Electoral debates in the VODs of the Public RTVs of Europe

Debates electorales en los VOD de las RTV Públicas de Europa

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ABSTRACT
Introduction: In the public media, the electoral debate is of special interest because of the rules that these televisions must adopt to fulfill their public service commitments and maintain the values of diversity, universality, and participation. In the new scenario posed by VOD's platforms, the inclusion of these televised electoral debates and variations in their format are presented as an exercise of transparency and a commitment to the country's audiovisual memory that reinforces the values of diversity, proximity, and representative universality. **Methodology**: The article comparatively reviews the use of this format in seven of the main public television stations in Europe following the models of Hallin and Mancini and with a regional subdivision within the democratic-corporatist model to obtain results with an ethnical-political cut. **Results and conclusions**: There is a notable disparity between public televisions that have access to electoral debates on their VOD platforms. The analysis reveals that, despite its importance, the debates are not available in the online media environments, although they are accessible from third-party platforms, mainly YouTube.

KEYWORDS: VOD platforms, electoral debates, public television, VOD, participation, new formats, Europe.

RESUMEN
Introducción: En los medios públicos, el debate electoral es de especial interés por las reglas que deben adoptar estas televisiones para cumplir con sus compromisos de servicio público y mantener los valores de diversidad, universalidad y participación. En el nuevo escenario que plantean las plataformas propias de VOD la inclusión de estos debates electorales televisados y las variaciones en su formato se plantea como un ejercicio de transparencia y un compromiso con la memoria audiovisual del país que refuerza los valores de diversidad, proximidad y universalidad representativa. **Metodología**: El artículo revisa de un modo comparativo el uso de este formato en siete de las principales emisoras públicas de televisión de Europa siguiendo los modelos de Hallin y Mancini y con una subdivisión regional dentro del modelo democrático-corporatista para obtener resultados con un corte étnico-político. **Resultados y conclusiones**: Existe una notable disparidad entre las televisiones públicas que tienen accesibles los debates electorales en sus plataformas de VOD. El análisis desvela que, a pesar de su trascendencia, los debates no se encuentran disponibles en los entornos online del medio, aunque sí son accesibles desde plataformas ajenas, principalmente YouTube.

PALABRAS CLAVE: plataformas de vídeo por demanda, debates electorales, RTV pública, VOD, participación, nuevos formatos, Europa.

CONTENTS

Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela).

1. The growing role of VOD platforms

Audiences around the world have adopted, in recent years, new forms of content consumption with the flourishing of VOD services (Video on Demand) (IHS Markit, 2019) and algorithmic automations (Túñez, Toural, Valdiviezo-Abad, 2019) driven, among other things, by SmartTVs proliferation (Ofcom, 2018). Particularly in Europe, it has been observed how viewers spend more and more time watching nonlinear television (free, by subscription, video on demand, and transactional video on demand), and less time watching traditional linear television (Ofcom, 2018, Consejo de Europa, 2019).

Although there has been a general increase in minutes per day per person who passes watching audiovisual content, in countries like the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain, the video-on-demand services have reduced the minutes they spent seeing traditional television (IHS Markit 2019). This trend is expected to increase in the coming years, as new competitors such as Apple and Disney, among others, will enter the market at the end of 2019 and throughout 2020 (Consejo de Europa, 2019).

This increase in television consumption poses two challenges for European public service broadcasters. On the one hand, the rapid changes in the audience's habits will force them to develop more and more advanced content strategies oriented to VOD to retain audiences on the move. On the other, as the struggle for the viewer's attention intensifies, with exponential growth subscription platforms such as Netflix, HBO or Amazon and the upcoming Disney+ or AppleTV, public service broadcasters will have to dedicate special attention to the development of their VOD platforms. This

also demands them to organize and present their contents in a way that they are always available, not only to compete with other platforms but also in the case of public service media, to generate in themselves an audiovisual archive with historical and social value.

The commitment of VOD algorithms and platforms to public service values has already been subject to international research, but more intensely in the European context. One of the most common conflicts when assessing the justification of the recommendation systems is the principle of participation. Although engagement is key to maintaining relevance, most academics agree that this should not happen regardless of the cost.

