* (Potter, 1997, p. 146)'. As such, I can be said to be analysing a singular form of religious discourse, namely that which is issued by the Catholic Church. As I will not compare and contrast with other religious communities, I will solely be investigating how the specific religious discourse of the Catholic Church through social media is functioning in relation to identity, and creating a sense of belonging.

By implementing the concepts of discourse in combination with semiotics in this project, I will be able to conduct a multimodal study of how the content of the posts and Tweets of the Pope and the Vatican might be trying to create a common Catholic identity and if they have a focus on creating a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church in their online followers. By having a focus on the discourse presented by the Church, I will be able to study these questions and thereby answer the problem formulation.

Semiotics

In this sub-section, I will explain how I will apply semiotics in concert with discourse in creating a multimodal analysis. The application of a semiotic framework will function in order to analyze the pictures issued by the official social media accounts of the Vatican and Pope Francis, amongst others. By having a focus on semiotics, I will be able to study how the Church represent themselves and the value/virtue of Catholic identity and belonging. In this part, I will illuminate and explain the concept of semiotics. I will also clarify why I have chosen to implement this aspect in my study and finally I will explain how I am going to apply semiotics in my analysis.

Semiotics can, in broad terms, be defined as the study of signs (Bryman, p. 559). Bryman describes the concept of semiotics as such: *Semiotics is the study/science of signs. An approach to the analysis of documents and other phenomena that emphasize the importance of seeking out the deeper meaning of those phenomena. A semiotic approach is concerned to uncover the processes of meaning production and how signs are designed to have an effect upon actual and prospective consumers of those signs* (Bryman, p. 716). As such, semiotics will work in analyzing the content of the pictures and posts issued by the Church via social media platforms in order to investigate the deeper meaning of the content and why it might have been issued. By doing this, I will be able to study what reaction the Vatican might intend their followers to have from viewing the pictures. The study of signs can thus give the opportunity to investigate the wanted outcome and purpose of using specific semiotics tools in communicating a certain message (Sedgwick, p. 306).

According to Bryman, the study of semiotics can be defined in the purpose '*to uncover the hidden meanings that reside in a text* (Bryman, p. 560)'. Semiotician Umberto Eco, argued that semiotics is often highly relevant in examining the process of communication within different contexts and social settings (Eco, 1976). The study of semiotics can, as such, be observed within several forms of text, such as pictures, commercials, billboards, paintings, traffic signs and so on. A text can be defined as a form of message which consists of a collection of different signs (Chandler, 2004, p. 3). Extended to the concept of text is the medium in which the text exists. The medium can be mass media such as: radio, books, films, television, Facebook, pictures, Twitter etc. or of interpersonal form: e-mail, skype, chat, phone call etc. (Chandler, p. 3). The study in this project will be based on the written tweets, posts and pictures of the Catholic Church with focus on Twitter and Instagram. The semiotic focus will be on the process of communication through the pictures issued by the Pope and the Vatican.

When talking about semiotics, it is of importance to note the concepts of signifier and signified, as well as the connotative and denotative meaning of the signs. According to Saussure, the signifier is classified as what we actually see, e.g. a cross. The signified is '*the meaning to which the signifier points* (Bryman, p. 559)'. In this case, the signifier of the cross might point to Christian religion or Jesus. Saussure is one of the pioneers within the field and development of modern semiotics. Charles Pierce is another pioneer within the field (Sedgwick, 2008). I will, however, only be conducting my analysis based upon the methods of Saussure and Umberto Eco, who draws from

the notions of semiotics set by Saussure. Saussure was interested in the study of signs, but also argued that language itself could be represented within the system of signs. Saussure stated that: *'Language (and the words or signs within a language) do not merely correspond to a pre-existing (extralinguistic) reality. Rather, language is seen as constituting the reality we experience* (Sedgwick, p. 306).' As such, Saussure argues that language functions through the relations of similarities and differences that exist between signs rather than just through the relationship between the components signs have to external objects (Sedgwick, p. 307).

This brings us to the next concepts within the study of semiotics, which is that of connotations and denotations. Denotation is *'the manifest or more obvious meaning of a signifier and as such indicates its function* (Bryman, p. 559)'. The obvious meaning of a cross would be Jesus, as such one can talk of a sign-function. A sign-function is an object or sign which is installed in such a way that it *'denotes a certain function'* (Bryman, p. 559). This brings us to the connotative meaning, which is *'a meaning associated with a certain social context that is in addition to its denotative meaning* (Bryman 559)'. If we take the example of the cross again, most people would likely come to think of holy, religion, virtue, death and so on. The aspect of connotation, however, is based on the values which a person adds to the meaning of the denotation of the sign (Bryman, p. 560). Connotations are valued differently depending on the culture of the person interpreting the sign. A radicalized Muslim who sees a cross might think *'Evil, heretics, false religion, anti-Muhammad etc.'*. But connotations can also be much more personal than that of the impact of culture. A given person might look at the cross and think: Boring Sundays, fantasy figure, that stupid priest in Sunday school etc. Occasionally people confuse connotation with denotations, and as such they are treating the connotations of a given sign as if it has a fixed meaning (Sedgwick, p. 309). As a researcher, one has to be aware of avoiding arbitrary conclusions based upon one's own reading of the signs, and concentrate on the focus the sender of the sign might have wanted the sign to represent (Bryman, p. 560). What is important for the Catholic Church to be careful about here, is the fact that they are issuing pictures to many different cultures, and even though most of their followers obviously would understand the signs used by the Church, they may bring other connotations of their posts than intended. A sign system is also sometimes classified as a code – a code is *'the generalized meaning that interested parties may seek to instill in a sign* (Bryman 559)'. Taking again, the sign of the cross, the pictures issued by the Catholic Church naturally have an interest in installing the sign of the cross

with a positive connotation. Semiotician Daniel Chandler states that: '*Contemporary semioticians study signs not in isolation but as a part of semiotics 'sign systems' (such as a medium or genre). They study how meaning are[sic] made and how reality is represented* (Chandler, p. 2)'. As such, the sign systems will be analyzed in trying to uncover the reality which the Catholic Church wants represented.

It is important to stress that when applying the method of semiotics, one is not only to evaluate the visual signs, but also evaluate the language itself in the study of signs (Iedema, 2003). When we investigate sign systems and linguistic sign systems, we do not only observe and define what we can essentially see, but also determine what the sign is not. When we see a cross or read the word 'holy' the word implies 'not Pagan', 'not evil', 'not secular', 'undefiled' etc., and as such the definition of what the word is not is helping to classify the meaning of the word itself (Sedgwick, 2008).

As the focus of the project is to investigate and analyze the content of the posted tweets sent out by the Catholic Church, the method of semiotics will, as argued, be relevant in detecting how the Church might use specific signifiers, signs and codes in order to draw people to the Catholic faith and tradition. When applying the method of semiotics along with discourse analysis and using them as a unity, I will be able to conduct a qualitative multimodal content discourse analysis on the activity of the Catholic Church on the social media.

Multimodality

As an extension of the two previous sub-sections, I will in this sub-section explain the connection of discourse and semiotics by using the method of multimodal discourse analysis. A multimodal discourse analysis will be applied in studying how the Catholic Church is representing itself through the use of different modes of discourse and semiotics. In this way, I will be able to analyse the content of the tweets and posts sent from the Pope and the Vatican and examine how these work in representing a Catholic identity and sense of belonging.

Multimodality can be described as, in broad terms, the study of how image and language work together in communicating and forming messages. According to Iedema, the concept of multimodality '*was introduced to highlight the importance of taking into account semiotics other than language-in-use, such as image, music, gestures, and so on* (Iedema, 2003, p. 33)'. The focus of the method of multimodality can be said to investigate all the different modes which reside within

all forms of communication, other than language. As we are being constantly presented with pictures, videos, sound effects, images and so on through television, computers, iPads or smartphones; a multimodal discourse analysis can be argued to be more relevant than ever, especially when analysing different texts communicated on online media (Iedema, 2003). It can be argued that the sharing of pictures and different texts across different international social networks are challenging people's conception of their own semiotic sign system, because so many cultures are being mixed when communicating on the mediated communication platforms (Kress, 1996, p. 34). As such, it can be argued that signs and images themselves are taking over some of the previous linguistical tasks within communication.

We are living in a mediated world in which the use of images, designs, colours etc are sometimes favoured over the use of language to illustrate representation of a product, an organization or even, in this case, virtue (Iedema, p. 33). This notion works well with that of social network theory, as it focuses on the forms of communication within the multimedia frame and how it works in relation to representation. Iedema argues that: *'The computational sphere is clearly a very influential engine behind the renegotiation of what different semiotics are made to do, with its ability to digitally represent and thus fuse into a single medium spoken and written language, image and sound. But the extent to which formal bureaucratic and corporate organizations have adopted multimodal ways of (self-) representation is remarkable too* (Iedema, p. 38)'. This statement is relatable to one of the scopes of this project, which is to investigate how the Catholic Church is using different multimodal ways of representing themselves which can, maybe, be argued to resemble that of a corporate organization or company.

