

The Spanish territorial agendas: a thematic analysis of the debates in the regional elections of the year 2019

Las agendas territoriales españolas: análisis temático de los debates en las elecciones autonómicas del año 2019

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This research thematically analyzes the televised electoral debates held in the different Autonomous Communities of Spain that held elections in 2019. **Methodology:** Coding and aggregation through a score of the topics expressed by each candidate, determined by the structure of the debate on each television. Table presentation and application of Spearman's correlation coefficient to measure correlation levels. **Results:** The chronic issues (economic policy, public services, and employment) occupy the first positions in rank in most of the Autonomous Communities, adding the one of "Ideology and campaign", typical of electoral contexts. **Discussion and conclusions:** The presence of nationalist or regionalist political parties in the government tends to generate shared problems between their respective territories.

KEYWORDS: political communication; agenda-setting; television; electoral debates; regional elections; political science.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La presente investigación analiza temáticamente los debates electorales televisados celebrados en las distintas Comunidades Autónomas de España que en el año 2019 celebraron comicios. **Metodología:** Codificación y agregación a través de una puntuación de los temas expresados por cada candidato, determinados por la estructura del debate realizado en cada televisión. Presentación en tablas y aplicación del coeficiente de correlación de Spearman para medir niveles de correlación. **Resultados:** Los *issues* crónicos (política económica, servicios públicos y empleo) ocupan las primeras posiciones en rango en la mayor parte de las Comunidades Autónomas, sumándosele el de “Ideología y campaña”, propio de los contextos electorales. **Discusión y conclusiones:** La presencia de partidos políticos nacionalistas o regionalistas en el gobierno tiende a generar problemas compartidos entre sus respectivos territorios.

PALABRAS CLAVE: comunicación política; agenda setting; televisión; debates electorales; elecciones autonómicas; ciencia política.

CONTENTS

1. Introduction. 1.1. The relationship between media, political, and public agendas. 1.2 The study of campaigns and electoral debates. 1.3 Electoral debates in Spain. 2. Materials and methods. 3. Results. 3.1. Elections in Asturias and Cantabria. 3.2. Elections in Navarre and La Rioja. 3.3 Elections in Aragon and Valencia. 3.4. Elections in Murcia and Extremadura. 3.5. Elections in Castilla León and Castilla La Mancha. 3.6. Elections in the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands. 3.7. Elections in Madrid. 3.8. Old topics and new discussions: analysis and correlations 4. Conclusions and discussion. 5. Bibliographic references.

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

1. Introduction

On Sunday, May 26th, 2019, municipal, European, and regional elections took place in Spain, with a result that placed the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* as the main force in the state sphere facing a new electoral period. This article takes as reference the regional elections held in Aragon, Asturias, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Valencian Community, Extremadura, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, and Navarre for the thematic analysis of electoral debates. Due to the multiplicity of media used for these debates, those with television format were selected, prioritizing those made in regional televisions and, as far as possible, those in which the political parties established by the law in force by resolution of the Electoral Boards participated.

The electoral campaign is the period of greatest intensity in the political exercise because the political dispute is exacerbated as the moment of reaching power approaches. In that context, electoral debates have consolidated over the years as one of the main moments of that dispute (McKinney, & Carlin, 2004), in which strategies and mechanisms are put in place from the political and media actors. Within the framework of the electoral campaigns and the voting decision process, one of the fundamental elements is how the political candidates are positioned regarding the topics of the debate, in such a way that the evaluation that the citizen makes of that positioning ends up becoming one of the factors for the configuration of the electoral decision. In that sense, the associations that the citizens make about the electoral candidates regarding the topics of interest, among which are both structural issues and those of a temporary and particular nature of a specific territory, are activated in the campaign.

1.1. The relationship between media, political, and public agendas

In response to the classical theory of the establishment of the agenda (McCombs, & Shaw, 1972), we will say that the media can transfer the relevance of the topics they consider most important (media agenda) to citizens, in such a way that the issues that the media positions as important end up being considered important for the electorate (public agenda). To understand this relationship, it is convenient to start from the concept of the agenda itself, understood as the set of topics or issues that the media proposes as important and, consequently, are visible in the media sphere (Weaver, 1997), being an *issue* the “often conflictive social problem that has received coverage” (Dearing, & Rogers, 1996, p. 3). Just as the media build their agenda, political actors also have a repertoire of issues to which they attach greater importance, so they focus on them, both to highlight them as problems and to offer a possible solution to them.

This relationship between the different agendas is one of the most important pillars when it comes to studying how public opinion is configured (McCombs, 2018), but it is particularly important in electoral terms. Here, the interaction between the different mentioned agendas, to which the personal agenda should be added, can have an impact on the configuration of the electoral decision (Bouza, & González, 2009) mutated by the emergence of the digital society, of consumption in second screens and through social networks (Yang *et. al.*, 2016), although essentially maintaining very similar agenda construction schemes (Harder, Sevemans, & Van Aelst, 2017; López-López, & Vásquez González, 2018; López-López, & Oñate, 2019).

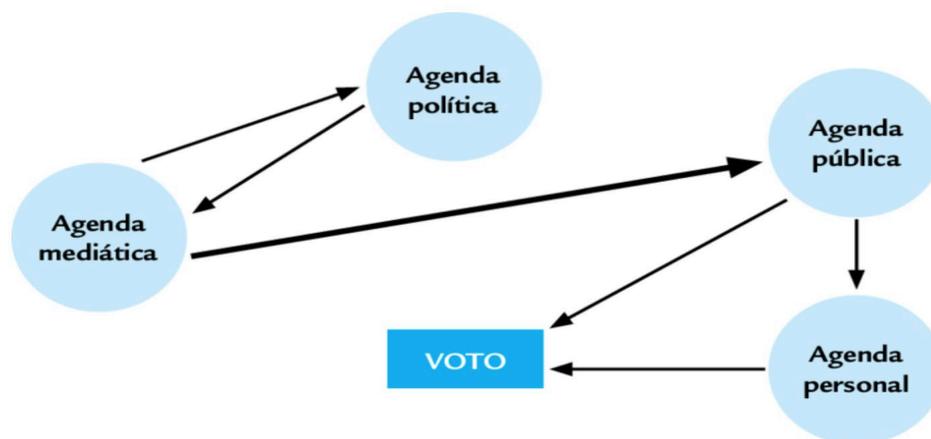


Image 1. *Voting decisión.*
Source: Bouza & González, 2009.

1.2. The study of campaigns and electoral debates

Academic literature provides abundant empirical evidence in the study of the electoral campaign and debates (Barreiro Rivas, Pereira López, & García Hípola, 2015; Herranz-Rubio, 2019), which is generally divided into different areas: the development of the campaign, its coverage by the media, and the effects it generates in the citizens' vote decision (García Marín, 2015). Within the framework of an electoral campaign, the debate among the candidates is recognized as the high point of the dispute over the vote, a premise that remains for several reasons. In the first place, it is the moment in which candidates have the opportunity to debate among themselves about their programmatic proposals and, in recent times, are even able to receive questions or comments from the citizens themselves. Secondly, the electoral debate represents a moment of relative control on the part of the candidates regarding the media, as it is the act of the electoral campaign in which candidates can address citizens avoiding the intermediation of the media, although through them (López-García *et.*

al, 2018). In the third place, the electoral debate is the moment of the campaign to which the media themselves pay more attention, both in the preparation and in their development and subsequent analysis. Not surprisingly, the media is an increasingly important actor in the acceptance and negotiation of how the debate is held. Finally, these tend to have high levels of audience, probably becoming the act that concentrates the greatest number of citizens, with new consumption models on second screens (Saavedra-Llamas, & Rodríguez-Fernández, 2018). On the other hand, the electoral debate can be considered the moment of maximum expression of the personalization of politics, because during its development the political abilities of each candidate are exalted. It is also the moment when alliances are manifested and when attack and conflict strategies are launched as the main tools at the service of negativism (González, & Chavero, 2013), in this case of political negativism (Mayer, 1996; Iyengar, 1991).