Following the guidelines suggested by John Reith about "giving the public what they want even if they don't know they want it" (Hutchinson, Sorensen, 2018; Fields, Jones, Cowlishaw, 2018), the recommendation systems must take in count the notions of universality, diversity, transparency, and impartiality (Fields, Jones, Cowlishaw, 2018); Moe, Van den Bulck, 2017; Hutchinson, Sorensen, 2018), that are fundamental to reinforce the legitimacy of the PSM (Campos-Freire, Rodríguez-Castro, de Mateo-Pérez, 2019).

In other words, even though relations with the audiences are orientated through content recommenders, the public media cannot fail to fulfill their mission and their commitments directly derived from that character of public ownership, since not doing it would compromise their commitment with society and could expose the audience to unilateral or 'bubble filtered' content exclusively based on their patterns of consumption or contents predefined as "enjoyable" (Pariser, 2011).

Also, in a moment in which VODs are also postulated as co-creative elements, since they take into count the audience's preferences and tastes to generate recommendations (Fields, Jones, Cowlishaw, 2018), and then these impact on the promotion of one or another content by the platform, these mechanisms have the opportunity to generate spaces for co-creation and citizen participation, that reinforce the value of innovation identified by the EBU for public televisions, and that follow the line of other academics about the value of participation in public management (Simonofski, Snoeck, Vanderose, 2019; Alford, Hughes, 2008).

2. Electoral debates on television

The debates as a genre, in a general way, and the debates in electoral campaigns have generated innumerable academic research. All aspects have been analyzed. Focusing the investigator's gaze on the format (Kraus,1962; Kraus 1988; Carlin, Howard, Stanfield, and Reynolds, 1991; McKinney and Carlin, 2004; Schroeder, 2008; Schroeder 2012; Turcotte, 2015), the comparison of the format and its use in different countries (Schroeder, 2012; Micovic, 2014), the format as a campaign modernizing element (Campus, 2010; Caprara, 2007; Berrocal, 2003: 55-79; Langer, 2007: 371-387), the discursive contents with studies of staging, performance, rhetoric (Matera and Salwen, 1996; Anaya, 2014), the pragmatics (Bañon, 1997; Fernández, 2000; Blas, 2001; Fuentes, 2009; Blas, 2011; Micovic, 2014) or the role of journalists (Martel, 1983; Stepp, 1987; Lanoue and Schrott, 1991; Coleman, 2000; Kraus, 2000; Schroeder, 2016; Núñez-Mussa, 2018).

In Spain, the contributions to the analysis of televised debates carried out by Díez Nicolás and Semetko, 1995; Vidal Riera, 1997; Berrocal, Dader and Rospir, 2003; Marín, 2003; Canel, 2006; Castells, 2009; Gallego Reguera, 2009; Ruiz Contreras, 2007; Campo Vidal, 2013; Gallego Reguera, 2011; Gallego Reguera, 2012; Conde-Vázquez, Fontenla-Pedreira and Rúas-Araújo, 2019; and Gallego Reguera and Martínez, 2019 stand out, among others.

The research by Carolina Herranz-Rubio about the scientific production regarding electoral debates in Spain turns out to be very illustrative. Her bibliometric analysis of scientific articles, chapters of books and the books, conference proceedings, and the thesis published in the period 1993-2018 unveils that, in descending order, prevail the analysis of the contents, of the media coverage, of the effects of the debates, of the study of the formats, of the organization, of the history, the legislation of these, and the genre of the debate. (2020, p. 11). The author highlights (2020, p. 15) that while research in the USA is oriented to the effects on the vote or in France to the linguistic aspects, in Spain they have been centered on the study of the contents and coverage. The data that Herranz-Rubio provides points to an analysis of the debates' contents from a pragmatic perspective in more than half of the analyzed documents (51.2%) followed by studies of Rhetoric (30.2%).

> Within the pragmatic theories, the study of discourtesy is the one that has interested researchers the most (with 25.6%). Secondly, there is the analysis of the questions, that is, what is related to their nature, their functions, their types, etc. (with 7.0%). As for Rhetoric, the study of the discursive strategies stands out (with 9.4%). Concerning Linguistic, nonverbal communication has been the most researched aspect and, within this, the study of gestures and postures has stood out (with 7.0%). (2020, p. 13)

Research references on the relationship between electoral debates and VOD have not been found in the scientific literature. Articles orientated to comparatively analyze the use of the format on public television have not been found in the bibliographic review either. This article is, therefore, a timely proposal since it reviews both issues by proposing a recount of televised electoral debates and their registration on the platforms of each public broadcaster or other media, mainly, in channels promoted by collective actors in social networks.