While many multimodal discourse analysis studies have their major focus on the *'complexity of texts or representations as they are* (Iedema, p. 30)', other multimodal discourse studies are also focussing on how the construction of the multimodal representation functions as a *'part of larger dynamic processes'* (Iedema, p. 30). In this project, I will have a specific focus on how these multimodal representations are a construction made to be observed as a part of a larger dynamic process within the social media field. In this endeavour, the theory of social network will come into play in studying how the multimodality of the messages is being shared between the different nodes. The notion that signifiers vs. signified are not something which is fixed, fits well with the idea that identity and the showing of identity is not a fixed state, but something which is also changeable.

If it is so, as argued in the theory section, that identity is something which is performed, the multimodality of online posts and tweets can be said to enhance the forming of identity and identity making through the activities on social media platforms. This notion will, however, be approached and analysed further within the analysis chapter.

Analysis

As Pope Francis and Vatican News are very active accounts on both Twitter and Instagram, there is a vast number of posts and pictures to select from. Therefore, I have chosen to delimit focus to posts dating from December 2017 to April 2018. I have three reasons for this choice: 1. To make to study as up to date as possible, 2. The timeframe December 2017- April 2018 covers two of the biggest Christian holidays: Christmas and Easter. 3. Furthermore, the Vatican launched a new way of communicating in December 2017, as mentioned, by joining all their many websites and fora into one – Vatican News, which also had a new symbol and color. Therefore, my delimitation allows me to see how they have been communicating, since this change in communication on social media.

By choosing data which are created during and in between the most prominent Christian holidays, I might be able to see how the Pope and Vatican News might embrace these events, to evangelize the Catholic messages and study how these might work in answering the problem formulation concerning how the Catholic identity is represented by the Church and how the representation is used in appealing for a sense of belonging in the online followers.

The selected data from both Instagram and Twitter will all be present in my appendix. The Tweets will be presented with the date, the sender, the actual tweet, and the number of times it has been liked and re-tweeted. As Vatican News often link to their own news channel, I will be writing the title of the article followed by a link. The data collected from Instagram will be presented with the picture, the text written to the picture, as well as the hashtags and the number of likes. In the analysis, the data will be referenced to as this: e.g. TW2 refers to Twitter post nr.2 in the appendix and IN9 which will refer to Instagram posts nr.9.

The analysis will be separated into three parts: 1) *Twitter: A holy discourse*, 2) *Instagram: Digital icons and representation of Catholic belonging* and 3) *Hashtag: Spreading the word*. I have chosen to take my point of departure in the social media platforms and hashtags, as I believe these correlate with the different aspects of my selected theory. The first part will be analyzing data from Vatican

News and Pope Francis on Twitter, by focusing on the discourse used in representing Catholic identity in the small micro-blogging texts. This analysis will be focused on the vocabulary, inclusion-exclusion, actions and identities used in the tweets, and how these discursive tools are used in making people feel a sense of belonging to the Catholic identity. The second part of the analysis, I will take my point of departure in the photos issued by the Pope and Vatican News on Instagram. In this part my focus will be mainly on the semiotics and multimodal representation of the Catholic belonging. The final part of the analysis will focus on the use of the hashtag and how the Church uses the hashtag in sharing their message. In this part, I will also be looking at how people on Instagram adopt these hashtags, and how these are used in representing their Catholic identity and demonstrate their sense of belonging. The method of multimodality will be present within all three parts of the analysis, but the first part of the analysis might be argued to have a bigger focus on the discourse of the posts, where the second part has a more specific focus on the semiotics of the pictures, whereas the final part has a focus on both the discourse as well as the semiotics. The theories of belonging, identity and social network theory will be present in all parts of the analysis.

Twitter: A Holy discourse

In this first part of the analysis, I will be analyzing tweets from the official Twitter account of Pope Francis, @Pontifex and @VaticanNews. The focus will be on the discourse concerning vocabulary, inclusion-exclusion, actions and identities used by the Church to see how they represent and express the Catholic identity and further it by using social media. I will be analyzing how they talk about the more difficult areas of Catholicism in the 21st century, such as abortion, women's rights, sacraments etc. In this part, I have chosen to analyze a few of the many existing tweets as they serve as examples of the majority of tweets from the Pope and Vatican News.

The representation of Catholic identity and belonging on Twitter

As mentioned in the identity theory chapter, following the definitions of identity by Hall and Marcia, identity should not be defined as something which is fixed as they view identity as an ongoing process of creating the self (Hall, 1990). Hall also states that identity is constructed through narration and shared discourses of both history and shared cultures (Hall, 1990). In order for people to create an identity which include the aspect of being Catholic, the Catholic Church itself must be somewhat stable in its own narration and discourse so people can know, define and identify with the Catholic Church and why they should follow them.

One of the difficulties for the Catholic Church is that their identity can be argued to be rather fixed, with an inability to make big changes within the institution, as they believe their traditions to be founded by the divine. The Catholic Church is an ancient institution which self-declares its own roots back to the apostle Peter as the first Pope. From this, it can be observed that the historical narrative of the Church functions in creating a grounded Catholic identity. Yuval-Davis argues that narratives are used to defining and explain to others who they are and thereby create an identity. This can arguably also be said for institutions such as the Catholic Church. The backlash of the narratives of the Catholic Church is that the Church has a rather bloody background with witch burnings, Crusades, torture of people not willing to convert, to newer problems such as pedophilia. These cases have been covered in depth by media through time. The narrative of the Catholic Church has thus been much defined by the criteria of the mass media and popular culture. However, the Church is trying to take the narratives of the Church and the Church identity into their own hands by creating their own (social) media sites.

The lack of ability to make big changes in their religion creates a number of problems for the Church in a world which is developing at a huge pace. Issues concerning women's rights, abortion, contraceptives, homosexuality etc. are popular subjects which the Church has a conservative stance on, much to the frustration of some people. If the Church were to change their views on say abortion, they would have to go against the word of the bible and thereby lose their credibility not only to the faithful followers of the Church but also to themselves and their own identity as an institution, founded by God. The Church is thus faced with a problem of staying a 'living' Church which is in tune with today's society and popular beliefs. More people support women's rights, homosexual rights and right to divorce, and they might therefore be identifying with some of the outgroups which the Church thinks are morally wrong - people are, as Hall and Marcia state, in a continuous development of own identity which is not always agreeable with that of the Catholic Church. This could be argued to be one of the reasons why people in the Western World might have difficulties identifying with the Catholic Church. One way the Church has chosen to deal with the decline in members in the western world, is to create a 'modern' brand for themselves through the use of social media.

The name of the Pope's Twitter account is @Pontifex which means bridge-builder in Latin. The word *Pontifex* is also a Latin term used to refer to the Pope himself, as *Pontifex* is also used to describe

the term 'High-priest'. *Pontifex* is used several times by the apostles in the Latin Bible to refer to Jesus as the *Pontifex*. The word *Pontifex* thus creates a certain authority to the account, stating that it is of the 'highest priest' the Pope. This sign of having authority is something which is very important in Catholic tradition and belief, as they see the transfer of 'the keys of heaven' from Jesus to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19.

¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." *Bible, ESV (English Standard Version)*

Therefore, the Catholic Church believes that when Jesus gave the keys, he also gave the divine authority he had, to build and administer the Church to Peter, who Catholics call the first Pope. The symbol of the keys is also represented in the emblem of Vatican News, which will be discussed later in the analysis. The account name @Pontifex can be observed as being a part of a specific Catholic discourse in that it articulates a certain authority, but also that it has its roots in the Latin tradition of the Church. As such, the Church is confirming its own identity through the name of the account. The choice of this account name can be determined as a way for the Church to signal that they are trying to reach out and build a bridge between what might have come between the Church and the people not following the faith. Moreover, it can also be argued, not only for the Church to reach people but for people to cross the bridge and join the Church as well, and as such the whole purpose of the Twitter account can be detected from the name of the account itself.

The question now is, in what way does the Pope use the social media in order to create an identity in Catholics, 'fallen' Catholics and non-Catholics? What does he tweet about and why? Before I go into the analysis of some of the tweets, it is of importance to explain that the Tweets from Pope Francis are not something which he writes on his own, based on what he is feeling here and now. While many of his tweets may be the product of his thoughts and opinions, they go through an administrative team at the social media department of the Secretariat for Communication who are in charge of the actual account on both Twitter and Instagram (Stack, 2016).