1.3. Electoral debates in Spain

The tradition of holding electoral debates during the campaign period begins in the United States with the first televised debate in 1952 and, progressively, has become widespread in the rest of the countries of democratic tradition as an expression of the political will for dialogue and approach to the citizen. As its use has been extended, the electoral debates have become increasingly more sophisticated acts, moving from the flat format they had in the beginning to a more dynamic one that we observe in recent years, with participation even through social networks. Although candidates may, in electoral debates, address their potential voters without the intermediation of the media, it is no less true that, more and more, the negotiation of the details that involve conducting an electoral debate goes through criteria more related to the media format, especially television, than with the political field itself, although there must be mutual trust between actors (Campo Vidal, 2017). In fact, the media even put their conditions in the negotiation before the holding of the electoral debate. This ultimately is the maximum expression of media-centered democracies, as suggested by Swanson (1995).

In the Spanish case, the tradition of electoral debate is less extensive, although also deeply studied (Herranz-Rubio, 2019; Reguera, & Rodal, 2018). One of the most famous was the one starring Felipe González and José María Aznar in 1993; later, it was not until 2008 when they are resumed with José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (PSOE) and Mariano Rajoy (PP), who inaugurated the second stage of electoral debates, after which they are happening in a generalized way in the different appointments. The generalization of the debates has been such that they are carried out in campaigns of different levels: national and regional, which reflects the weight given to the main activity of the campaign.

In general, most of the literature on electoral campaigns and, specifically, on electoral debates in the Spanish case, address this phenomenon from the perspective of its reception by the audience; nevertheless, we found some studies for the Spanish case that emphasize the study of campaign issues and their effect on the individual, in which empirical evidence is provided on the low influence of electoral advertising on campaign issues especially related to the influence of the media when positioning these issues (Humanes, & Moreno, 2012); we also found some studies on the immediate effects of electoral debates (García Luengo, 2011) and others on how the media cover electoral debates in the Spanish case, especially from the framing theory (García Marín, 2015). Finally, some works address the significant influence of electoral debates when making the electoral decision, especially in close-knit electoral contexts (Lledó, 2001).

The importance of the thematic agenda is especially significant in the electoral campaign due to the audience's attention to the topics of debate and the association with political advertising (Jamieson, & Campbell, 1994; López Escobar *et al.*, 1996), period in which also increases the importance of the

image of the candidates. The emphasis on the topics of debate during the electoral campaign is not only important for the configuration of public opinion and discussion topics, but also the voting decision (Weaver, 1997; Bouza, & González, 2009).

2. Materials and methods

Research of the electoral debates in the epistemological framework of agenda-setting theory has had a large number of works in recent decades, especially through the content analysis technique (Pérez Curiel, & Lancharro Montiel, 2017) through its thematization (López-López, *et.al*, 2019), framing (Téllez Morales, 2009) or determining the influence of the structure on the agenda (Benoit, & Hansen, 2001). Therefore, the methodology of the present work is widely justified, in which the electoral debates that were held due to the autonomous elections of May 2019 in Spain, in Aragon, Asturias, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Valencian Community, Extremadura, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, and Navarre are thematically analyzed. Those with television format in the autonomous entities were selected, except for the Cantabrian case, in which the one in *El Diario El Montañés* has been analyzed as the closest format to the rest. To this end, the technique used was that of content analysis through a minute of each of the debates. In each of the large blocks (media agenda) a process of codification and aggregation of the specific topics of each of the candidates (political agenda) was carried out with their corresponding weighting (primary, secondary, tertiary), scored with a 1, 0.5, and 0.25 respectively. This score has been made based on the importance and emphasis that each candidate has placed in their proposals, analyzing the replicas made by the adversaries, and their counter-replies as a mechanism for adjusting the importance of each topic. The result of the sum of the successive interventions of each of them forms the thematic agenda of the electoral debate. This analysis model is an adaptation of the so-called “impact area” (Bouza, 2004), widely contrasted in previous research.

The main objective (MO) of the present investigation is to compare the agendas of the autonomous electoral debates held in 2019 in Spain, the secondary objectives being two: a) to rank the position of the so-called chronic problems (o1); b) know the inclusion of feminism, the environment, and immigration in territorial agendas (o2). Due to the nature of the research, we work with four research questions: Is corruption still present as a predominant topic? (Q1) Is it the purely ideological debate that builds thematization? (Q2) Does the discourse of the extreme right affect the configuration of the agenda? (Q3) Has Catalonia been present in the debates? (Q4).

To answer these research questions, we propose two hypotheses that guide this work:

- Economic and proximity factors determine the correlation between territorial agendas (H1).
- The party in the government modifies the configuration of the agenda in the electoral debates (H2).

The following table (1) shows a summary of all the electoral debates of the 2019 regional elections in Spain that have been analyzed for this work.

Table 1. *Analyzed debates.*

Autonomous Community	Date and place	Participants	Duration
Asturias	May 20 th , 2019 (RTPA)	Adrián Barbón (PSOE); Teresa Mallada (PP); Lorena Gil (Podemos); Ángela Vallina (IU); Carmen Moriyón (Foro); Juan Vázquez (Ciudadanos); Ignacio Blanco (Vox).	145 minutes
Cantabria	May 15 th , 2019 (El	María José Sáenz de Buruaga (PP); Miguel	97 minutes

	Diario el Montañés)	Ángel Revilla (PRC); Pablo Zuloaga (PSOE); Félix Álvarez (Ciudadanos); Cristóbal Palacio (Vox); Mónica Rodero (Podemos)	
Navarre	May 22 nd (Navarra TV)	Javier Esparza (Navarra Suma); María Chivite (PSN-PSOE); Uxue Barkos (Geroa Bai); Bakartxo Ruiz (EH Bildu); Mikel Buil (Podemos); María Luisa de Simón (Izquierda-Ezkerra).	105 minutes
La Rioja	May 16 th , 2019 (TVR)	José I. Cenicerros (PP); Concha Andreu (PSOE), Raquel Romero (Unidas Podemos); Pablo Baena (Ciudadanos); Julio Revuelta (Partido Riojano).	103 minutes
Aragon	May 14 th , 2019 (Aragón TV) ¹	Luis María Beamonte (PP); Javier Lambán (PSOE); Maru Díaz (Podemos-Equo); Daniel Pérez Calvo (Ciudadanos); Arturo Aliaga (PAR); José Luis Soro (CHA); Álvaro Sanz (IU); Santiago Morón (Vox)	122 minutes
Valencia	April 17 th , 2019 (territorial delegation RTVE)	Rubén Dalmau (Unides Podem-EU), Toni Cantó (Ciudadanos), Mónica Oltra (Compromís), Ximo Puig (PSPV-PSOE), and Isabel Bonig del PP-CV.	100 minutes
Murcia	May 17 th (Televisión Región de Murcia)	Fernando López (PP); Diego Conesa (PSOE); Óscar Urralburu (Podemos); Isabel Franco (Ciudadanos).	123 minutes
Extremadura	May 21 st (Canal Extremadura)	Guillermo Fernández Vara (PSOE); José. A Monago (PP); Irene de Miguel (Unidas por Extremadura); Cayetano Polo (Ciudadanos); Ju. Morales (Vox); Pedro Lanzas (Extremadura Unida); Laura Márquez (Actúa)	148 minutes
Madrid	May 19 th , 2019 (Telemadrid)	Isabel Díaz Ayuso (PP); Ángel Gabilondo (PSOE) Isabel Serra (Unidas Podemos); Ignacio Aguado (Ciudadanos); Rocío Monasterio (Vox).	107 minutes
Castilla León	May 14 th (Radio Televisión de Castilla León)	Alfonso Fernández Mañueco (PP), Luis Tudanca (PSOE), Pablo Fernández (Podemos), and Francisco Igea (Cs).	108 minutes
Castilla La Mancha	May 20 th (Castilla La Mancha Media)	Emiliano García-Page (PSOE); Paco Núñez (PP), José García Molina (Podemos); Carmen Picazo (Ciudadanos); Daniel Arias (Vox)	134 minutes
Balearic Islands	May 15 th (IB3)	Gabriel Company (Partido Popular); Francina Armengol (PSOE); Juan Pedro Yllanes (Unidas Podemos); Marc Pérez-Ribas (Ciudadanos); Miquel Ensenyat (Més); Jaume Font (El Pi); Silvia Tur (Gent per Formentera); Josep Castells (Més per Menorca)	147 minutes
Canary Islands	May 23 rd , 2019	Fernando Clavijo (Coalición Canaria); Ángel Torres (PSOE); Asier Gómez (PP); Noemí Santana (Si Podemos Canarias); Román Rodríguez (NC); Vidina Espino Ramírez (Ciudadanos)	93 minutes

Source: self-made.