3. Methodology and research questions

This research takes as a starting point that the presence of electoral debates in the content chart of these 'On Demand' platforms should be part of the work of the public service media to provide the viewer with the ability to recover and review those contents that form part of the political campaigns that end with the election of their representatives, in addition to collecting these videos as part of a repository of political history and audiovisual memory of the country. And more so considering that the debate is not an ephemeral product for punctual consumption but that its content marks references to evaluate the subsequent actions of the participants throughout the legislature.

In the absence of previous references of similar works, the study is projected as a deductive, exploratory, and descriptive research. The main objective is to define the position of televised electoral debates in the context of VOD platforms of public televisions to identify whether these platforms are also being used as an archive of the political audiovisual memory of countries and as an element of transparency and access for citizens to the most relevant political discussions for the election of their representatives. Furthermore, it is intended, as a secondary objective, to know if providing an updated view of the formats used on the televised electoral debates in public service media.

The questions raised to achieve the objectives proposed in this article are the following:
PI-1. How many electoral debates have been conducted or broadcasted in the public media of each country over the past few years?

PI-2. Has the format varied regarding the number of participating parties?

PI-3. Do the VOD platforms of the European public RTV collect the televised electoral debates broadcasted on their channels?

PI-4. What are the trends in the formats of televised electoral debates on public RTVs in Europe?

PI-5. Are there differences or similarities in these formats according to the public RTV model?

PI-6. Are there common features or differences in the format of televised electoral debates according to the three models of Hallin and Mancini (2004)?

Seven European public radio broadcasts distributed in a balanced way following the models of Hallin and Mancini and with the particularity of a regional subdivision within the democratic-corporatist model have been taken as the object of study to obtain results with an ethnic-political cut. The media under study are the following:

- Polarized pluralistic model: Andorra (Andorra Difussió) and Spain (RTVE).
- Democratic-corporatist model: Germany (ZDF), Austria (ORF).
- Regional Subdivision: Netherlands (NPO) and Belgium (VRT).
- Liberal model: United Kingdom (BBC).

In all cases preliminary research has been made about the federal or general elections to Parliament in each of the seven countries during the period 2009-2019, both included. After identifying the years and the number of elections that took place during that period, the detailed search of all the videos referring to the elections in each of the countries has been carried out, both on their own VOD platforms, and on YouTube, Vimeo, and in general searches by a web browser. To perform this search in each of the countries, it was first necessary to identify the words with which they identified the contents related to the elections in their language, to obtain more precise results in each of the countries. Once all the televised electoral debates available on the online platforms were identified and collected, the format was analyzed and the number of participants was identified through a self-made data collection sheet, tested before collecting the data. The online tracking was developed in the months of September and beginning of October of 2019. The data interpretation was developed throughout October 2019. The results were amplified in November to incorporate the debate of the general election of November 10th, 2019 in Spain.

4. Number of debates and format analysis in Europe

Below are the results compiled in summary tables in which the number of debates and their formats are counted of the seven European countries included in the sample. Andorra and Spain represent in this case the polarized pluralist Mediterranean model, Germany and Austria the democratic-corporatist model, complemented by Belgium and Holland, comparing the possible regional similarities or differences existing inside this same model and, at last, the BBC of the United Kingdom for the liberal model.

4.1. Andorra

Table 1. *Debates in Andorra Difussió Parliamentary elections.*

Polarized pluralist Mediterranean model			
Number	0	1	1
Year	2011	2015	2019
Number of parties	NA	4	7
Accessible in the VOD	NA	Yes	Yes
Accessible online	NA	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

Andorra held televised electoral debates during the parliamentary elections of 2015 and 2019. Besides the debates with the representatives of the parties aspiring to the government of Andorra, it held other regional sub-debates to address local issues.

The number of members in the debates of *Andorra Diffusió* almost doubled in 2019 since it increased from four in 2015 to seven in the last elections, adapting its format to the new political reality that was present in the country. Also, on the corporation's website, there are dedicated and permanently accessible segments on the coverage of each of the elections, which includes all kinds of news related to the elections and also the different types of debates that were held.