When looking at the vocabulary used on @Pontifex, the following words can be observed to be repeated: Joy, holy, Jesus, Gospel, Confess, God, forgiveness, Cross, Church, hope, meaning and

pray (see appendix). These value laden words can be observed to be a part of the Catholic discourse which are used in representing Catholic values and virtues and thus work as a strategy in creating an identity in their followers. With this strategy of representation of the Catholic identity, the Church is trying to remind people why it is important to follow the Church. Two of the questions the Church has to take into account is; why should we follow the Catholic Church? And how should we do it? The Church needs not only to articulate its own identity, but also argue why this is an identity others need to embrace as well. As such, the Church is displaying the criteria of belonging to the Church which can be observed as Pope Francis has many tweets urging people to take action in different spiritual ways, especially in taking care of the poor and weak. Examples of this are:

TW1: *"Listening to religious teaching or learning a doctrine is not enough. What we want is to live as Jesus lived."*

TW2: *"The word 'happy' and 'blessed' becomes a synonym for 'holy', because those faithful to God, by their self-giving, gain true happiness."*
#GaudeteetExultate

In this way, the Pope is trying to counter the notion that being Catholic is something you do on a Sunday, but that you need to live your religion every day. He is also emphasizing the words *happy*, *blessed* and *holy*, where he emphasizes that happiness can be achieved through holiness and faithfulness. In TW2 Pope Francis not only describes what to do, but also what the people who are faithful to God will gain, and that being Catholic equals happiness, blessings and holiness. The Pope is advocating the Catholic faith with the promise of happiness in a world where more and more people experience stress, anxiety and depression making the Catholic faith desirable. One of the problems of the Church, is, as mentioned in the background chapter, that many people identify with Christianity, but they don't live their religion, which can be argued to be one of the reasons for the decline in members – they are belonging without believing (Antonsich, 2007). Therefore, the Pope is arguing that being Catholic is not enough, but that you need to become active before you can identify and belong, and argues that Catholicism should not be passive and emotional but active and behavioral (Yuval-Davis, 2006). From this, he can perhaps reach some passive members. Marcia

argues that when constructing one's identity, one must go through a crisis in order to evaluate one's childhood values (e.g. Catholic). The result of this crisis can either be to construct a new identity or return to base. Francis can thus be argued to reach out to the people who have created a new identity by reminding them of what they lost, or make them reevaluate their values which may be against the Church. As argued, the Pope has to reach out to people from many different cultures from different nations. Each nation has some of their own Catholic narratives in creating their own national identity and traditions, which they value or interpret in different ways, and the Pope cannot reach out to every form of Catholic culture in the world. As a result, the Church has to represent themselves as the 'home' of people reaching for a religious citizenship within the Church, to make people belong to a community which is above that of national identity.

Identity making through a holy discourse on Twitter

The notion of 'know your audience' is rather difficult as the Pope's 'audience' come from all over the world from multiple social locations and cultures. The Pope does not always write mellow love messages advocating happiness and the promise of an afterlife, but also more controversial messages concerning Catholic tradition and beliefs:

TW3: "Today we pray for all the children who are not allowed to be born, who cry with hunger, who hold weapons in their hands instead of toys."

TW4: "The Family is the harmonious union of differences between a man and a woman. When it's open to life and to others it's even more authentic."

TW5: "Every life counts: from the beginning to the end, from conception to natural death."

In these examples the Pope can be argued to touch upon: abortion, women's rights, family structure, homosexuality, contraception, and euthanasia. In TW3 the Pope equals abortion with that of hunger and child soldiers, which would be provocative to many. However, it is also a testimony of what the Catholic faith teaches. By stating this, he is reminding his audience what the Catholic faith is also about, however controversial that is. When stating that we should pray for 'the children who are not allowed to be born' he is stressing the issue of not only abortion, but also women's rights, in that he is indirectly saying that the woman are not allowing children to be born. As such, TW5 also functions with TW3 in that he states that a life starts from conception, and as such, the Catholic Church regards embryos as children. TW4 is themed on marriage which argues that a

marriage is harmonious if it is between a man and a woman, and that it is preferred that the relationship is 'open to life' which would say that they should not try to prevent any conception. As such, Francis is also touching upon some of the more controversial subjects of the belief of the Church 'head on'. The Pope is then indirectly communicating a discourse describing the inclusion and exclusion of people who can belong to the faith based on morals and virtues. By defining the in-group the Pope is also categorizing the Catholic faith and Catholic identity.

The official Twitter and Instagram accounts of Vatican News and Pope Francis are very 'in-tune' with each other. Vatican News often posts links to what the Pope has said or shares his actions and travels around the world. The continuity between the Tweets of the Pope and Vatican News show them as a united force. The fact that Vatican News link to the quotes and actions of the Pope also shows that he is of great importance to the Church, and that the Vatican supports him, not the other way around. Therefore, Vatican News are often functioning as pointers towards the Pope.

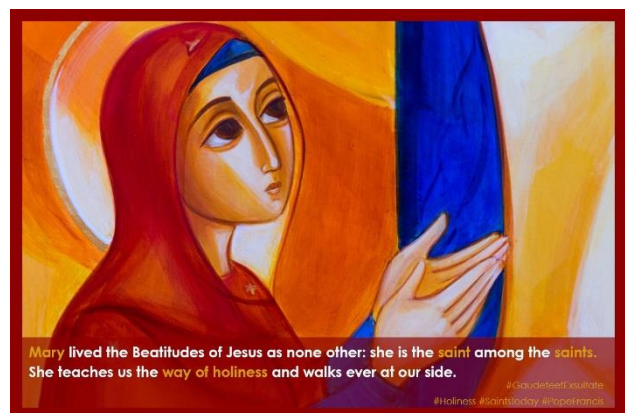
Two examples of Vatican News Tweets are:

TW6: "Mary lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other: she is the saint among the saints. She teaches us the way of holiness and walks ever at our side." (Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation #GaudeteetExsultate) #Holiness #SaintsToday

TW7: "*Pope Francis has urged parents to baptize their children soon after birth, thus giving them the opportunity of having Jesus Christ live inside them from the beginning of life.*"
<http://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-04/pope-at-general-audience-baptism-christifies-us-.html>

The first is a devotional quote from the Pope concerning Saint Mary. The Catholic Church is known for its devotion to the Holy Mother, and by stating that she is 'the saint among saints' and that she 'walks by our side' the Pope is acknowledging her as a prominent figure in the Catholic faith. As such, the Pope invites Catholics to trust in Mary and her holiness and advocate

people to reach an attachment to her, and thereby the Pope is trying to argue for the continuation



of Catholic identity. When the Pope and Vatican News are talking about ‘the Beautitudes’ and ‘saints among saints’ they are creating/keeping a certain Catholic discourse with vocabulary and phrases used among Catholics, and as such they are, as Hall would argue, creating an identity through a shared discourse (Hall, 1990). Being Catholic equals the emotional attachment to that of Mary, and works as an attachment link in belonging to the Catholic faith (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Marian devotions are a Catholic practice and have high esteem for Catholics, who pray to her for her intercession to God on our behalf. In the picture shown with the Tweet, we see a depiction of Mary who is looking up with her hands reached out in acceptance, which may be interpreted to mean that she is taking and accepting whatever God is giving her, i.e. Jesus. Therefore, the picture together with the text communicate an appeal for living a holy life accepting God’s (and the Church) will and that Mary is important in living a life in holiness. The focus on the sainthood of Mary works as a signifier to what Catholic identity is, but also what it is not. The Catholic Church, alongside with the Eastern Orthodox Church, are some of the only Christian denominations which practice the devotion to saints. Thereby, by making the focus on not only sainthood, but the sainthood of Mary, the Vatican is addressing two aspects which represent signifiers unique to the Catholic (Eastern Orthodox) faith.

The second is a call from Francis for Catholics to continue to baptize their Children as soon as possible. In this post he stresses that parents have the opportunity to have Christ in their children from the very beginning. The word ‘opportunity’ can be said to have a positive vibe and thus Francis propose baptism as a choice in which you have an opportunity to have you child receive Christ, which is a good thing according to the Church.

The text is followed by a link to what the Pope actually said. The link is more relevant here in that people may begin to ask; why must I do that? If you follow the link, you will see the positive discourse continues, calling baptism a ‘free gift’ and



an opportunity ‘to grow in a life of grace’ (Bordoni, 2018). This can also be argued to be a way of continuing the tradition and increase the membership of the Church. If the Church can get more

members from birth, chances are that some of them will stay in the formation of identity, if not for religious reasons, then for traditional and cultural reasons (Marcia, 2012). In the picture shown with the text, the Pope can be seen blessing a small baby boy who is lifted up to him. The picture of the blessing of the baby works in relation to the appeal in the Tweet, which argues for babies to be baptized into the Church.

