

THE ELECTORAL SPOT ON YOUTUBE. ANALYSIS OF THE SPANISH GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 2023

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. This study analyzes the role of the electoral spot as a key tool in audiovisual political communication during campaigns, in a context where citizens primarily consume information through digital screens. **Methodology.** The research focuses on the videos published on the official YouTube channels of the four major national parties in Spain's 2023 general elections: PP, PSOE, Vox, and Sumar; which together accounted for 84.5% of parliamentary representation. Using a quantitative analysis of impact and *engagement* metrics, the study examines usage levels, reach, and voter response on this platform. **Results.** The findings show that parties with less presence in traditional media rely more heavily on the digital ecosystem, achieving greater visibility, while the PSOE, the ruling party at the time, concentrated its efforts on analog channels. **Discussion.** Vox was the party with the most followers and "likes" on YouTube, in contrast to PSOE, which, despite lower use of the platform and a smaller follower base, achieved the highest engagement. **Conclusions.** In conclusion, the study highlights the growing importance of digital channels in political communication and reveals significant strategic differences among parties based on their institutional position and media presence.

Keywords: election campaign, election, election spot, political video, YouTube.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Electoral spots have been defined as spaces for buying time on television to place political messages (Kaid & Johnston, 2001). In many countries such as the United Kingdom, the USA or Mexico, among others, political advertising time can be purchased, while in Spain, electoral spaces on television are regulated by the General Electoral Law (LOREG) still in force, which grants each party a limited amount of time, depending on its representation in the previous elections. However, “political processes have been modified in the face of the irruption of digital platforms” (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2012), which has allowed other spaces without the mandatory intermediation of the State. Currently, it is evident and politicians are aware that they have a lot at stake in social networks and must adapt to the digital environment to communicate with their constituents (de Sola & Pascual, 2024, p. 6).

Since the appearance on the scene of the Internet, social networks and digital platforms, the references of broadcasting spots on public television instituted by the LOREG have become obsolete. Today the electoral spot is not only managed in regulated spaces, but rather in networks such as Twitter (now renamed X), Instagram, Facebook and YouTube (Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán, 2022) and are broadcast on multiple platforms.

This evolution of the dissemination channels influences the nature of the content, which in the case of political communication is materialized in the transition from the electoral spot to the digital spot, where “digital technology and the expansion of social networks have given great versatility to the production and dissemination of political videos” (Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán, 2022, p. 307) that must adapt to new formats and languages, through the construction of stories that show the life of politicians or bring them closer to the citizens (Baeza, 2016).

YouTube, the specialized video platform, has redefined the distribution and characteristics of political audiovisual content. YouTube has contributed to the infotainment phenomenon, which emerged at the end of the 20th century with the rise of news programs that incorporated entertainment elements: “politainment” or “infotainment”, a combination of “information” and “entertainment”, transferring it to the Internet and maximizing its possibilities (Gil Ramírez et al., 2019). Content creators began to use eye-catching resources and titles, simpler messages and dynamic visual narratives to capture the viewer's attention and reach a larger audience (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2012; Gil Ramírez et al., 2020).

Studies on YouTube in electoral processes analyze the uses of this platform since its use for the first time in the 2009 European elections and highlight its wide reach and ability to segment specific audiences (Vesnic Alujevic & Van Bauwel, 2014); its ability to complement campaigns with more personalized messages in the 2016 general elections in Spain (Berrocal Gonzalo et al., 2017), and present as

a shared conclusion the ease of YouTube to disseminate its messages to less politicized young voters, being a popular network in this segment of the population and more accustomed to “infotainment”. However, the potential impact of the political communication of this platform is not as powerful when the message is not in line with the previous beliefs of the viewer and their level of political knowledge is low (Bowyer, Kahney Middaugh, 2017).