¹ The debate is not in public repositories. It was transferred exclusively for investigative purposes by the direction of Aragón TV.

The results are presented through tables, applying Spearman's correlation coefficient to measure the degree of correlation between the orderly agenda of topics of each Autonomous Community based on their weight. In the case of a tie between two or more subjects, the one that has been in the highest rank the most is placed first; if the tie persists, the minutes are reviewed and the one that has been present on the screen for the longest time is placed first. 18 issues have been selected because they have been the most present in each one of the debates, excluding those that are not repeated or do so with less intensity. The topics are as follows: employment, economic policy, environment, corruption and regeneration, public services, ideology and campaign, social policy and citizen rights, state policy, infrastructure and transport, equality, SMEs, institutional policy, autonomous financing, primary sector, minority groups, housing, territorial policy, and industry and energy. Likewise, the analysis of the bivariate correlation is carried out by comparing the territorial, economic (wealth, poverty, and unemployment), population (density and aging), and institutional (government parties) dimensions, understood as explanatory factors.

3. Results

3.1. Elections in Asturias and Cantabria

The main electoral debate for the Presidency of the Principality of Asturias, which lasted more than two hours, was held on Monday, May 20th, in the Asturian public Radio TV and seven candidates participated: Adrián Barbón (PSOE); Teresa Mallada (PP); Lorena Gil (*Podemos*); Ángela Vallina (IU); Carmen Moriyón (*Foro*); Juan Vázquez (*Ciudadanos*), and Ignacio Blanco (Vox). The result of the elections resulted in a clear victory of the PSOE (20 seats) which, added to the deputies of the *Izquierda Unida* (2), allowed the socialist candidate to enter the presidency on the second ballot. The debate would take place on five large blocks (Industry; Infrastructure, mobility, and metropolitan area; Rural environment and depopulation; Culture, co-officiality, and reform of the Statute of Autonomy; Public Services), where each candidate would have three minutes, in addition to one small presentation at the beginning in which the first measure to be carried out would be indicated, and a last general intervention of one minute appealing to the vote.

In the thematic field, the debate was limited by the blocks stipulated by the public corporation in agreement with the political parties, leaving little room for the introduction of new issues by the candidates. The socialist Barbón and the candidate of *Ciudadanos*, Juan Vázquez, were the most questioned (the latter as a result of serving as an advisor to the previous government), the liberal assuming several negative frames, including, by the *Partido Popular* and Vox, what would promote a low coalition potential. In the first places in rank are the so-called chronic problems, linked to economic policy (1), institutionalism (3), and the situation of public services (2), placing corruption in fifth place (recurring issue at the time of crisis) and industry as a regional element of differentiating character (coal and energy transition). One of the characteristics of Cantabria is that it does not have its own broadcasting service, so the electoral debate relevant to the elections to Parliament (with television format) that has been selected for the present study was the one carried out by *El Diario El Montañés*, one of the most relevant in the area. In it, the main candidates for the Presidency of the region participated: María José Sáenz de Buruaga (PP); Miguel Ángel Revilla (PRC); Pablo Zuloaga (PSOE); Félix Álvarez (*Ciudadanos*); Cristóbal Palacio (Vox), and Mónica Rodero (*Podemos*). The result would throw a victory of the regionalist, who would reach the Presidency with the support of the PSOE.

Table 2. *Thematic agendas of Asturias and Cantabria.*

ASTURIAS			CANTABRIA		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Economic policy	7.50	1	Public services	12.50
2	Public services	7.25	2	Infrastructures and transport	9.75
3	Institutional policy	6.75	3	Economic policy	8.75
4	Campaign and ideology	6.25	4	Campaign and ideology	7.25
5	Corruption and regeneration	5.75	5	Employment	6.75
6	Infrastructures and transport	5.5	6	Institutional policy	6.25
7	Employment	5	7	Industry and energy	5
8	Industry and energy	4.75	8	Social policy and citizen rights	3.75
9	Culture and language	4.50	9	State policy	3.25
10	Environment	4.25	10	Corruption and regeneration	2.25
11	Territorial policy	2.75	11	Territorial policy	2
12	R + D + I	2.50	12	Equality	1.75
13	Minority groups	2.5	13	Autonomous Financing	1
14	Social policy and citizen rights	2.25	14	SMEs	1
15	State policy	2.25	15	Minority groups	1
16	Housing	1.50	16	R + D + I	0.75
17	Immigration	1.50	17	Housing	0.5
18	Primary sector	1.25	18	Primary sector	0.25
19	SMEs	0.75	19	-	-
20	Equality	0.5	20	-	-
21	Others	0.5	21	-	-

Source: self-made.

The debate was held on six blocks, with an initial and final minute (Balance of the legislature; Infrastructures; Public services; Employment and economy; Education; Agreement), with a structure of 45 initial seconds for each candidate and subsequently flexibility in the times within the established for each block -with some measure- in the replicas. This format allowed for a livelier dialectic confrontation and a more direct confrontation of ideas, in addition to forcing candidates to initially clarify their proposals. In general, the weight of the criticism and who determined the agenda was Miguel Ángel Revilla, able to delimit the discussed subtopics, displacing the PP and C'S, omitting Vox, and with some distribution of roles with the PSOE when defending the previous government's management. The relation of presented topics, in terms of rank, presents the chronic in the first places (public services, infrastructure, economic policy, and employment), with the appellant on electoral campaign (personal, partisan, and ideological appeals), placing corruption (10) and autonomous financing (13) in subsidiary positions, with equality in a marginal twelfth position (only claimed by the PSOE) and no appeal to the environment.

3.2. Elections in Navarre and La Rioja

The electoral debate of the elections to the Parliament of Navarre was held in the private corporation *Navarra TV* on May 22nd, with the presidential candidates of the main parties in liza: Javier Esparza (*Navarra Suma*), María Chivite (PSN- PSOE), Uxue Barkos (*Geroa Bai*), Bakartxo Ruiz (*EH Bildu*), Mikel Buil (*Podemos*), and María Luisa de Simón (*Izquierda-Ezkerra*). Its structure has been very characteristic since there have been no closed blocks, but rather guiding questions on certain topics that allowed a greater dynamism of the segments. Besides the first generic minute (*What is Navarre risking in the coming years?*) and the final intervention, issues related to taxation, public services,

self-government, and infrastructure have been dealt with three and a half minute shifts. Regarding the codification of the topic “Autonomous financing” (4), it has been carried out based on the mentions within the issue “Economic policy” (2) or “Territorial policy” (5) that referred to forality. From a qualitative point of view the debate has been strongly polarized and with a clear self-referential component (codified under the topic “Ideology and campaign”), with serious accusations between *Navarra Suma* and the rest of the contestants. The conservative coalition constantly appealed to the stability it represents before "nationalists and populists" questioning the socialist candidate. As a distinguishing feature from the rest of the debates, the reference to the PNV and the Basque Country has been very present, as well as a sort of “hidden agenda” of *Geroa Bai* and *EH Bildu*. Regarding the topic agenda, the first three in rank assume a chronic dimension without exceptional character, combining ideology, economy, and public services. It is important to highlight the null references to corruption or immigration, besides the low position in the rank of the topic “Equality” or “Environment”, in positions 10 and 11 respectively.