In conclusion, it can be observed that the Catholic Church is creating a unique form of discourse regarding their Church and its traditions. Through the use of Tweets, the Church is representing the many facets of the Catholic Church its traditions and thus its identity. The Church is also addressing areas of moral which they are not as popular for, like their opposition to abortion, contraception, homosexuality etc. The Pope and Vatican News are represented as a strong united force on their social media site, with Vatican News working as a guide to the Pope and his teachings. The discourse presented in the tweets is often packed with value laden words as holy, pray, saints, promise, hope, confess, forgiveness etc. This vocabulary is helping in representing the Catholic identity through a common discourse. The Pope's messages of happiness and hope can be argued to appeal to people who may be in an identity crisis and who are trying to reach a commitment (Marcia, 2012). The Pope is also presenting the 'requirements' of belonging to the Catholic faith, including as well as excluding certain social locations. It can also be observed that the Pope is trying to reach out to non-Catholics or new Catholics by the promises of the good things which will happen to them if they choose to believe and belong to the Catholic faith.

Instagram: Digital icons and representation of Catholic belonging

In this second part of the analysis I will be focusing on the visual representations by doing a multimodal analysis of the posts issued on the Instagram accounts of the Church. I focus on Instagram because this platform takes its point of departure in pictures, putting the text secondary, opposite that of Twitter. This analysis will thus work in order to answer the problem formulation in both how the Catholic identity is represented, but also how these representations are used to appeal to a sense of belonging in others. In this part, I will be analyzing two pictures, one issued by the Pope and the other from the Vatican. I have chosen to focus only on two pictures, as I will analyze these in depth as exemplars for the general content issued by these two accounts.

The Catholic Church is known for its use of icons, crosses, art, statues, medals, candle lights etc. which has been a part of Catholic tradition for centuries. These symbol-laden objects work as

Catholic signifiers. As mentioned in the semiotics chapter, signifiers only work if people share connotations, which are often based on cultural background or lived experience (Chandler, 2004). If you see a person who wears a cross necklace, you might conclude that that person is Christian, but not necessarily Catholic. If you, however, see a person with a medallion of Mary, you might know that this is a Catholic and the person it is wearing a visible label signifying her own Catholic identity, others might not know of this signifier and thus it could work as a conversation starter. As such, icons and other religious items are used to showcase one's social location regarding religion, as well as show one's religious identity and belonging. In showing a Catholic identity, through the use of e.g. icons, they are not only showing who they are, but also who they are not. The issue with the use of icons and statues are often frowned upon from many protestant denominations, in that they accuse the Catholics of idolatry which is forbidden in the Bible. As such, Catholics are not only showing who they identify with, but also who they do not identify with and thus go through a formation of identity through behavioral identity actions (Eco, 1976) (Marcia, 2012). This showcase of religiousness is now not only crosses and statues, but also actions on the social media as well as more detailed photos and texts through which they are defining and signifying what being Catholic is. Couldry argued that membership of a community is based on a common connection such as religion or commonality, which Couldry calls social object theory, where the object functions as a way to facilitate interactions (Couldry, 2012). In this part of my text, the 'object' of analysis will be pictures, and I will investigate how these help create meaning, represent identity and Catholic reality.

Catholic images and symbolism

As of 16th of December 2017, Vatican News showcased their new emblem when merging several Catholic media into one, Vatican News (Stack, 2016). Their trademark consists of two red boxes, the first box shows two keys crossing each other with the Papal tiara on top of them, all in white. In the smaller box next to it, is the word 'NEWS'.

The colors of red and white are hardly coincidental. The Catholic liturgical color of white represents: light, innocence, purity, triumph and glory, where red represents: passion, blood and God's love (Catholic.org, 2018). By choosing the main color red, which also works as the canvas, the Church is emphasizing passion and God's love. Red, however, also has non-Catholic value which is that of observing danger. Many news agencies,



such as BBC, CNN, TV2 News and so on have red as a color in their major logo as it is a strong color which catches people's attention, which is also why red is often used on traffic signs. The white color forming the keys and Papal tiara are used in representing innocence, light and purity of the Catholic Church. If the Church was to use a black color, the connotations for some might be that of sorrow and mourning. Connotations are different from culture to culture, but it might be argued that these exact colors are interpreted in the same way in the majority of the cultures the Catholic Church is trying to reach. The word 'NEWS' is with capital letters, again to catch people's attention, but also to symbolize a certain urgency behind the use of capital letters. The word Vatican is not used in the logo, leaving people to make their own deductions to the Vatican from the sign of the two crossed keys and the Papal tiara, which are a symbol of the authority of the Church, with the passing of keys from Jesus to Peter. The image is also used on the Vatican State's flag, however, with different colors, structure and design.

On the Instagram of Vatican News they, as on Twitter, point to the Pope. But unlike Twitter, they also cover Church history and Catholic dogma. The Pope's Instagram @franciscus, is covering his actions and Catholic faith statements. All texts are interpreted in 3-7 languages, always available in English, Spanish and Italian.

On the Pope's Instagram, pictures are accompanied with his statements. As such, the Pope/Church is able to make Catholicism, the concepts of the Church and the life of the Pope more attainable. When looking through the many posts of Pope Francis, two major themes are repeated; the showing of Catholic tradition and sacraments, and the Pope's travels and actions. One example can be seen on the right.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also more popularly called 'confession'. The picture shows a young man kneeling with folded hands in front of the Pope sitting in the confessional. The Pope is turning his head as to better hear what



IN1: *"In the Sacrament of Reconciliation we find our way back to the Lord, and rediscover the meaning of life."*

#Lent, #Quaresma, #Cuaresma, #Quaresima, #Carême

the man is saying. The picture is taken from a top-down angle. Going to confession is a Catholic sacrament which sometimes is criticized by protestant Churches due to theological differences in interpretations of the Bible. By showing a confession, the goal would be to visualize and defuse the ideas some people might have about Catholic sacraments, and thus make them less 'scary' or alien to non-Catholics. Nonetheless, the Pope also, once again, promises a prize which is that of rediscovering the meaning of life and being with the Lord. As such, language is, as argued by Saussure, *"constituting the reality we experience"* (Sedgwick, p. 306). The 'matter-of-factly' way the Pope states this is not only prepositioning his view upon what is happening and why, but it is being represented as the truth and as a practice which should be adopted by more people. The picture is taken from above, which can both be to keep the man confessing anonymous, but it could also be argued to show the divine intervention in the sacrament, as if God is watching from above. The lighting of the picture is behind the Pope, which is a way in which to represent that he is the light. Catholics believe that when a priest is in the confessional, he is 'In Persona Christi', meaning he is

functioning as Christ, able to forgive sins on the behalf of Christ (Vatican.Va, 2018). The post also carries the hashtag #Lent which is also a labeling of the Christian tradition of Lent, which is a time for fasting, praying and repenting. The use of hashtags will, however, be discussed later. By having a focus on the sacrament of reconciliation, which is somewhat unique for the Catholic faith, they are once again, not only showing who they are, but also who they are not (Eco, 1976).

When analyzing the multimodality of the pictures issued from the Church, it is important to keep in mind, 'what does it mean and to whom?'. The Church has followers from all over the world, all with different conceptual maps. However, some signs are quite universal, so with the Church choosing simple depictions of the Pope representing Catholic belief and tradition, it broadens the understanding of the content of the picture and thus creates a bigger in-group. While non-Catholics might not know that this is a confessional, they are still seeing a man in a humbling position on his knees with folded hands, bowing his head, as the Pope is leaning in his ear to hear better, and maybe subconsciously detect the light which is behind the Pope. A sign should not be studied in itself but in relation with a whole 'sign system' (Chandler, 2004). Here, the Catholic Church seems to be trying to create and preserve a certain sign system which carries the purpose of installing positive connotations of Catholic signs in their followers. This effort of trying to enhance positive connotations in relation to the Catholic Church and their sign system is functioning as a representative of the Church. In conclusion, it can be observed that the Church is posting pictures in trying to represent certain doctrines and using these representation in defending their doctrines. This could arguably be intended to demystify the Church in order for more people to feel a sense belonging to the Church.

Addressing issues of Catholic beliefs

The Church also has to address some of the more debatable issues of the Church, as we saw the Pope did with some of his Instagram posts. One of the jobs of the Vatican's presence on the social media is not only to show what Catholicism and the Pope is all about, but also make the criticized aspects of the Church less negative. One of the ways they have done this is in the representation of women and women's position in the Vatican. The Vatican has often been criticized for not allowing women to be ordained as priests, and in 2016 following Pope Francis visit to Sweden, which is famous for its feminist standpoints, the Pope was criticized for stating that the position of priesthood was not meant for women (Kirchgaessner, 2016).