Although it seems that in the electoral video -whether in networks or in the classic television format- the presence of the candidate remains unalterable. On “YouTube most campaign videos give visibility above all to the main leader, a rule that is more than fulfilled in the case of Vox (63.64%), PSOE (57.14%) and Podemos (50%)” (Plazas-Olmedo & López-Rabadán, 2022, p. 324). Institutional and professionalized formats tend to coexist with other more informal and typical of networks, as happened in the 2019 general elections. Despite the permanence of these lines, there is no doubt that the Internet is modifying our political practices and that the dissemination of spots outside the space established by legislation is increasing (Villar-Hernández & Pelliser Rossell, 2021).

The IAB Spain study, published in May 2023, at the beginning of the local and regional election campaign, presents data on the penetration and use of networks, which continues to be stable, reaching pre-pandemic levels: 85% of Spanish Internet users, aged 12 to 74, use networks for an average of one hour a day, reaching 30 million individuals who use networks for entertainment (80%), interaction (65%) and information and understanding current affairs (54%) (IAB, 2023). Parties are aware of these data and take advantage of these channels to broadcast campaign spots, being aware that one out of every two users find advertising on this communication channel annoying.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this study is the analysis of the electoral videos that the parties, which ran for the general elections of 2023, published on their official YouTube accounts. The focus is on the dissemination of the digital electoral spot from the call to the voting day, focusing more on the political videos made in a professional way.

The data have been collected by reviewing these official YouTube accounts and monitoring these four national parties.

The electoral spot could be defined as a premeditated audiovisual message, of perlocutive character, controlled and designed by the political party, without media manipulation, whose intention is to persuade and attract the voter to get his vote. The control of the political party over the disseminated message and its persuasive-perlocutionary nature is a determining factor. Sádaba (2003) and García Beaudoux and D'Adamo (2006) point out that the spots are political messages, persuasive, designed by the parties and not mediatized by the media,

since they are delivered in a closed format for broadcasting. Evidently, the spot is decided by the party, generally after commissioning experts from the advertising or even cinematographic world.

Like commercials, the electoral spot is continuously repeated to fix the message, to get space on the screens and to get visibility. It works like the commercial advertisement, generally trying to sell the candidate. In other words, “the electoral video is an audiovisual political, persuasive and pragmatic discourse. It is a locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary discourse with clear and specific objectives” (Peña-Jiménez, 2014, p. 78) and the piece is edited thinking of an audience accustomed to audiovisual, with film and advertising techniques, closer to the commercial format than the ideological one. It is an audiovisual message for a citizen who lives connected to the screens, the homo videns of which Sartori (1998) spoke.

2.1. Typologies

Regarding the paradigms of the electoral spot, the typology established by Peña-Jiménez (2010, p. 54) is based on Devlin (1987), one of the pioneers in this field: 1) Talking bust, talking head or talking head ads: ads where the candidate is seen speaking directly to the camera in a short shot. 2) Cinéma vérité: short film showing the candidate in everyday scenes, working in an office, at a rally, with his family, etc. 3) Documentary advertisements: they show the candidate's achievements. Suitable for those running for second terms. 4) Man-in-the-street ad: alleged citizens who speak in favor of the candidate and pretend to represent the average voter (whether retired, female, young people) by representing different targets, although voters recognize that it is scripted. 5) Life portion advertisement or docudrama: attempts to show a natural conversation in an everyday scene. 6) Testimonials: public and well-known personalities (singers, actors, celebrities, etc.) who speak in favor of the candidate. 7) Bio spot: biographical ad presenting the candidate's life story. 8) Independent ads sponsored by organizations. 9) Negative ads that disqualify the opponent. 10) Informative: it uses the simulation of a television news program. 11) Song: the ad is a song in support of the candidate. It happened in Zapatero's 2009 campaign with “Defender la alegría”, with lyrics from Mario Benedetti's poem. This production was preceded by “Yes, we can” in support of Obama, created by will.i.am and featuring stars such as Scarlet Johanson, Herbie Hancock, Adam Rodriguez, etc. 12) Cartoons: this typology was used by the PSC (Socialist Party of Catalonia) in a negative approach against its adversary and under the title “Nines russes”. It can be found in productions of IU (United Left), Ciutadans, Na-Bai, etc. It is an economical format and can generate very adapted, ad hoc images.