Table 3. *Thematic agendas of Navarre and La Rioja.*

NAVARRE			LA RIOJA		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Ideology and campaign	9	1	Public services	9
2	Economic policy	7.5	2	Economic policy	7
3	Public services	6.75	3	Ideology and campaign	5.5
4	Autonomous Financing	5	4	Infrastructures and transport	5
5	Territorial policy	4	5	Employment	4
6	Employment	3.75	6	Population and territory	3
7	Social policy and citizen rights	3.5	7	Industry and energy	2.5
8	Infrastructures and transport	2.5	8	Institutional policy	2.25
9	Institutional policy	2	9	Primary sector	1.75
10	Equality	2	10	Social policy and citizen rights	1.50
11	Environment	1.75	11	Equality	1.50
12	State policy	1.50	12	Territorial policy	1.25
13	Housing	1.25	13	Environment	1.25
14	Culture and language	1.25	14	State policy	1
15	R + D + I	0.75	15	SMEs	0.75
16	Industry and energy	0.5	16	Minority groups	0.75
17	Corruption and regeneration	0.25	17	Corruption and regeneration	0.75
18	-	-	18	Autonomous Financing	0.25
19	-	-	19	R + D + I	0.25
20	-	-	20	Others	0.25

Source: self-made.

The electoral debate of the elections to the Parliament of La Rioja was held on May 16th on *Televisión Rioja* (TVR), a private channel belonging to the Vocento group, with five of the six invited candidates participating (Vox declined to participate): José Ignacio Ceniceros (PP), Concha Andreu (PSOE), Raquel Romero (*Unidas Podemos*), Pablo Baena (*Ciudadanos*), and Julio Revuelta (*Partido Riojano*). The debate was organized on four blocks of a generic nature (Infrastructures; Economy; Health, Education, and Social Policy; Depopulation and rural areas) with three-minute interventions, with an initial minute, and the so-called “golden minute”. In general, the candidates maintained a speech very in line with that of their political parties in other contests: the popular appealed to economic policy; *Ciudadanos* (beyond the campaign slogans, common in all autonomous communities), spoke of freedom to choose in the educational field and of eliminating the

“chiringuitos” of the Administration; the *Podemos- Izquierda Unida- Equo* coalition showed its “purple” (equality) and “green” (environment) position; the socialists reinforced everything that has to do with public services, and the *Partido Riojano* emphasized its autonomy to “strengthen the self-government” of the region. State policy was practically absent (14), with certain allusions to the government of Pedro Sánchez, as well as to autonomous financing (19). The three most recurring issues on the thematic agenda are those chronic ones within an electoral campaign: public services, economic policy, and those that have a strong self-referential character (personal references of the candidate, appeal to the party or ideological reference). The main characteristic of this electoral debate has to do with its little specific nature, beyond the problem of infrastructure (4), depopulation (6) or the primary sector (9). The elections would be won by the female socialist candidate, who would be inaugurated president with the support of *Podemos* and *Izquierda Unida*.

3.3. Elections in Aragon and Valencia

On May 14th, the debate to the Courts of Aragon took place on public television Aragon TV with the participation of Luis María Beamonte (PP), Javier Lambán (PSOE, ultimately winning and inaugurated president), Maru Díaz (*Podemos- Equo*), Daniel Pérez Calvo (*Ciudadanos*), Arturo Aliaga (PAR), José Luis Soro (CHA), Álvaro Sanz (IU), and Santiago Morón (Vox). The debate, along the same lines as the rest, was divided into four large blocks (“Economy, Industry, and Employment”; “Social rights”; “Aragon in Spain: self-government”; “The Aragon of the future”), with two minutes and a half per candidate, plus a minute of initial intervention and the so-called final golden minute.

Table 4. *Thematic agendas of Aragon and Valencia.*

ARAGON			VALENCIA		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Public services	12.75	1	Ideology and campaign	11.25
2	Ideology and campaign	11.75	2	Corruption and regeneration	6.25
3	Economic policy	11.50	3	Economic policy	5.5
4	Territorial policy	9	4	Employment	4.75
5	Employment	6.5	5	Equality	4.75
6	Equality	4.5	6	Autonomous Financing	4.25
7	Population and territory	4.25	7	Public services	4
8	Social policy and rights	3	8	Social policy and rights	3.25
9	State policy	3	9	Territorial policy	3
10	Institutional policy	1.75	10	Institutional policy	2.5
11	Infrastructures and transport	1.75	11	Infrastructures and transport	1.5
12	Environment	1.50	12	Environment	1.5
13	Autonomous Financing	1.50	13	State policy	1.25
14	Corruption and regeneration	1.25	14	R + D + I	1.25
15	Primary sector	1.25	15	SMEs	1.25
16	Industry and energy	1	16	Housing	0.5
17	Culture and language	0.75	17	Primary sector	0.25
18	Housing	0.75	18	-	-
19	SMEs	0.75	19	-	-
20	R + D + I	0.5	20	-	-
21	Minority groups	0.25	21	-	-

Source: self-made.

In addition to the clear distinction between the left and right blocs, with the attempts of PAR and *Ciudadanos* to exercise the role of the hinge through centrality, the situation of Catalonia has also

been present, beyond self-government and territorial policy. Due to its geographical and political proximity, both PP and C's assumed this cleavage as fundamental in their speech, coming to accuse the *Chunta Aragonesista*, with the passivity of the PSOE, of carrying out a *pan-Catalan* policy. This worked to reinforce the issue of state (9) and territorial (4) policy, with appeals to Pedro Sánchez and Miquel Iceta by *Ciudadanos* and appeals to the unity of Spain by the PP and Vox. It was the latter who, unsuccessfully, assumed the speech of "freedom" of choice of the education center (1) in defense of the concerted. The candidates of the left displayed the public nature of health and education, in addition to the demand for social policy. Likewise, the campaign issue, economic policy, and employment have been present in the first positions in rank, being housing, R+D+i or small and medium-sized enterprises in the last places.

The territorial delegation of *Radio Televisión Española* (RTVE) was in charge of organizing the debate with the main candidates to preside over the *Generalitat Valenciana*, which was held on April 17th, 2019 and in which Rubén Dalmau (*Unides Podem-EU*), Toni Cantó (*Ciudadanos*), Mónica Oltra (*Compromís*), Ximo Puig (PSPV-PSOE), and Isabel Bonig of the PP-CV participated. The electoral result would throw a victory of the PSOE that would make the socialist candidate president again, with the support of *Compromís* and *Unides Podem-EU*. With a duration of about 100 minutes, it was classically structured: between the initial minute and the golden minute, five thematic blocks ("Economy"; "Health and Education", "Policy of equality and conciliation", "Transparency, trust, and agreements "; "Autonomous financing") in which each contestant would have three minutes to set their position and discuss. In general, the debate was characterized by a strong ideological component: on the one hand, the signatories of the *Acord del Botànic*; on the other, an entity between PP and C's, with very few attacks between them and building a joint story in which the main item stems from the urgent need for change. Before the "imposition" of "the leftist *Sanchista* coalition", the conservative bloc assumes "the liberal flag", enshrined in issues such as parents' freedom to choose the language and the school in which to educate their children or the generalized descent of taxes. On the other, both Puig and Oltra put in value the "institutional stability" and the advances in social, equality or employment matters achieved by their government. As exceptional issues in this debate, compared to the rest, is the second position that occupies corruption and regeneration, derived from the large number of cases that occurred in the community at the time of the *Partido Popular* and that still has great place in the politic agenda; and autonomous financing, as Valencia is one of the communities most affected by the current financing system.

3.4. Elections in Murcia and Extremadura

Canal Extremadura was the place chosen for holding the electoral debate with the main candidates for the presidency of the Region, which faced the popular Fernando López Miras; Diego Conesa of the PSOE; of *Podemos*, Oscar Urralburu, and from *Ciudadanos*, candidate Isabel Franco. The debate has followed the classic format of four large blocks with one minute of initial intervention and another final one requesting the vote, although the denomination of these has been wide enough to allow introducing the parties' priorities ("Economic policy"; "Water and environment"; " Model of region"; "Agreements and democratic regeneration"). The strategies of the PSOE and *Podemos* have been to propose an alternative government through a progressive coalition, with a sustained presence of the defense of public services (5) and social policy (7); the one by the PP has consisted of generating negative frameworks for *Ciudadanos* to clarify their agreements policy (6).