On Women's Day, 8th of March 2018, Vatican News posted a selection of pictures showing the positions of women in the Catholic Church. The International Women's Day (IWD) purpose is described as: *'(a global day) celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity¹ (Internationalwomensday, 2018).'* The Church showcased a collection of pictures followed with this statement, see above. With this text 10 pictures are showed of nuns,



IN2: "Women are telephone operators, as well as university presidents. They direct museums and hospitals; they are theologians, restorers, and journalists. They are both lay and consecrated women, and they come from all over the world. There are more than 750 women who work in the Holy See." #women #womensday #festadelladonna #8marzo #diadelamujer #8demarzo #mujersvalientes #8maeco #felizdiadasmulheres #diadasmulheres #Vatican #vaticano

¹ 'In the context of gender equality, gender parity refers to the equal contribution of women and men to every dimension of life, whether private or public'.

journalists, crafts(wo)men, teachers, artists, doctors etc. The text lists the many positions of women, and by mentioning high positions such as university presidents and museum directors, they are trying to argue the importance of women in the Vatican. They know the world is watching and many are hoping for a development furthering the positions of women within the Church. As such, the post also states that women also have consecrated work and are theologians as well. In the IWD organization they focus on 'accelerating gender parity', which may be why the Church has put an exact number on the women who work in the Holy See in order to show that they have not just taken a few pictures of women happening to be in the Vatican. The Church thus reaches out as a bridge-builder trying to connect with those who classify themselves as feminist or may have left the Church, or not joined the Church, because of perceived lack of the gender equality in not having female priests. One of the slogans and popular hashtags used by IWD is '#pressforprogress'. This progress is hard for the Catholic Church as they have their roots, not only in religious texts but also in what the Pope and former Popes have said about certain issues, and can as such not 'progress' in the matter of installing women as priests without contradicting earlier Catholic teachings. The Church therefore has to represent itself in a way which can show some form of progress for gender equality in the Vatican.

One of the pictures Vatican News posted, which I will be analyzing, was that of a woman teaching/speaking to other women (arguably one or two men), in a room in the Vatican (IN2). The picture can be argued to show that while women cannot be a priest or be 'In Persona Christi', she can still teach others in theological matters. The small benches made for kneeling in front of the seats shows us that it is a place for worship, and thus the Church is showing that a woman can, opposite popular beliefs about Catholicism, teach in a Church. We do not know for sure what she is talking about, but given the context of being in a room which is built for worship, one might conclude that it is of a religious nature. Some might see the picture and argue that she is only teaching women, and not teaching men.

What is especially interesting with this picture is the mosaic working as a background for the picture. The mosaic work shows Mary and the apostles at Pentecost. Mary, the only woman in the mosaic, is standing in the middle being the focus of all the apostles who look to her. The small flame which is over their heads is an ancient Christian symbol symbolizing the holy spirit, as the holy spirit is often depicted as a flame in the Bible, it can be concluded that the mosaic is representing Pentecost

where the apostles, Mary and others were filled with the Holy Spirit and talked in tongues. Mary is called the mother of the apostles, as Jesus 'gave' Mary to Peter as he died proclaiming *"Woman, here is your son,"*²⁷ and to the disciple, *"Here is your mother."* (John 19:25 NIV). Catholics argue that by this proclamation Jesus made Mary, not just the mother of the disciples but all Christians as well, advocating the correctness of practicing Marian devotions. Another sign is the rings that are around their heads which is also an ancient symbol of saints, letting people know that people depicted with this symbol are saints.

This depiction of old ancient symbols together with the more modern setting in the front of the picture with a woman teacher and modern women in general is showing a form of continuity for the Church from then to now, representing that women always have been and always will be important to the Church. The Church argues that Mary is the focus of the apostles and that she was in a position where they would look to her, which puts women in a position of power. Mary's arms are up in an open 'blessing position' showing that whoever is in the room is being blessed with the presence of her and the holy spirit, and it can be argued that she, as the Church mother, gives her acceptance to the female teacher and congregation.

This picture focuses on the ancient Catholic sign system with the saint symbol and the symbol of the holy ghost. It is very important to consider that the pictures issued are very thought through in creating a structured message to their viewers. It can be argued that they have to reach three kinds of people in this post: feminists, believing Catholics and fallen Catholics/critics who might have left because of feminist issues in the Church. Non-Catholics might not get the Catholic codes or sign system which is in the mosaic, but they would understand that a woman is in focus, portrayed in the middle of the mosaic. The non-Catholic feminists might protest against the 'women only teach women' situation in the picture which would be seen as a sign that women are not good enough to teach the men.

In conclusion, it can be observed that the Catholic Church is representing Catholic identity through the different images and texts shown on Instagram. By the use of pictures, the Church thus tries to put Catholic practice into a positive light through the Churches' statements accompanied by a picture which is, through the use of lighting, angel etc. presented in a positive way. The Pope and Vatican News only have one account on Instagram where translations of texts are offered in 3-7

languages, opposite Twitter where there is accounts for every major language. This can work as a way in which to show the internationality of the Church, and work as a way in which to include as many nationalities as possible. It can, however, also be argued to have a fragmentation to it, making the viewers feel less special. The fact that the Church is not offering any translations in languages of non-Catholic countries such as Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, or Russian can be criticized in their true endeavor which is evangelizing the Gospel of the Bible to the world, rather than hold on to 'western languages'.

The representation of the Church and Catholic identity is not only focused on making Catholic practices and beliefs less alien and more achievable through the pictures presented on Instagram, but also advertise what a person can gain from joining the faith. The focus on creating positive connotations on the Catholic Church can thus be said to be a tool in which to appeal for a sense of belonging in the people seeing the posts. The Church can arguably be perceived as a mysterious and closed organization with a dark past and some would argue a dark present as well, that the pictures on Instagram can work as little 'windows' into this religion to see the inside of this big community. The pictures thus works as a way of carrying proof to the statements made from the Pope and Church teachings. The posts, texts and pictures can thus be seen as a way to advertise the guidelines and goals of the Church, why it is important and why people following these guidelines will achieve advantages both in this life and the next. Therefore, the Images are not very complicated and are straight forward in their way of showing what they want to depict. Many of the pictures issued were pictures of the Pope meeting new people or carrying out religious practices. Moreover, it can also be seen that the Church have a heavy focus on gives herself credibility through the divine authorization which is believed to be constituted by Jesus himself.

Through the use of pictures and texts on Instagram the Church is also trying to address the difficulties of morality in heated topics such as gender equality. The Church is using pictures in order to facilitate the importance of women within the Vatican, in strengthening the bond towards those to whom the gender issues are a barrier in joining the faith.

Hashtags: Spreading the word

In the previous two chapters, the messages from the Pope and the Vatican on the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram have been analyzed on the basis on discourse, identity, semiotics, multimodality and belonging. In this final chapter, I will analyze the use of hashtags on

both Twitter and Instagram, with a focus on social media theory and belonging as well as discourse and identity theory. This chapter will provide an insight in the way the Church is representing themselves and the Catholic faith through the use of hashtags, and study how these tools are helping in trying to create a common Catholic identity when appealing for a sense of belonging for Catholics and non-Catholics. I will take my point of departure in the most current popular hashtags to be found used by the Pope and Vatican News².

The hashtag (#) is used on both Twitter and Instagram and functions as a form of 'word search'. If you press a hashtag word, for example #popefrancis, you would see what everyone else on that media platform has posted with that same hashtag. This has several functions; it can help the node to connect with several other nodes through the same tie, which in this case would be that of Pope Francis, and it can broaden people's horizon on the subject matter as well as work as an influencer depending on the popularity of the hashtag. As these sites are microblogging sites, hashtags can be used in order to encourage further reading on the subject and create a community and share accounts based on the subject. The hashtag can therefore be described as a form of communication which works as a tie connecting communities, as well as people, and is as such creating a representation of the Catholics and the Church (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017). In the previous analysis chapter, the nodes of the accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News have been analyzed, whereas in this chapter I will be focusing more on the connections and ties between the nodes.

When a person chooses to tweet or post a picture on Instagram with a hashtag, that person is doing several things at once. By creating or copying a hashtag which says '#SaintsToday' on a tweet or post, you are (depending on the conceptual map of the reader) labeling who you are and representing what community you belong to. Depending on the type of hashtag you can reach different levels of categorization of self. If a person were to use the hashtag #Catholic, #Lent, #SaintsToday, he is representing himself and his social location by labeling himself through the use of the hashtag (Yuval-Davis, 2006). A person is able to post several hashtags in order to both send a message, but also to create and show one's identity and belonging. With the ability to post several hashtags in one post, a person can communicate a certain intersectionality defining gender, religion, nationality, age etc. (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Therefore, the Church is not only defining themselves through the

² As of April 2018

hashtags, but also presenting ways in which Catholic people can represent themselves and their identity and values.