Garramone (1986) proposes a typology that distinguishes the so-called issue spots, i.e., those that present a theme or proposal, from image spots, which focus on emotional content.

2.2. Management

These ads/spots usually present a priority approach that is referred to as management according to the approach adopted (positive, negative or contrasting) as established by the Annenberg School of the University of Pennsylvania (USA):

1. **Positive ads:** it speaks in favor of the candidate or the party presenting him/her, without including disqualifications of the adversary.
2. **Contrast ads:** they present comparisons, either directly or explicitly, or by deduction.
3. **Negative ads:** they focus on attacking and/or directly criticizing the adversary, with a message “against”.

In the same campaign, the spots of a party may present different views or approaches, some of them in favor of the candidate and positive, together with negative or frontal attack ads. Regarding the negative (Peña-Jiménez, 2011a) or comparative-negative spots, it can be pointed out that they are usually directed to those closest to the candidate, to the like-minded, affiliates and sympathizers with the intention of mobilizing their own vote. They are remembered more than the positive ones, although “experts advise moderation in this type of advertisement, since excess can have the opposite effect to that sought” (Peña-Jiménez, 2011b), and if it is excessive it can act as a boomerang.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTORAL SPOTS THAT WERE BROADCAST ON YOUTUBE DURING THE GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN IN JULY 2023

3.1. Context

In 2023, Spain was facing two elections: an autonomous regional election, to which 12 regions representing 51% of the country's population were called, and the general elections, which were to be held at the end of the legislative period, in December 2023.

The regional elections were held on May 28 and more than 35 million voters were summoned (National Institute of Statistics, 2023). The two major parties: the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE, in Spanish) in the Government and the Popular Party (PP) in the opposition, approached the campaign as a first round of the general elections.

The municipal elections were won by the PP with 31.5% of the vote, seven hundred thousand votes ahead of the PSOE, which obtained 28.2% of the ballots. Vox retained third place, with 7.1%; Ciudadanos, the third political force in 2019, only obtained 1.3% and disappeared from the political map; Unidas Podemos lost representation in many important cities (Ministerio del Interior, 2023).

With respect to regional governments, the PP renewed by majority the regions of Madrid and Murcia, snatched seven regions from the PSOE, where it could

govern in coalition with other parties, and the PSOE retained two autonomous regions. This electoral turnaround was quickly described by politicians, journalists and analysts as “the blue wave”, since it presented the PP with autonomic power in 12 of the 17 regions of the country and in the two autonomous cities (Hernández, 2023; García, 2023).

Twelve hours after the electoral results were known, the President of the Government announced the calling of general elections for July 23rd (Presidencia de Gobierno, 2023), a new electoral appointment in less than two months, being the first time that elections would be held in Spain during the summer period.

One day after the call, the PSOE published its first pre-campaign video on its X account (formerly Twitter), with the title “La mentira” (The lie), with negative treatment, which focused on what were issues in the opposition and mobilization against PP governments in the past, the Yak-42, the Prestige or 11-M (Barro, 2023). It quickly had 3.6 million reproductions and was questioned as a “dirty campaign” (Muñoz, 2023), reminiscent of the famous video of the “Doberman” of the PSOE in 1996, the first negative electoral spot in Spain, which sought the reprobation of the adversary without further ado (Peña-Jiménez, 2011b).

3.2. Corpus and Methodology

The analysis is carried out on the official accounts of political parties on YouTube, from the call for elections on May 29 until the voting date, July 23, 2023. In this network, the parties broadcast their main videos, record the quantitative activity of these contents and create a community. The data were collected from July 25 to October 25, 2023.