The thematic agenda has been very particular, placing employment in the first position in rank; second, economic policy, and the environment in third place. The latter has not been focused on climate change but on the situation of the *Mar Menor* and public water policies (Tajo-Segura transfer), very present in recent decades in Murcian politics. As another distinctive issue and with a

sustained presence in the interventions of C's, PSOE, and *Podemos* is corruption, mainly by the way to reach the presidency by the PP candidate after the resignation of Pedro Antonio Sánchez López after his imputation. On the other hand, industry, housing or self-government have had very low visibility, in the last positions in rank. The elections have turned Fernando López Miras into the president, with the support, in the third investiture session, of *Ciudadanos* and the ultra-right-wing Vox.

Canal Extremadura was the place chosen for holding the electoral debate with the main candidates for the Presidency of this Community. Under the motto “*Extremadura Decide*” on May 21st, Guillermo Fernández Vara, of the PSOE; José Antonio Monago, from the PP; Irene de Miguel, from *Unidas por Extremadura (Podemos)*; Cayetano Polo, of *Ciudadanos*; Juan Antonio Morales, from Vox; Pedro Lanzas, from *Extremadura Unida*, and Laura Márquez, from the *Actúa* party, founded by Gaspar Llamazares and Baltasar Garzón faced each other. The structure has been markedly different from the previous ones due to its flexibility: to the four large blocks in which each candidate had two minutes (“Economy”, “Society”, “Quality of life”, and “Great challenges”), four-question times from journalists, a free discussion section, and a final minute requesting the vote were added.

Table 5. *Thematic agendas of Murcia and Extremadura.*

MURCIA			EXTREMADURA		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Employment	8.75	1	Ideology and campaign	18
2	Economic policy	4.25	2	Employment	11.75
3	Environment	4	3	Public services	10
4	Corruption and regeneration	3.75	4	Economic policy	6.75
5	Public services	3.75	5	Territory and population	6
6	Ideology and campaign	3.75	6	Institutional policy	5.25
7	Social policy and citizen rights	3.5	7	Primary sector	5.25
8	State policy	2.75	8	Infrastructures and transport	4.50
9	Infrastructure and transport	1.25	9	Equality	4.25
10	Equality	1.25	10	Territorial policy	4.25
11	SMEs	1.25	11	Corruption and regeneration	3.50
12	Institutional policy	0.75	12	Minority groups	3.25
13	Autonomous Financing	0.50	13	Environment	3
14	Primary sector	0.50	14	Tourism	3
15	Minority groups	0.25	15	Industry and energy	2.75
16	Housing	0.25	16	Social policy and citizen rights	2
17	Territorial policy	0.25	17	Culture and language	2
18	Industry and energy	0.25	18	SMEs	1.76
19	-	-	19	Historical memory	1.25
20	-	-	20	Immigration	1
21	-	-	21	State policy	1
22	-	-	22	R + D + I	0.5
23	-	-	23	Autonomous Financing	0.5
24	-	-	24	Housing	0.5
25	-	-	25	Others	0.25

Source: self-made.

The format and the number of participants (and a duration of almost two and a half hours) has influenced the configuration of the agenda, very diverse and wide, in which they have notably highlighted the issues related to the very intention of an electoral campaign (agreements policy,

accusations, ideology, etc.), followed by employment (creation and precariousness), and public health and education services. Of particular note are the situation of the territory and population (5), the primary sector (7), and the infrastructure (8) that define a media agenda that combines chronic problems and those specific to the Autonomous Community. The territorial policy has been present to a greater extent than in other territories, with appeals (through the issue of “Territorial Policy”) to the unity of Spain by *Ciudadanos*, PP, PSOE, and Vox. The latter has tried to introduce issues such as immigration, historical memory, and corruption, which found an ally in *Ciudadanos* to place it in 11th place, one of the highest in Spain. The elections would finally be won by the PSOE with an absolute majority.

3.5. Elections in Castilla León and Castilla La Mancha

The private corporation *Radio Televisión de Castilla y León* (RTVCYL) was responsible for broadcasting the first electoral debate held between the candidates for the Presidency of Castilla y León (of a total of two) that faced the popular Alfonso Fernández Mañueco, the socialist Luis Tudanca, the representative of *Podemos*, Pablo Fernández, and Francisco Igea for *Ciudadanos* (who, after the election result, would again make the conservative president despite the victory of the *sanchista* candidate). The format was divided into four blocks (“Depopulation and rural development”; “Economy and employment”; “Taxation”; “Democratic regeneration”) with six-minute shifts, of which one was reserved for position taking and the following five for a guided debate. Likewise, the candidates had an initial intervention of a minute and a half and a final one of one minute, intended to appeal directly to citizens.

At the thematic level, the blocks largely determined the proposals of the candidates, which redounded in their proposals in an excessively long and corseted debate format. In general, it was possible to detect the preeminence of the so-called chronic problems with very vague and descriptive presentations (economic policy, employment, and public services), in addition to two elements that differentiated it from other autonomous communities. Firstly, the issue of corruption in a prominent fifth place (mainly boosted in the “Democratic regeneration” block and the successive cases after more than three decades of the government of the *Partido Popular*); secondly, the appeals to depopulation, being Castilla-León one of the most scourged regions of the so-called “emptied Spain”. Special attention is drawn to the low relevance of social policy, the environment, territorial policy or autonomous financing.

Table 6. *Thematic agendas of Castilla León y Castilla La Mancha.*

CASTILLA LEÓN			CASTILLA LA MANCHA		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Economic policy	7.75	1	Public services	13
2	Employment	4.5	2	Campaign and ideology	12.5
3	Public services	4.25	3	Economic policy	7
4	Institutional policy	4	4	Primary sector	5.5
5	Corruption and regeneration	4	5	Employment	4.25
6	Population and territory	3	6	State policy	3.25
7	Campaign and ideology	2.75	7	Social policy and citizen rights	2.50
8	SMEs	2.5	8	Institutional policy	2.25
9	Equality	2	9	SMEs	2
10	State policy	1.5	10	Autonomous Financing	2
11	Minority groups	1	11	Environment	1.75
12	Social policy and citizen rights	0.75	12	Territorial policy	1.75

13	Industry and energy	0.5	13	Industry and energy	1
14	R + D + I	0.5	14	Culture and language	1
15	Autonomous Financing	0.5	15	Equality	0.5
16	Territorial policy	0.25	16	Minority groups	0.25
17	Environment	0.25	17	Population and territory	0.25
18	Infrastructures and transport	0.25	18	Infrastructures and transport	0.25
19	Primary sector	0.25	19	-	-

Source: self-made.

The public television of Castilla la Mancha (*Castilla-La Mancha Media*) was responsible for hosting, on May 20th, the debate between the candidates for the Presidency of the Autonomous Community, in which Emiliano García-Page (PSOE, who would obtain an absolute majority in the electoral night), Paco Núñez (PP), José García Molina (*Podemos*), Carmen Picazo (Ciudadanos), and Daniel Arias (Vox) participated. Its development (with a longer debate than usual) was structured around five large blocks with four minutes of intervention for each candidate - in which one was to set posture and the rest of interpellations -, a minute of initial intervention, one minute for the agreements, and one final minute appealing to the vote. The blocks, which largely determined the topics or issues discussed, were those of “Employment and industry”, “Health and Social Policy”, “Education, culture, and equality”; “Agriculture, water, and environment”, and “Fiscal policy and autonomous financing”. In the first position in rank, public services have been placed, followed by issues related to the campaign (ideology, personal issues or other dynamics of the dialectical confrontation), and thirdly, economic policy. With a more focused position than that of his socialist counterparts, Emiliano García Page was able to translate a discourse centered on three axes: a regionalist character without breaking “national unity”; the introduction of the topic of state policy in his favor since “he equally confronted Pedro Sánchez and Mariano Rajoy in defense of the interests of the Castilian-Manchego”; finally, constantly framing his rival Paco Núñez (PP) in the nefarious management of Cospedal. The rest of the topics have had an unequal follow-up: SMEs and territorial tort (C's), Autonomous financing (*Podemos*), and the defense of traditional culture (Vox) have assumed subsidiary positions, with the environment (11) and equality (15) practically missing.