On Twitter, the Pope is not a frequent user of hashtags, like Vatican News, however after the publication of his apostolic exhortation³ *Gaudete Exsultate*, translated 'Rejoice and be glad' (Francis, 2018) the Pope used three hashtags frequently which were: #holiness, #Saintstoday and #GaudeteExsultate and used these hashtags several times every day on both Twitter and Instagram from 9th of April (publication date) until April 14th 2018, just a week after Easter (Martín, 2018). An apostolic exhortation is an old practice where the Pope sends out a message of encouragement or guidance on how to live a good Christian life (Martín, 2018). The apostolic exhortation is below the teachings of Church doctrine, and it does not implement rules, but guidelines on the wanted behavior from Catholic believers (Martín, 2018). An apostolic exhortation plays on a person's performativity in relation to belonging to the Catholic Church. Having an official guideline on what to focus on and how to act in one's life, is helping the Church communicate the criteria a person needs to fulfill in order to be a good Catholic. As such, a certain performativity is needed in belonging to the Church. While it can be argued that most people will not have read *Gaudete et Exsultate* except for devout Catholics, the Pope issued small pieces with bullet points from his work, followed by one of the three themed hashtags. All three texts are used as small messages of religious wisdom on how to live and what people will gain from it. Therefore, the Pope is representing the values and

TW8: *"Being poor of heart, reacting with meekness and humility, knowing how to mourn with others, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness."* #SaintsToday

TW2: *"The word "happy" or "blessed" becomes a synonym for "holy", because those faithful to God, by their self-giving, gain true happiness."* #GaudeteetExsultate

TW9: *"The Lord calls each of us to holiness, you too."* #Holiness

virtues of the Church by having a focus on the words holiness and happiness. The Pope uses these value laden words in his Tweets in order to create a certain religious discourse in communicating his message. By advising people to adopt these 'holy' 'saint-like' qualities he is positioning himself as a teacher of authority to his followers, which in relation to social network theory, Tuten would

³ A moral message, in a form of a short book issued by the Pope (Martín, 2018)

call an opinion leader, which will be touched upon later. These Tweets are meant for the followers to reach a certain exhalation in striving for perfection in being a saint today, rather than wait for the afterlife. The hope of the Church would be that people would use these hashtags to promote the newest apostolic exhortation and also create a certain flow in the messages from the Church which Tuten describes as *'exchanges of resources, information, or influence among members of the network'* (Tracy L. Tuten, p. 103). The result of creating a flow in their religious messages is to reach a form of media multiplexity, where the hashtag is shared on several different social media platforms (Tracy L. Tuten). By creating a flow in the messages and information, they are thus reaching a level of media multiplexity where they are using their followers to distribute the message by using the hashtags presented, which in this instance works as a form of free commercial for the apostolic exhortation and the Catholic Church. This flow of 'morally Catholic' hashtags is working as a form of representation of the values and virtues of the Catholic Church and their followers.

As mentioned in the social network theory chapter, the participation within a community is crucial for the community to function, which in this case is the participation of using and reusing Church and faith related hashtags. For a community to function, it needs good content and distribution (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017), so it is important that the Church catches people's attention through their content so that people would value the content enough to either share it or communicate one's own message in relation to the content and using the same labeling hashtag. As a result, the Church receives a form of feedback by seeing how people use their hashtags. As such, the hashtag is creating a form of social media evangelization in representing Catholic values both within and outside of the Catholic community. When a person is faced with the same hashtag several times, he or she might get curious as to what the hashtag is about, and come to use the hashtag himself, which could lead to a more active religious lifestyle by confirming one's beliefs online.

Common Catholic identity

In this part I will give an example of how the religious hashtags are embraced by Catholics online. In the second part of the analysis, the picture of the man going to confession was, as mentioned, hashtagged #lent. Lent lasts about 40 days, and the hashtag was used both on @franciscus and @vaticannews during this time. By following the hashtags, it could be observed that #lent had been

and her followers on Instagram, she is displaying her religious identity through the use of pictures and text and using her hashtags as identity labels of values, identity and social locations. Behavioral identity only happens when a person has committed to a specific identity and is sure of one's practice in public. As such, a person who uses official hashtags on their accounts have arguably been through their own either formation or construction of identity, and can now be of influence to others. It can be argued that if a person, who might consider converting to the Catholic faith or return to the faith and is in an identity crisis (Marcia, 2012) stumbles across @kendra_tierney's account, they may find some form of inspiration and connection with her in practicing the faith.

As studied, Catholics look to the Pope for credible information on different subjects, and he can as such be regarded as an opinion leader. An opinion leader can influence many people within different fields, but for an opinion leader to keep his power, also within the social media network, he must have followers with different qualities. Using social network theory, @kendra_tierney, who has 8,288 followers⁶, would be categorized as a: connector, impacter and an active mind (Tracy L. Tuten, 2017). While she only has 8,288 followers, she is not a big opinion leader, but she is able to appeal to people to follow the Catholic faith. People like @kendra_tierney, who is sharing Catholic themed hashtags, is strengthening the ties between the Church and the Instagram community and helping represent the Catholic identity and the belonging aspect of a Catholic family through the ties of common labeling hashtags shared with the Church. By using hashtags, people are not only creating their own identity, but also showing their positioning in society, which can be evaluated by others when showing one's politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

⁶ Number retrieved the 25th of April 2018

Common Catholic belonging

On February 12th 2018, Vatican News started a series of displaying old pictures from the Vatican. The first photo in their series was a black and white picture of Pope Pius XII who is speaking to a camera. The caption is as follows (look right):

By stating that they are 'in step with technology and mass media', the Vatican is praising their ability to be in tune with the current technology tendencies. This statement came about two months after their new launch of the new Vatican News, and is as such attributing the fact that they are still 'in step with' the newest media. By having a focus on the year 1954, Vatican News also tries to depict a certain



IN4: *"Always in step with technology and mass media- Pope Pius XII on TV in 1954. Today we start a program to share with you—for the first time ever – exclusive images taken from the Vatican Photographic Archive. Follow us at #VaticanBnW"*

continuity in the Church's attempts to reach out to people through the media and maybe change the view that the Church is an old institution which is not in touch with the world. After this, they state that they have '*for the first time ever – exclusive images taken from the Vatican Photographic Archive.*'. When Vatican News focuses on '*for the first time ever*' they are also stating that this new form of Vatican News is going to be something which is new and exciting and different from the past, and therefore the Church is framing themselves as the ever evolving 'in tune' Church. When they explain that the images are exclusive and taken from the Vatican photographic archive, they are also leaving the reader to believe that the otherwise seemingly closed Church is opening up to the world sharing some of its treasures with us. So, from this post, the Church is representing their ability to change and be in touch with the world with a willingness to open up and share from within. Finally, Vatican News ends their post with the hashtag #VaticanBnW⁷. 'BnW' is a standard shorthand

⁷ Bnw= Black and white

used on social media for black and white, and as such Vatican News are again trying to show that they are in step with the new form of communication on social media.

From the 18th of February 2018, #VaticanBnW has been used 9 times out of their 34 posts⁸ and is thus a steady reoccurring type of post. By having a focus on the past, the Vatican and previous Popes, the Church is putting an emphasis on the historical narrative in creating a common identity in Catholics. There are differences between e.g. African Catholics vs. American Catholics e.g. in their views on the use of contraception, where African Catholics takes this stance from the Church very seriously while research shows that the Catholic American women use some form of contraceptive (Staff, 2011). What is important for the Catholic Church is to represent a common ground which unifies all cultures and nations in a shared Catholic identity. Common for all Catholics, no matter if they are Mexican, French or African, is the Holy See which they should all look to for guidance which is placed in the Vatican. The focus on the history of the Vatican and past Popes can be argued to be a tool in which to unite Catholics worldwide despite cultural differences. While many Catholics have different national cultural identities, one can perhaps talk about the Church trying to (re)create and communicate a common Catholic cultural identity, which is above the level of national identities. From Hall, we learn that if people share a common cultural background, they will be able to interpret elements in the same way, and as such have their own conceptual map based on their common Catholic identity and cultural code (Hall, 1997). Having the same cultural code is equal to carry some of the same morals and values with the people within that group. In this case, it can be argued that the morals and values are especially strong, in that the people within the Catholic Church hold these morals based on the belief in God and his one true Church. As such, the conceptual map within the culture works not only as a form of creating identity, but also in the politics of belonging within the group. By having a focus on the past, the Church is creating its own identification through the use of narratives. According to Yuval-Davis, a person uses narratives in order to achieve identification with a certain group. While it is important for individuals to use narratives in order to reach identification and belonging with a community, it is of crucial importance that the community, organization, institution you identify with is clear in their narratives and identity of self. The Catholic Church is representing historical narratives with the effort of trying to show the Catholic identity and to reach a common shared identity in Catholics through the use of posts and hashtags on social

⁸ Date of data collecting 25th of April 2018

media. As stated previously, the Catholic identity is deep-rooted in the act of narratives, throughout history. While every post on Instagram and Twitter work as small narratives of telling and retelling Catholic narratives, the Church is by the use of #VaticanBnW trying to stand out in the pluralistic approach to faith on social media by focusing on the uniqueness of their long history and at the same time display their 'up to date' way of communicating on social media platforms.