4.2. Germany

Table 2. *Federal Elections Debates in ZDF.*

Democratic-corporatist model			
Number	1	1	1
Year	2009	2013	2017
Number of parties	2	2	2
Accessible in the VOD	No	No	Yes
Accessible online	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

On September 27th, 2009, federal elections were held to choose the members of the 17th Bundestag of Germany, where the preliminary results showed a victory of the Democratic Christian Union (CDU), their Bavarian brother party, the Social Cristian Union (CSU), and the Free Democratic Party (FDP).

The electoral debate, in this case, took place between Angela Merkel, of the CDU, against her main opponent, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, of the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

The same model was repeated later, in 2013, with a two-way debate between Angela Merkel and Peer Steinbrück, and, for the last time, in 2017 also between Angela Merkel and the socialist Martin Schulz.

The *Mediathek* of the ZDF (second public channel where the debates of the federal elections are made to 2) only presents the video of the last debate held in the country (2017) as well as other contents of interest around the same subject as the pre-debate or the post-debate. The *Mediathek*-ZDF was "relaunched" in 2016, which is why the recordings of the debates before that time are not available on the platform. However, that indicates that no recovery work has been done on these files to be included in the newspaper library. On YouTube, however, it is possible to access these contents.

4.3. Austria

Table 3. *Debates at ORF Federal Elections.*

Democratic-corporatist model			
Number	10	10	10
Year	2013	2017	2019
Number of parties	2	2	2
Accessible in the VOD	No	No	No
Accessible online	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

The format of the electoral debates of the Austrian television is similar to that of the German public television. It is a "duel" format between two participants. Unlike the German model (in which only the two candidates with real chances of winning face each other), in Austria, a total of ten debates are held in each election, making all the possible combinations of political couples, that is, that each of the party representatives debate in a duel of two with each of the other representatives.

None of these duels, however, is available in the VOD platform of the Austrian public chain ORF, in which, however, we can find some German debates and historical Austrian debates.

4.4. Belgium

Table 4. *Federal Elections Debates in VRT.*

Democratic-corporatist model *(regional subdivision)*			
Number	NA	1	1
Year	2010	2014	2019
Number of parties	0	2	6
Accessible in the VOD	No	No	No
Accessible online	No	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

The debates broadcasted by the VRT have gone from zero in 2010 to six in 2019, the year in which they appear named on their official website, although the video is not available. A message on the website suggests that at one point it was, but that this video was subsequently removed.

The first televised debate in the Belgian VRT available online is the one held during the 2014 federal elections, which corresponds with the largest electoral operation carried out in the country, choosing not only the new Belgian parliament but also the decentralized assemblies and the members of the European parliament.

The VRT, despite the importance of these elections in the Belgian context, does not have these videos available on its website, although they can be found, instead, on other platforms like YouTube, uploaded by users outside the corporation.

4.5. Holland

Table 5. *Debates in the NPO. General elections.*

Democratic- corporatist Model *(Regional subdivision)*			
Number	1	1	1
Year	2010	2012	2017
Number of parties	4	8	14
Accessible in the VOD	No	No	Yes
Accessible online	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

In Holland, the participants in the most recent debate are the 14 largest parties according to the Voting Guide of February 1st, 2017, and the current distribution of seats in the lower house. The six smaller parties, debate in trios, while the leaders of the eight largest parties enter into 1-to-1 discussions.

This design was collaboratively determined on February 2nd between the audience and the television through a raffle through NOS on Facebook and the thematic channel NPO NEWS. A debate with two scenarios is also held at the Dutch NPO: local and national, in which topics such as health care and employment are discussed. Two sets are used for this debate, one in which the local representatives are and in another the national ones.

The number of parties and the format of the debates changed over time, although in 2010 the debate consisted only in a 4-way debate between the main candidate parties to preside over the Dutch executive, in 2012 it was established for the first time the 'multiple duels' format with 8 candidates (4 and 4 spread over two tables).

Only the last of these debates, the one corresponding to the 2017 elections, is available on the VOD platform of the Dutch NPO, in which it is understood that a file recovery has not yet been made to include in the newspaper archive, except for those that are especially relevant historically. The videos of previous debates, however, are available on YouTube but uploaded by other users.

4.6. United Kingdom

Table 6. *General Elections Debates in the BBC.*

Liberal model			
Number	3	4	3
Year	2010	2015	2017
Number of parties	7-7-3	7 y 2	7-7-2
Accessible in the VOD	No	No	No
Accessible online	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

The debates of the general elections of the United Kingdom of 2010 consisted in a series of three debates between the leaders of the three main parties that disputed the general elections of 2010: Gordon Brown, Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party; David Cameron, leader of the opposition and the conservative party; and Nick Clegg, leader of the third largest political party in the United Kingdom, the Liberal Democrats. These were the first debates of this kind to be broadcasted live in the period before the elections in the United Kingdom.