3.6. Elections in the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands

On May 15th, the electoral debate in the Balearic Islands was held at *IB3 Televisió*, which faced Gabriel Company (*Partido Popular*), Francina Armengol (PSOE), Juan Pedro Yllanes (*Unidas Podemos*), Marc Pérez-Ribas (*Ciudadanos*), Miquel Ensenyat (*Més*), Jaume Font (*El Pi*), Silvia Tur (*Gent per Formentera*), and Josep Castells (*Més per Menorca*). With a slight representation of progressive voices due to the legal form taken by the coalitions in Formentera and Menorca, during the television space, there were clearly two blocks: those that opted for political change with a conservative perspective (PP, C's, *El Pi*) and the political actors with a vocation of continuity of the progressive government. The elections would be won by the socialist candidate, who would eventually preside over the Autonomous Community.

Table 7. Thematic agendas of the Balearic and Canary Islands.

BALEARIC ISLANDS			CANARY ISLANDS		
Rank	Topic	Score	Rank	Topic	Score
1	Economic policy	13.25	1	Public services	13.5
2	Ideology and campaign	13	2	Campaign and ideology	8
3	Public services	8.75	3	Housing	5.5
4	Housing	8	4	Economic policy	5
5	Institutional policy	5	5	Corruption and regeneration	3.75

6	Social policy and citizen rights	4.5	6	Territorial policy	3.25
7	Tourism	4.25	7	Social policy and citizen rights	3
8	Environment	3.75	8	Employment	2.75
9	Infrastructures and transport	3.25	9	Infrastructures and transport	2.50
10	Employment	3	10	State policy	2.25
11	Minority groups	2.25	11	Culture and language	2.25
12	Territorial policy	2	12	Institutional policy	1.75
13	Culture and language	1.75	13	Territory and population	1.50
14	Equality	1	14	Tourism	1.25
15	SMEs	0.75	15	Environment	1.25
16	Territory and population	0.75	16	Equality	1
17	State policy	0.5	17	Sports	0.75
18	Autonomous Financing	0.5	18	SMEs	0.5
19	R + D + I	0.5	19	R + D + I	0.25
20	Corruption and regeneration	0.5	20	Minority groups	0.25
21	-	-	21	Industry and energy	0.25
22	-	-	22	Immigration	0

Source: self-made.

Unlike other territories, in the Balearic Islands, the thematic agenda has been built in a particular way: in the rank number 4, 7, and 8, specific problems of the Autonomous Community have been placed, such as housing, tourism, and the environment. The first one linked mainly to the rise derived from the rental price and shortage of public housing; the second, about the tourism model and the possibilities of growth; the latter, environment, not so linked to the general ideological vision of climate change, but rather inherent to the territorial planning itself and urban pressure. Located in the first three positions, the recurring economic policy (raising and lowering taxes) and public services (health and education), in addition to the self-referentiality of the candidates: they talk about themselves, their parties, ideologies or coalitions. Corruption occupies the last position in rank, collapsing the importance that media and politicians give to the issue in the electoral spaces, with state policy in position 14 (only two references to Sanchez and Rajoy) and autonomous financing in place 18.

On May 23rd and with 93 minutes duration, the debate of the elections to the Parliament of the Canary Islands in *TVE-Canarias* gathered the main candidates for the Presidency of the Autonomous Community: Fernando Clavijo (*Coalición Canaria*); Ángel Torres (PSOE); Asier Gómez (PP); Noemía Santana (*Si Podemos Canarias*); Román Rodríguez (NC); Vidina Espino Ramírez (*Ciudadanos*). This debate has been selected, and not the one carried out in *Televisión Canaria* because it is understood as more representative, due to the exclusion of *Ciudadanos* in the latter. The result of the elections would displace the *Coalición Canaria* from power, leading the PSOE the new executive with the support of NC, *Podemos*, and ASG. The debate would be divided into six blocks (Health and Social Policy; Employment; Land Management, Housing, and Public Works; Education; Agreements) with initial interventions of 1 minute without interruptions by the candidates and two others at their free disposal, during the replicas in the first two blocks and one in the next two. Similarly, a minute of free designation was provided in the fifth section on electoral agreements and a final minute. The debate was characterized by an attack by practically all parties to *Coalición Canaria* focused on the axes of mismanagement, democratic regeneration, and corruption (5), with a lot of inter-block transversalities and a territorial agenda focused on the poor quality of public services and the high price of housing. It is important to note the non-introduction by the media of a block on tourism, one of the main hallmarks of the Autonomous Community, as well as the very small presence of equality between men and women (cited by PP, C'S, and NC) or environment (only by NC).

3.7. Elections in Madrid

The debate of the candidates for the Presidency of the Community of Madrid faced Isabel Díaz Ayuso (PP), Ángel Gabilondo (PSOE), Isabel Serra (*Unidas Podemos*), Ignacio Aguado (*Ciudadanos*), and Rocío Monasterio (Vox). The candidate of *Más Madrid*, Iñigo Errejón, did not participate because it was considered a newly created formation by the Central Electoral Board (without representation in the Regional Assembly or having attended other processes and having obtained a significant percentage of votes, as in the case of Vox). The election result ended with a victory of the conservative bloc that, through a government pact with *Ciudadanos*, and an investiture agreement with Vox, would make Díaz Ayuso president. The debate, held in Telemadrid, was organized into five major blocks (Economy and Employment; Health and education; Social policy; Urban planning, mobility, and the environment; Pacts), with what is known as the final “golden minute” and an initial intervention by each candidate, by way of presentation, that the television itself described as “silver minute”. The novelty of this debate was the internal structure of each block: two or three minutes for each candidate, first setting an initial position through a question from the journalist and the rest of the time for debate and counter-argumentation.

In general, the discussion assumed a marked ideological character (first position in range), with two very marked blocks, and the construction of a discursive framework by the PP and Vox that opposes “liberal” or “freedom” Madrid and “socialism” or “totalitarian lefts”. For his part, the *Ciudadanos* candidate, Ignacio Aguado, spent a large part of his time attacking Ángel Gabilondo through the introduction of issues such as economic policy (2) or recalling his work as Minister of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (“state policy”). In general, there is a more nationalized agenda, with the introduction of topics such as “security”, “immigration” or “equality”, more typical of the dynamics of the State. The attention is drawn to the limited attention given to territorial integrity or comparative grievance in terms of financing.

Table 8. *Thematic agendas of Madrid.*

MADRID		
Rank	Topic	Score.
1	Ideology and campaign	16.25
2	Economic policy	7
3	Social policy and citizen rights	5
4	Housing	4.5
5	Public services	4.25
6	Infrastructures and transport	4.25
7	State policy	3.25
8	Corruption and regeneration	2
9	Immigration	1.50
10	Territorial policy	1.50
11	Equality	1.25
12	Institutional policy	1.25
13	Security	1
14	Industry and energy	1
15	Vulnerable groups	0.75
16	SMEs	0.75
17	Employment	0.5

Source: self-made.

3.8. Old topics and new discussions: analysis and correlations

Economic policy has led a large part of the disputes between candidates, mainly in the range 1 to 3, dimensioned by the structure of the debates in blocks, in which at least one was destined to talk about the economy. The proposals have been focused on two dimensions. The first, on fiscal progressivity and the rise and fall of taxes in the autonomous tranches, with the parties of the right proposing a generalized descent that will cause more economic activation (“money is more profitable in the taxpayers' pocket”) and those of the left (mainly Podemos, confluences and nationalist parties) indicating the need to raise it to higher incomes to invest in public services. Secondly, in a more symbolic dimension that borders on the ideological, the dispute between “two different models”, not only in inter-block competition but also present in intra-blocks: the model that bets on economic freedom and the one that advocates the intervention.