In conclusion, the use of the hashtags is of great importance in evangelizing the gospel and the Catholic virtues on social media platforms. As studied, the hashtags carry many different functions with it, such as communicating and labeling one's identity, connecting with other people and broadening one's horizon on the field. The hashtag can, as analyzed, also be used to advocate or advertise something which Pope Francis did with his *Gaudete et Exsultate*. When using a hashtag, a certain flow in the religious messages can be observed through the sharing of posts and hashtags. The flow of Catholic or moral hashtags can thus be seen as a form of representation of the Catholic values and virtues. The hashtag was not only used in creating individual Catholic identity, but also a common identity as seen with the #VaticanBnW hashtag, which purpose was to find a common historical background which all Catholics could belong to despite other cultural differences. By using the hashtag, the Church is not only representing their own identity but also creating it by having a focus on the hashtags as being a part of the Catholic narrative (Hall, 1997). The hashtags can also be seen as positionings in society, where their values and morals can be valued or judged by others. It can be argued that the use of hashtag can have two different effects on their followers, one can be that of creating an out-group/in-group situation with people dissociating themselves from the hashtags, while the other effect might be that of feeling a connection or unification in the Church. These effects can be argued to be wanted by the Catholic Church, while they want as many people to belong to the Catholic faith as possible, they are also steadfast in their beliefs and doctrines which should be held, due to their divinity, in order to belong to the Catholic Church. As such, the Church is both defining their own identity, but also representing their values and criteria for belonging to the Catholic Church through the use of hashtags.

Literature review

In this chapter, I will be discussing and describing the already exciting literature evaluated in relation to the scope of my thesis. As mentioned in my introduction, I have found it most relevant to place my literature review *after* the analysis, as I have not been able to find any already existing literature within my study area, as there was no literature which quite had the same focus point or structure as my problem area. In my searching on the use of social media in relation to religion and the shaping and creation of identity and belonging through the use of social media, I found mostly articles and books covering Islam and Islamist fundamentalists and their recruiting of young Muslims via social media. When searching for relevant literature, it was of importance that the aspect of the use of social media was present in the texts and this was not to be found with my focus.

I did, however, find the book *Digital Religion, Social Media and Culture* which has two articles in it called *How Religious Communities Negotiate New Media Religiously* (Campbell, 2012) and *Twitter of Faith: Understanding Social Media Networking and Microblogging Rituals as Religious Practices* (Cheong, 2012). These articles were the closest to relevant literature which I could discover on the subject of my thesis. In the article made by Campbell, there is a focus on the development and acceptance or rejection of media by different religious groups, but, moreover, she also focuses on the media traditions of the Catholic Church and how Catholic values work in relation to media and how they have integrated media in their communication.

In her article, Campbell is presenting and discussing the attitude of different religious groups in relation to media, from television evangelising in the early 1990s and up till today. As such, Campbell has a strong emphasis on the historical development of the technology and the religious communities' reactions to technology, rather than how they have accepted it and use it today, which has been the scope of my project. Campbell has studied the negotiations of media and seen what is required of a religious group to use e.g. social media in developing a public discourse. Campbell argues that the negotiation '*requires the religious group to create public and private discourses that validate their technology choices in light of established community boundaries, values, and identities* (Campbell, p. 86).' In this way, the article has an emphasis on whether religious groups negotiate the use of technology and media or if they reject it. This focus of investigating a religious group's attitude towards the use of media has been applicable to my study, to see how the Catholic Church has embraced social media in their communication.

Campbell moves on to use the Catholic Church as her case study on how a religious community has chosen to use media in their approach to technology in reaching out to other people. In her text, Campbell presents the historical facts of the hierarchy within the Church and the approach the Catholic Church has had to media back in the dark ages, where the Catholic Church was the sole editor of printed media (Campbell, p. 88). In the text, there is emphasis on the ways which the Catholic Church has used in accommodating new technologies and media as a part of their religious work. From the study, she found that the Catholic Church had always been very open to use the technologies available for communication and evangelization to people around the world.

The way in which Campbell's study deviates in purpose from my research, is that she focuses on the discourse the Catholic Church is using *about* the use of media, where my study is focused *on* the discourse found and used on social media platforms. While Campbells study has a historical basis, I take my point of departure in the present use of popular social media. As such, Campbell does not use any data showing how the Church actually represent themselves on the media, but rather how they talk about it and how they manoeuvre discourses concerning cyberspace and Catholic ethics and morals. The book which the article occurs in is from 2012, but the article itself does not use any data later than from 2010. There has been eight years of social media development (Instagram only started in late 2010 (Bruner, 2016)), and in this time, the Church has come up with new ways of communicating, created accounts on social media, created a new social media committee etc. which makes Campbell's article less relevant for my study. However, her study has provided me with some historical insight in regards to the Catholic Church's use of different media and how they have never shied away from using the newest form of media in communicating to other people. This insight has also given me a background knowledge of what the Church's attitude towards the use of social media has been (and still is) which has been of relevance in my investigation and analysis of how the Church is using Twitter and Instagram in representing themselves and their values. Campbell stated that: *Official discourses serve to both reaffirm communal traditions, value and practices of the community amongst its members and to serve as a form of external PR to affirm their beliefs and identity to those outside* (Campbell, p. 92). This statement is correlating to the scope of my thesis, as investigating the representation of Catholic identity would also be to investigate the traditions, values and practices of the community.

In the second article of the book *Twitter of Faith: Understanding Social Media Networking and Microblogging Rituals as Religious Practices* by Pauline Cheong, Cheong sets out to discuss the *'range of communicative uses and appropriations of Twitter in order to deepen the understanding of microblogging as a religious practice, including its benefits and limitation for community building, as well as its heuristic potential for further learning and research* (Cheong, 2012, p. 191).'

In Cheong's study, she states that tweets are not the only means which a Church can use to communicate to their followers, but that the relationship between people and the social media platforms is now so intertwined that tweets and the use of twitter has a constitutive role for all religions in general. She argues that without the use of Twitter, Churches and pastors would miss out on an opportunity to have scripture and lessons liked and shared. Cheong takes this stance further by stating that the use of twitter is almost a new form of religious ritual, as it brings *'a sense of the sacred, which in turn revitalizes communal sentiments and higher moral purpose through identification and solidarity with other believers* (Cheong, p. 201).'

This stance with religious identification is something which has been relevant for my study. However, Cheong's study is focusing on the use of twitter from local parishes, prayer lines and local priests and ministers within the United States, and not from an official Church or religion as such, nor does she focus on the international aspect of Twitter usage. By using data from internal communication forms of local and personal Twitter accounts, she is analysing the effects and use of Twitter among private persons and smaller faith communities. In this project, the data is collected from the external communication form of one single faith institution to study the representation of that particular religious identity and belonging and wanted effect from a strong hierarchical religious organisation. Cheong has no specific focus on a particular religious denomination, which is an important aspect of my study. Cheong's data collection is collected from personal tweets based on a shared hashtag #TOF (Twitter of faith) which was issued by a protestant American minister in 2008, having most of her data from the year 2008-2009 (Cheong, p. 194). Vatican News has been using Twitter since March 2010 (VaticanNews, Twitter), and is not evaluated by Cheong. Another important fact is that the Pope was not using social media when this article was made. Cheong's article was made at the latest in 2012 when it was published, the latest of Cheong's data dates from 2011, and Pope Benedict XVI joined Twitter the 12th of December 2012 (McDonald, 2013).

Cheong's article does, however, have some relevant aspects in relation to the general building of faith communities on Twitter, as well as investigating the effects of the use of the hashtag. Even though the hashtags investigated are outdated, it still poses an example of the way in which a hashtag can unify people within the same faith group. By seeing Cheong's study of how hashtags and tweets flow within social media, I have been able to consider what the Catholic Church might want as an effect in their followers when issuing a statement or hashtag. As such, I have been investigating how the Catholic Church is trying to engage people in their practice of faith when integrating the use of hashtags in their tweets, but in Cheong's study she focuses more on the ties in-between many different private nodes.