Although it cannot be affirmed that voters follow the campaign through YouTube, it can be seen, as other studies on electoral campaigns and diffusion in networks point out, “a growing use of emerging media, which already compete with television for the attention of voters” (García González & Iturralde Chaparro, 2023, p. 369), especially among the youngest voters.

The study focuses on the four national-level parties that, in the previous general elections of November 10, 2019, had obtained more than 80% of the national deputies. Following the 2019 data, the videos of PSOE, 28% of the votes; PP with 20.81%; Vox, which occupied the third position with 15.08% and Unidas Podemos, which reached 12.86%, were analyzed. In the latter case, it was commuted by the recent Sumar party, which includes multiple platforms that in 2019 had been attached to Unidas Podemos. Ciudadanos, which had 6.8% of the votes in 2019, decided not to run in the 2023 general elections in view of the dismal results in the autonomic elections.

The four national-level parties analyzed reached 296 deputies, 84.5% of the total number of representatives in the Congress of Deputies (Ministerio del Interior, 2019). In the general elections of 2023, the result is that these analyzed parties

have obtained 322 deputies, 92% of the total number of representatives in the chamber.

The study focuses on the analysis of political videos made in a professional manner -with a planned production-, avoiding those that use other content as raw material (such as cuts of speeches, events, interviews, etc.) and those classified on the YouTube platform itself as “shorts”, short videos that can last up to 60 seconds, similar to those of other social networks and that are usually prioritized by the algorithm over regular videos, but whose production is neither professional nor planned.

In the data analysis, in addition to the impact on the audience based on the number of video views, this research takes into account for the analysis the degree of interaction and engagement with the spots through the engagement rate.

Engagement is a metric that existed before the digitalization of the media and Nelson (2021) offers a study and new definitions in this regard, however, in the digital world its measurement formula may vary, because it is mainly used by digital audience measurement companies. In this research this factor has been taken into account, and the form agreed and used by different researchers has been sought, which includes several factors such as likes, comments, shares and views, determining the formula to use (the one commonly used by marketers, analytical tools developers and academics according to professional publications) composed by the total interactions (x100) divided into the total number of video reproductions.

Table 1

Measurement formula for engagement rate.

$$\text{Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Interactions} \times 100}{\text{Total Views}}$$

Source: López-Navarrete et al., 2021.

A rate between 0.5% and 2% is considered to be acceptable, since it measures the proportion of viewers who are interacting with the video in the form of “likes”, comments and shares.

Summarizing, the corpus of the four national groups that obtained representatives in the lower house is analyzed with a direct observation methodology of the data that is analyzed with a qualitative methodology, answering the following research questions:

1. How many spots do the analyzed parties offer on their official YouTube account?
2. What reach do they achieve? Is having subscribers the same as having views?
3. What is the strategy, typology or approach of the professional productions?
4. What engagement does each party achieve in their professional videos?

4. RESULTS

The results show that the four parties analyzed during the two months of the 2023 pre-campaign and electoral campaign publish videos, although they differ in style, publication volume, formats, followers and results.