Social policy, codified in topics such as “Public Services”, “Social policy and citizen rights”, “Minorized groups” or “Housing” has had a notable presence for two facts: first, the competence logic that decentralizes their management in the Autonomous Communities and places them as one of the priorities of the political agenda; secondly, because of its placement by television stations as a “block” that guides the strategy of the candidates and the center of gravity of the debates themselves. Regions such as Cantabria, La Rioja, Aragon or Castilla la Mancha have a social theme leading the classification, the Canary Islands included two (first and third place) and only in Valencia and Murcia do not occupy one of the first three positions in rank.

The campaign and ideology issue (which adds in the electoral period all those appeals of a confrontational context, such as personal issues of the candidate, supporters and ideological) is in all cases between ranks 1 and 6, with a more marked nature in the Autonomous Communities with more urban population (Madrid and Valencia). In these, appeals to the “left”, to equality and to “liberalism” or freedom are much more common, with confrontations that are closer to the world of ideas than to public policy. In this issue, the post-election proposals on coalitions have been codified, as they are understood as part of the intention of an electoral campaign. Public services (health and education) have also held very important positions in all electoral debates (1-5), sized by specific media blocks for this topic. All the candidates have opted to reinforce the public nature of these services, without a substantial difference between them beyond the appeal of the candidates of *Ciudadanos* to exercise public-private collaboration that at times also defended the *Partido Popular*. Both PSOE and *Podemos*, in those communities where they worked as an opposition, have marked their lines of action on this issue as something more than ownership: waiting lists, job insecurity, and educational and health infrastructure were their main arguments. Finally, there are some Autonomous Communities that among their first topics are those with a special interest in their region: infrastructure (Cantabria); territory and population (Extremadura); Castilla La Mancha (primary sector); Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, and Madrid (housing). It is important to emphasize the completely subsidiary position that immigration has (which in the symbolic dimension works much more in state policy), which obtains as the best result the 10th place in Madrid (by the continuous references of Rocío Monasterio, of Vox).

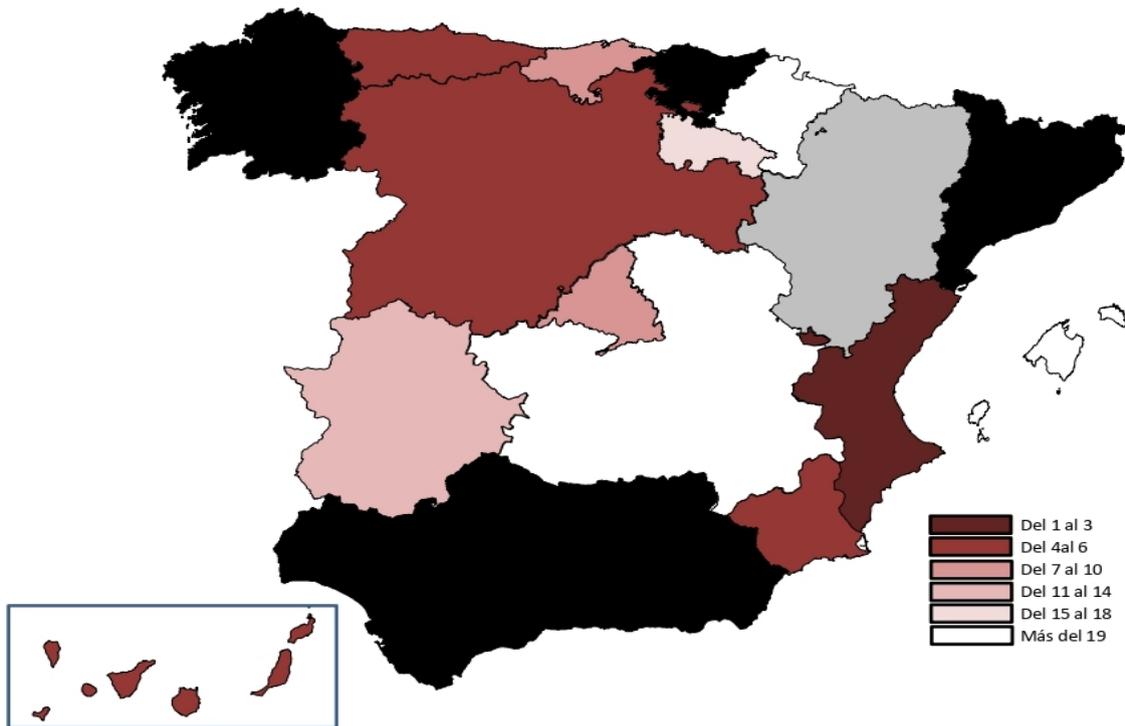


Image 2. *Corruption on the agenda by Autonomous Communities.*
Source: self-made.

Corruption has been present, although very unevenly. This theme, with a continued presence in the media agenda, in politics and public opinion in the last five years (CIS, 2019)² has had different repercussions in each territory: it has been in Valencia (2), Asturias (5), Murcia (4), Castilla y León (5), Canary Islands (5) where it has placed in the first positions in the rank, linked mainly to the *Partido Popular* and *Coalición Canaria*, with special emphasis from *Podemos* and *Compromís* in Valencia, and much less references by *Ciudadanos*.

On the other hand, the issues that have been able to form an agenda for the claim of the Autonomous Communities codified as “Territorial Policy” and “Autonomous Financing”, have been practically absent from the debates, with a reproduction of models of the state agenda. The first one has been located between ranks 5 and 19, with mostly low positions, highlighting the Navarrese (5) and Canarian (6) reality with a demand aimed at strengthening the Statutes of Autonomy and a timid appeal to the transfer of powers, especially by nationalist or regional parties. On the other hand, what at first can be understood as a frequent topic in the debates, such as autonomous financing, has only been outstandingly present in the debate of the Valencian Community (6) and again in Navarre (4), appearing in the last places in the rest (in many occasions in the last five places in rank). In this category (“Territorial policy”), references to the situation of Catalonia and territorial integrity have also been codified, with a very low presence in the territories, with the exceptions of Aragón by the popular candidate (4) and Extremadura by part of the socialist (10).

² Corruption began to emerge on the public agenda at the beginning of 2013, remaining at high levels until today, although always with a downward trend.

Table 9. Correlation (N=18) through Spearman's correlation coefficient.

		Ast	Can	Nav	LaR	Ara	Val	Mur	Ext	CL	CLM	Bal	Canr	Madr
Asturias	Correlation coefficient	1.000												
	Sig. (bilateral)	.												
Cantabria	Correlation coefficient	.740**	1.000											
	Sig. (bilateral)	.000	.											
Navarre	Correlation coefficient	.449	.657**	1.000										
	Sig. (bilateral)	.062	.003	.										
La Rioja	Correlation coefficient	.684**	.792**	.548*	1.000									
	Sig. (bilateral)	.002	.000	.019	.									
Aragón	Correlation coefficient	.505*	.676**	.856**	.680**	1.000								
	Sig. (bilateral)	.033	.002	.000	.002	.								
Valencia	Correlation coefficient	.395	.496*	.715**	.311	.717**	1.000							
	Sig. (bilateral)	.104	.036	.001	.210	.001	.							
Murcia	Correlation coefficient	.488*	.418	.422	.391	.542*	.676**	1.000						
	Sig. (bilateral)	.040	.084	.081	.108	.020	.002	.						
Extremad	Correlation coefficient	.688**	.604**	.459	.812**	.647**	.513*	.457	1.000					
	Sig. (bilateral)	.002	.008	.055	.000	.004	.030	.056	.					
Cast. León	Correlation coefficient	.562*	.595**	.383	.437	.503*	.608**	.604**	.550*	1.000				
	Sig. (bilateral)	.015	.009	.117	.070	.034	.007	.008	.018	.				
C La Man	Correlation coefficient	.315	.422	.496*	.631**	.618**	.323	.449	.531*	.503*	1.000			
	Sig. (bilateral)	.203	.081	.036	.005	.006	.191	.062	.023	.034	.			
Balearic Islands	Correlation coefficient	.558*	.437	.622**	.451	.544*	.368	.424	.422	.317	.340	1.000		
	Sig. (bilateral)	.016	.070	.006	.060	.020	.132	.079	.081	.200	.168	.		
Canary Islands	Correlation coefficient	.610**	.542*	.573*	.331	.622**	.558*	.467	.360	.370	.205	.715**	1.000	
	Sig. (bilateral)	.007	.020	.013	.179	.006	.016	.050	.142	.130	.414	.001	.	
Madrid	Correlation coefficient	.434	.517*	.455	.302	.465	.348	.199	.129	.170	.106	.620**	.779**	1.000
	Sig. (bilateral)	.072	.028	.058	.223	.052	.157	.428	.610	.499	.675	.006	.000	.