Only one of these three debates occurred on public television. All of the debates took place without interruption for 90 minutes and were broadcasted weekly by ITV, Sky, and the BBC. The first half of each debate focused on a particular issue (internal, international, and economic affairs), before discussing general issues. The questions were not revealed to the leaders before the debate.

Besides the leaders' debates, the financial spokesperson of the three main parties also participated in a debate centered on the economy, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, debating with the ex-chancellor George Osborne, and the Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesman, Vince Cable, on Channel 4. The debates also took place between April 19th and May 5th, a series of debates also took place in the political television series of the BBC *The Daily Politics*, between members of the Labour Party and their Conservative counterparts, Liberal Democrats, and representatives of the Green Party, the Scottish National Party, the Plaid Cymru, and the UK Independence Party.

In the year 2015, the first debate was a one-to-one program between David Cameron, Prime Minister (Conservative Party), and Ed Miliband, leader of the opposition (Labour Party). The second one counted with Cameron, Miliband, Nick Clegg, Vice Prime Minister (Liberal Democrats), Nigel Farage (UKIP), Natalie Bennett (Green Party of England and Gales), Nicola Sturgeon, Prime Minister of Scotland (SNP), and Leanne Wood (Plaid Cymru). The third debate counted with the leaders of the five opposition parties: Miliband, Farage, Bennett, Sturgeon, and Wood. In the last debate, the participants were Cameron, Miliband, and Clegg. Only Miliband, from the Labour Party, participated in the four events.

In 2017, there were two debates to 7, without the presence of the two leaders with greater possibilities of government (Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn, in this case). In a repetition of the format used before the 2015 elections, Jeremy Corbyn and Theresa May were subsequently interviewed by Jeremy Paxman of Channel 4 in front of a live studio audience.

None of the debates that took place in the United Kingdom during the last three elections are available in its VOD. In fact, when trying to search within that platform for content related to elections, we find that despite appearing named on the platform, they are not available for viewing.

4.7. Spain

Table 7. *General Elections debates in RTVE.*

Polarized pluralist Mediterranean model			
Number	2	1	2
Year	2015	2016	2019
Number of parties	9 y 2	4	4 y 5
Accessible in the VOD	Yes	Yes	Yes
Accessible online	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: self-made.

In 2015, in Spain, an unprecedented until that moment debate format was tested, a nine-way debate between the parties with parliamentary and in which *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos,* the two emerging parties*,* were also present, which, at that time according to the polls, had the chances to enter the next legislature in Congress. Subsequently, a debate was held between the two main candidates for the presidency of the government, Pedro Sánchez and Mariano Rajoy, in a classic two-way debate that had been the norm until the previous nine-way debate.

In 2016, the format of the debate changed to include the two emerging parties that had already consolidated their presence in Congress: *Ciudadanos* and *Podemos*. The approach of this debate regarding format did not vary too much beyond the number of participants, it continued to be structured by thematic blocks and with a single moderator.

Later, in 2019, we had the opportunity to witness two debates in general elections (one for each election). In this case, the number of participants varied from four in the first one, to five in the second one, with the emergence of VOX in Congress. The scheme by which the debate was guided followed the thematic blocks already marked on previous occasions, with the exception that this time there were two moderators, one representing public television and another representing a commercial channel.

All the videos of the debates, from 2015, 2016, and the two of the 2019 elections, are accessible through the RTVE on-demand content platform.

4.8. Model analysis

Each of the public RTV models corresponds to a particular political model. The polarized pluralistic model is characterized, as the name implies, for having a more heterogeneous political system, with greater divergence and media that tend more to opinion. The democratic-corporatist model has a strong external pluralism and a highly autonomous media system. Finally, the liberal model, and focusing particularly in the case of the BBC, corresponds to a long tradition of independence and

relevance of the public media and high professionalization. For this research, the regional subdivision allows us to address the particularities of the territories in which different regional identities coexist, such as the case of Belgium and the Flemish VRT, from which differences are intended to be extracted when compared with the neighboring Dutch NPO, hegemonic until a few years ago in the whole of the Netherlands.