4.1 Followers, publication volume and professional spots

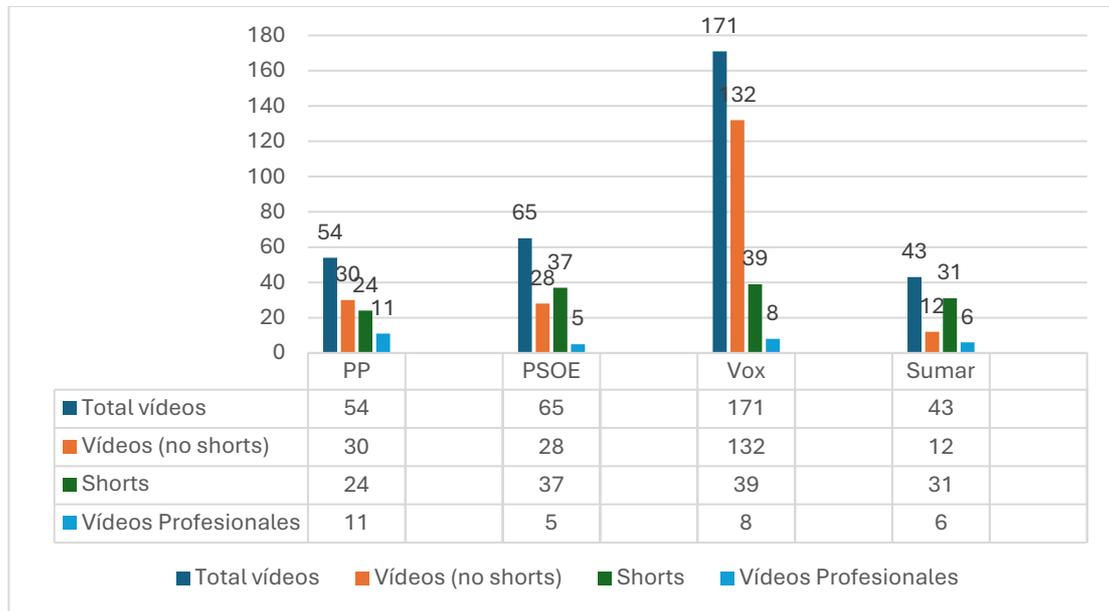
Regarding followers, it should be noted that the accounts present a great difference in subscribers, when the data collection was completed. The party with the most subscribers in its YouTube account is Vox, which exceeds 500,000, being the party with the most recent irruption in the political scene (it was created in 2013 but did not obtain regional representation until 2019). It is followed by the PP with 114,000, practically tripling the third place occupied by the PSOE, whose account is followed by 42,000 subscribers.

A singular case is Sumar which, although it is a coalition created in 2023, brings together left-wing parties with great experience in communication such as Izquierda Unida (founded in 1986), Unidas Podemos (founded in 2014), or Más País (founded in 2019). Despite barely reaching 9,000 subscribers on its YouTube channel, Sumar's production of political videos was similar to that of the PP or PSOE.

Regarding the number of publications, Vox is once again the party that published the most videos, exceeding 50% of the total content published by all political parties in this campaign: 171 out of 333 videos disseminated on YouTube were from Vox, disseminating 2.6 times more than PSOE, tripling those of PP and quadrupling those of Sumar.

Figure 1

Videos published by party and type on YouTube in the 2023 general election campaign.



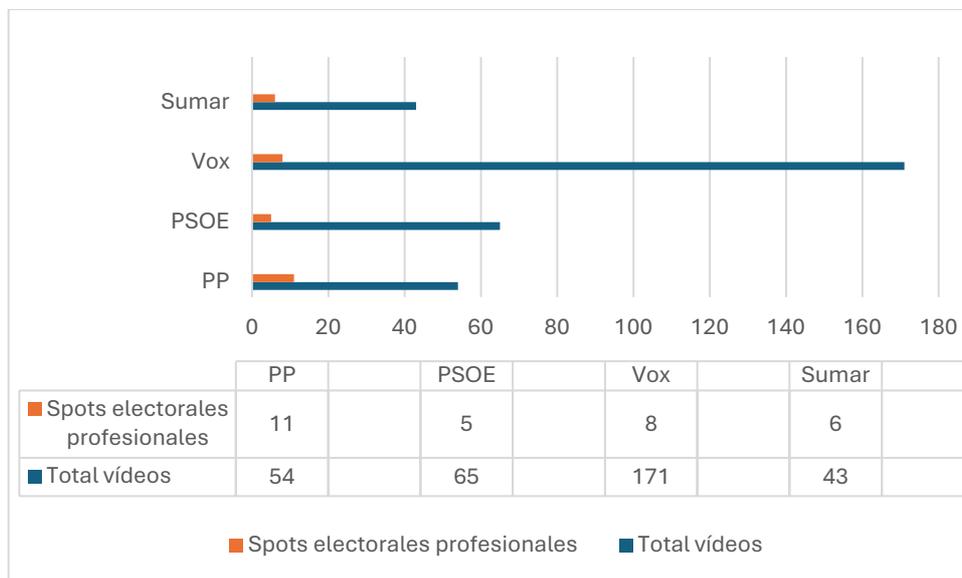
Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

However, in the production of professional and planned videos, i.e. content designed for campaigning as traditional political spots, the figures do not show such significant differences.