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

* The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).

Source: self-made.

Other issues of post material nature that have strongly entered the state political and media agenda (equality and environment) have not had a great impact on regional debates, either because the televisions have decided not to introduce them as a specific block or because the parties have not considered them as a priority. Besides, the approach that has been taken has been very different from that carried out at the state level. In the case of Equality (we mainly refer to policies aimed at combating inequalities and violence suffered by women), its situation has been inferior, highlighting the number 9 position it held in Castilla y León. The greatest references have been made by the candidates of the PSOE, although *Podemos*, too (“purple revolution”); Vox's constant references to what they qualify as “gender ideology” in the debates in which they have participated have been included, without much success in the replicas and successive counter-replies.

For its part, the topic “Environment” has had a better relative position (occupying the position number 3 in Murcia and number 8 in the Balearic Islands), although, far from reflecting on the ecological transition, energy model or climate change, the local casuistry has covered this issue: in Murcia the situation of the *Mar Menor* and, in the rest, small problems of pollution or sustainable local development.

As can be seen in Table 9, the result of relating the thematic agendas of the debates in each of the territories through Spearman's correlation coefficient, several correlations obtain a high level of statistical significance, some of them with high-intensity levels (> 0.70 and < 0.90). The territorial dimension (north/ south, Mediterranean/ Cantabrian or insular) is in Spain a circumstance that only determines a high correlation of the thematic agenda in some cases, with significant correspondences between neighboring territories, such as Aragón and Navarra (.856 **), Cantabria and La Rioja (.792 **) or Asturias and Cantabria (.740 **), despite finding high relations between remote Autonomous Communities, such as La Rioja and Extremadura (0.812 **) or between Murcia and Castilla León (.608 **). Another territoriality criterion to take into account has to do with the characteristics of insularity, as shown by the significant relationship at the 0.01 level (.715 **) between the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands, with common problems that are transferred in electoral debates, such as access to housing, tourism or the collapse of public services.

The wealth or poverty of a region determines, but in a very limited way, the priority that the media and politicians give to certain issues. Depending on the GDP per capita (INE, 2019a) there are higher levels of correlation between the richest Autonomous Communities (Navarre, Aragon, La Rioja, and the Balearic Islands), since, except for one, they all have a level of significance with moderate or high intensity. The same does not happen with the poorest regions, with results that are not statistically relevant. Population density (INE, 2019b) is also a criterion that determines higher levels of significance. The three most densely populated Autonomous Communities (Madrid, Balearic Islands, and Canary Islands), as well as those with lower population density (Castilla León, Castilla La Mancha, Aragon, and Extremadura), show high levels of correlation in the relationship of agenda issues, highlighting the one between Madrid and the Canary Islands (.779 **), which does not happen if we apply the aging index (INE, 2019c).

The unemployment rate (INE, 2019d) does not seem to be a factor that determines, in the first instance, higher levels of correlation: although there are moderate and high levels of correlation between three of the four regions with lower levels of unemployment (Cantabria, La Rioja, and Navarre), it does not occur with the fourth (Balearic Islands) nor among the Communities with more unemployment. On the other hand, the agendas added by Autonomous Communities according to the weight of the economic sector (INE, 2019e) find, in all cases, high correlation rates: Murcia, Extremadura, and Aragon (primary sector); La Rioja, Aragon, and Navarre (industry); Madrid, Balearic Islands, and Canary Islands (services).

Finally, on the formation of governments during the development of the legislature (2015-2019), either alone or in coalition, there is no tendency to build common agendas when socialists or popular assume the presidency of the executive, although there is when a regionalist or nationalist party does it: this happened in Cantabria with the PRC, in Navarre with *Geroa Bai* or in the Canary Islands with CC (.657 **, .542 *, .573 *), as well as with the presence in the vice presidency or councils, as *Compromís* in Valencia or the *Chunta Aragonesista* in Aragon, (.496 *, .715 **, .558 *, .505 *, .856 **, .622 **) with a relationship between them of .717 **. It is important to determine the relationship that this fact has with the construction that has occurred in Spain of systems of differentiated parties in the different territories, a result of the strength and importance, among other issues, of non-state parties.

4. Conclusions and discussion

This research has addressed for the first time, from the broad epistemological scope of political communication and within a competition scenario such as that of electoral debates, Spanish territorial agendas through a synchronous analysis, thus fulfilling the main objective. In general, as a first conclusion (o1) and within the classical categorization (Zuluaga, & Morales, 2017), it can be said that the chronic issues (economic policy, public services, and employment) occupy the first positions in rank in most of the Autonomous Communities, adding the one of “Ideology and campaign”, typical of the electoral contexts and coinciding with a large part of studies of the Spanish agenda. This is due to a normalized dimension that did not occur in the last decade of Spanish politics, with an altered agenda resulting from the economic crisis (López-López, 2018). Similarly, decisions on the organization of debates have displaced intermittent problems (immigration), short-term problems (corruption) or new ones (feminism or environment) to subsidiary positions (o2). The case of corruption (P1) powerfully draws attention, which went from occupying very important positions in the political agenda and media coverage (Palau, & Davesa, 2013; Chavero 2012), to the background.

Ideology has been present (P2), with a marked character in the more urban regions, such as Madrid, although it has not been decisive in the construction of the agenda. The “liberal”, on the one hand, and “the left” on the other, have succumbed to the political-administrative reality and the management problems of the regions, in addition to the media dynamics imposed by the media: the continent has influenced the content. In this sense, the strategies have been more directed, on the one hand, to raise on the rank economic policy and employment for the right’s side; on the other, to make visible social policy and the care of public services by the left’s side, generating watertight compartments and little inter-block competition dynamics. In this context, in the debates in which Vox has participated (a total of six), it has been unable to introduce the temporary or intermittent problems that could have given it prominence (immigration or security), because they are considered exclusive to the state agenda and, therefore, manifesting itself unable to generate any alteration in the agendas as can be seen by comparing the debates in which it has participated and in which it has not (P3). Therefore, it can be concluded that the extreme right has not set the agenda for issues discussed in the Autonomous Communities.

On the other hand, it has been seen that, contrary to what one might believe, the state agenda (media and parties), except in Madrid, do not have an almighty influence on regional dynamics. An example of this is the almost total absence of Catalonia (P4) in the debates, except for Aragon (as can be seen in the position in the rank of state and territorial policy). The determining factor is knowing what part of this fact is a consequence of the strategies of the parties or of the organization of the debate itself.

On the circumstances that influence the configuration of analogous agendas, economic and proximity factors do not determine higher levels of correlation (H1). They do by proximity in the north, but not in the south (where the so-called “relevance transfer” does not work); it does among the rich, but not among the poor, and without the unemployment rate being relevant. Nor does the existence of the same party in the government (H2): socialist or popular governments do not generate common agendas between them nor different from that of their opponents. Although in the latter case there is an exception: the presence of nationalist or regionalist political parties in the government tends to generate shared problems between their respective territories.

In short, this initiatory work must be discussed with future research that analyzes and compares the construction of territorial agendas based on the following: a) the content of the media outside the

exclusively electoral sphere; b) from the agenda of their political actors; c) of the problems that citizens understand as more relevant in the different Autonomous Communities.

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