In the two analyzed cases of the polarized pluralistic model we can observe important changes in the number of participants in televised electoral debates, for example, in the case of Andorra, going from four to seven in the last elections; and in the case of Spain, that went from the "duel" format complemented by other sub-debates to a five-way debate model, adapting to changes in parliamentary representation. It can be observed how in this case, the more volatile and changing polarized pluralistic model, seems to affect the increase in participants due to the increase in the number of candidates with the possibility of reaching the government.

In the democratic-corporatist model, it is possible to observe how both the German ZDF and the Austrian ORF maintain stable both the format and the number of debates over the last three electoral periods, as is the case with the liberal model of the British BBC, that only varies lightly in one participant in the 2010 elections, but has maintained the format in the last two electoral periods.

In the two regional subdivision models, there is a tendency to parallel innovation in terms of the number of participants and the format of the televised debate. However, both countries have maintained the unique debate for each of the electoral periods. In this sense we can observe that the regional subdivisions bear more similarities with the polarized pluralistic model than with the democratic-corporatist, taking into account the number of debates per electoral period and the tendency to change the number of participants.

5. Discussion

The analysis of the VOD platforms of the seven public televisions included in the sample allows us to answer the research questions and satisfactorily address the objectives set. Questions about the number of electoral debates that have been conducted/broadcasted in the public media of each country over the past few years (PI-1) and about the variation in the format in terms of the number of participating parties (PI-2) are answered in the summary tables provided. There are format changes in five countries, except for Germany and Austria, and an increase in participants in four of them, except for Germany, Austria, and the United Kingdom. There can be no talk of a single trend, although there are countries that almost double the number of electoral debates by public media.

The research question 1 *(PI-3) "Do the VOD platforms of the European public RTV collect the televised electoral debates broadcasted on their channels?"* is answered with the finding that there is a notable disparity between public televisions that have electoral debates accessible on their VOD platforms, being the most common case that these are not available. In the two cases of the polarized pluralistic model, Andorra and Spain, we see how there is a sort of storing tradition of these contents on VOD platforms. which contain the electoral debates of the past ten years in an organized and accessible way. In the same way, it seems that in the last 3 years a tendency has begun to be felt by the NPO and the ZDF, both of the democratic-corporatist model, of allowing access to these contents in their VODs, being the videos of the last federal elections viewable in both channels.

By identifying *what are the trends in the formats of televised electoral debates on public RTVs in Europe (PI-4)* it is observed, almost generally, that the videos of televised electoral debates are accessible through other platforms, being in all cases uploaded by users outside public television,

independently. This suggests a certain lack of interest on the part of European public televisions in maintaining an archive of these televised debates, taking into account that only five of the seven analyzed examples have been consistent when storing these contents. It is also notable that in the case of the Austrian ORF it is more common to find references to elections in larger countries through generic searches with the word 'federal elections' through their internal search filters.

Regarding if *there are differences or similarities in the formats of the debates according to the public RTV model* (*PI-5)* in the Saxon countries (United Kingdom, Germany, Austria) the format of the 'duel' between two candidates, reigns. In the case of the United Kingdom and Germany, this debate always takes place between the two candidates with real chances to achieve the presidency, and in the Austrian case we can observe the sublimation of this duel format by being repeated up to 10 times by performing all possible combinations of candidates

When determining if *there are common features or differences in the format of televised electoral debates according to the three models of Hallin and Mancini (2004) (PI-6)* it is seen how in the case of the countries of the polarized pluralistic model, the debate format adapts to the changes that are occurring in the political reality of each country, which also happens in the case of Holland and Belgium, marked by regional sub-debates and their ethnic-political particularities, which seem to generate a pluralizing effect similar to what happens with their neighbors of the Mediterranean model, and therefore it seems that they demand a greater diversity in both the format and the number of participants. In the televised debates of the Dutch NPO, an innovative idea has been chosen, that of applying a co-creation mechanism through social networks to determine the format of the debate. This fact is in line with the trends indicated by various academics on the management of products and content through co-creation with the audience, although for now, it is only an isolated case among all the analyzed televisions.

The data obtained from the VODs analysis describes the disparate use of the debate as a format in seven public televisions and refute the idea that these platforms are also being used as an archive of political audiovisual memory and, therefore, as an element of transparency and access for citizens to the most relevant political discussions for the election of their representatives.

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