In conclusion, I have been using both articles as inspirational background materials, which have some interesting insights for my study. I have not been able to use the articles as direct sources of information in my thesis as they have been outdated in some of their data, dealing with other forms of data and working with other research areas than I have. I have, however, been able to consider Campbell's historical knowledge on the Catholic Church's attitude to media and Cheong's focus on the effects of distributing hashtags.

Conclusion and discussion

Throughout this project, I have been focussing on the external communication of the Catholic Church via the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram. The analysis has been concentrated on the representation of the Catholic identity as presented by Pope Francis and Vatican News and on how these representations of Catholic identity is used in advocating a sense of belonging in their followers. In order to approach the problem area, I have implemented the theories of identity, belonging and social media theory. These have been used as a way in which to investigate the possible reasons as to why the Church has issued certain Tweets and posts on their accounts in representing a Catholic identity. These strategies have, moreover, also be relevant in analysing the wanted effects the posts might have on their followers in appealing for a sense of belonging. To complete the analysis, I have been combining the methods of discourse and semiotics in making a multimodal discourse analysis of the content of the posts and Tweets.

The analysis has been parted into three parts. The parting of the analysis was relevant as it gave a possibility to investigate each social media platform individually with the third chapter analysing

hashtags as a connecting element which can be used on both platforms. By parting the analysis I also had the possibility to focus on specific relevant methods for the different social media platforms and as such analyse the content of the selected posts into depth in order to answer the problem formulation.

The first part of the analysis was focussed on Twitter and the and the discourse used in representing Catholic identity. The scope was to reveal how the Catholic identity was represented through the use of discourse on Twitter. It was found that the Pope and Vatican News had create a somewhat specific religious discourse. This discourse is based in a value laden vocabulary and it was observed that this religious discourse was a way in which to represent the Catholic identity. Therefore, it can be found that the Catholic Church is creating a unique Catholic discourse through tweets which is helping positioning the status of the Church's authority and identity in relation to salvation and divine power. As observed, the difficulties facing the Church in today's society, is it's conservative positioning against abortion, women's rights, contraceptives etc. From analysing the Tweets, it could be detected that they address these issues impenitently basing their reasoning in the divine and traditions. As their identity and discourse are based in the belief of the divine it is difficult for the Church to change concerning these matters even if desired, and it can be argued that a change could ruin their identity and credibility as an institution. While it can be concluded that the Pope is steadfast in the opposition against gay marriages, abortions etc. he in turn promises happiness and fulfilment to the people keeping Catholic virtues and morals which could be argued to be an appeal to people who may experience depression, loneliness. In the analysis I found that Vatican News also contributed to the preservation of Catholic traditions and discourse concerning infant baptism and Marian devotions. With these practices being almost exclusively Catholic it is hardly a coincidence that it is these two traditions they focus on in their accounts. As such, the focus of divine authority is a way for the Church to build their identity and argue their opinions which is not only positioning the Church but also representing a common Catholic identity.

In conclusion, it can be found that the focus on creating a shared religious discourse is representing a Catholic identity on the social media. In the first chapter, there has been a specific focus on discourse and the theory of identity as set by Marcia and Hall. These have be crucial in understanding the construction and representation of Catholic identity and they have also worked in revealing the possible motivations behind the texts issued advocating the Catholic identity to

others as well. By creating and focussing on a shared religious discourse the concept of identity as set by Hall have been relevant in my findings as he argues that a shared discourse are helping in the creation of identity as well as a unification of those who share the same linguistical codes (Hall, Cultural Identity and disapore, 1990).

In the second part of the analysis, the scope was to analyse the images issued on the Instagram accounts of Pope Francis and Vatican News. The images were analysed by using a multimodal approach with a specific focus on the semiotic tools used in order to detect the means of representation of Catholic identity and belonging on Instagram. The fact that Vatican News are often pointing to the Pope and his doings, represents not only the importance of the Pope within the Church, but also shows a united force of the Holy See concerning the criteria of belonging of the Church. Through the pictures analysed it can be found that the pictures both have symbol-laden visuals which works as Catholic signifiers and it can be argued that the Church is trying to create a shared conceptual map which will lead to people having the same connotations from a given image. With the Vatican News choosing to posts pictures of the sacrament of reconsolidation it can be conclude that the Church is showing not only who they are but also who they are not and thus defining themselves on their differences from the Protestant denominations. It can be concluded that instead of hiding their conservative beliefs, the Church is using these differences and issues in advocating the Catholic faith by enhancing positive connotation and as such create a sign system which is functioning as a positive signifiers in representing the Catholic identity through pictures. From analysing the Instagram posts, it could be seen that they try to reach out to Catholics and non-Catholics alike by communicating on different levels in relation to the understanding of Catholic beliefs, as their accounts are official and not only for Catholics. On the pictures analysed, a specific Catholic imagery could be observed which only Catholics (or people who know about Catholicism) would detect. The settings and situations in the pictures are, however, rather simple to understand, e.g. a man showing respect to the Pope and a teaching woman, and can thus still create a positive connotation on people outside the community. I also discovered that all pictures were accompanied with text translated into 3-7 languages, so while the texts were translated to approach more people, a general semiotic sign system and Catholic discourse was created in connecting people in the belong to the Catholic Church across national or linguistical differences. The selection of translations can be critiqued as the accounts do not offer translations from non-Catholic countries. This can be

a way in which to keep too many critical comments from their posts, but it can also be argued to make their intention of evangelizing to the whole world less convincing. Throughout the analysis of the Tweets and posts it can be detected that they base their reasoning in the divine and in their historical narrative. I found that this historical narrative functions as a way for the Church to build their identity and argue their opinions. This form of identity which is grounded in the historical narrative is not only trying to give authority to the Church but can also be argued to create a common Catholic sense of belonging and identity across national identities. The fact that Pope Francis and Vatican News both addressed the international women's day shows that the Church position themselves as in touch with the 'outside' using it to present the positions of women within the Catholic Church. In conclusion, the representation of the Catholic identity is not only working in the Church trying to influence the world but also let the world influence them and as such try to appear less alien to people sceptical of Catholics. Moreover, the Church is not only representing their identity but also showing how this identity is used in appealing for a sense of belonging in their followers around the world.

The final chapter of the analysis, I found that the use of hashtag had a unifying effect between the posts of Instagram and Twitter as they were using some of the same hashtags on both platforms which created a flow and form of continuity. It can, as such, be observed that the Church use the hashtag both in their evangelization but also in the labelling of their own identity, which is also practiced by their followers. It can thus be concluded that the hashtag works as linguistical signifiers to the representation of the Catholic identity. The hashtag can as such be seen as a tool in which to create a sense of belonging and labelling of identity and as such have a unifying effect which could also be observed in the investigation of the example of a Catholic Instagrammer. I also found that the use of the hashtags #VaticanBnW was helping in representing a common historical background for the Catholic Church. When the Church is communicating to millions of people with different identities and nationalities, focussing on the historical narrative of the Church is crucial in unifying people from around the world in the shared historical narrative of the Catholic belief. While the hashtag can be argued to have a unifying effect, hashtags can also cause division. When using religious value laden hashtags as an institution some people might reject towards some of the labels being used, and can thus be argued to be excluding. While it can be argued to be a strong position of them to take, it can also be argued to hold them back in the critique of them as being too

conservative. In conclusion, it can be observed that the Church is defining their own identity through the use of hashtags and using these representations of Catholic identity in appealing for a sense of belonging in their audience.

To sum up, it can be concluded that the three parts of the analysis are all finding that Pope Francis and Vatican News are working in unison in representing the Catholic identity through discourse and semiotic means. The Church is faced with decline in the western world due to the inability to change their doctrines of belief to conform to today's trending morals. As such, they are using popular social media in trying to rebrand their identity, old doctrines and traditions through Tweets and images without changing them. The presence of the Church on social media are helping them in presenting themselves on a more modern field and thus include not only those belonging to the faith but others as well in creating an online community based on the Catholic faith. From the findings of this thesis it can thus be concluded that the Church is representing the Catholic identity through the use of a strong value laden discourse, imagery and labelling through the use of hashtags. As such, the Catholic identity is represented through the use of a specific Catholic discourse focussed on the differences and trademarks of the Church. These representations are used in appealing for a sense of belonging as they are trying to create an online Catholic community where people from around the world can connect via the tie of the Catholic faith through social media platforms. The representation of identity works in relation to belonging as they establish what is required in belonging to the Catholic community, as such, the appeal of belonging can be concluded to have performative dimensions as the Church is communicating the need for action in belonging and identify with the Catholic faith both online and offline.

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