The PP published 11 videos, of which 5 were versions with different lengths; the PSOE presented 5; Vox published 8, of which there was one version and Sumar produced 6. This production of 6.5 traditional spots indicates that this format shows a homogeneous use.

Figure 2

Total number of videos vs. electoral spots by political party professionals in the 2023 general elections..



Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

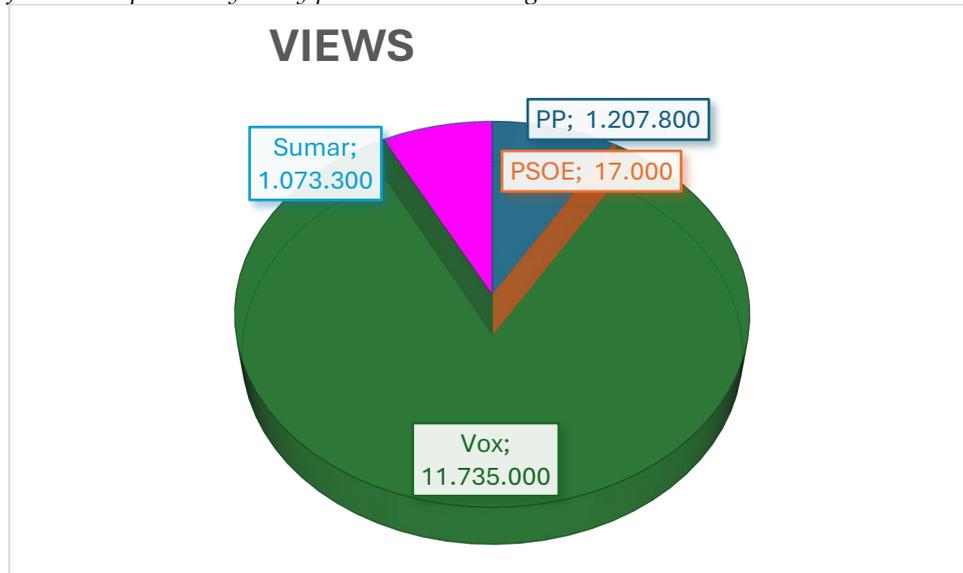
4.1. Impact and engagement

Regarding the impact of the videos published on YouTube, it can be affirmed that the official and campaign launch spots are the most viewed. In descending order, Vox achieved 4.7 million views, followed by the PP, whose spot was seen by more than 1 million people, and Sumar, which reached 620,000 views during the campaign period.

The number of views of these three parties, although different, is counted by hundreds of thousands and contrasts significantly with the dissemination achieved by the PSOE, whose first spot reached 3,700 views and the second, its most viewed video, obtained 6,200 views. This difference in dissemination suggests that the parties competing with the PSOE, the party in government, were more active in social networks, while the PSOE's communication would focus more on traditional channels due to the access it had as a government, which would confirm the idea of Sampedro (2021) who, after reviewing the hybrid and digital communication in Spain in the last 20 years, points out that it is the new parties who use the networks as an alternative space and with greater accuracy.

Figure 3

Views of electoral spots analyzed by parties in the 2023 general elections.



Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

In the case of the PP, the campaign launch spots, in their most widespread formats, represent up to 85% of the views of all their videos on YouTube, followed by the biographical video of their candidate with 160,000 views.

In the PP videos under analysis, it can be seen how the campaign launch video, with one million views, barely gets 92 likes, while the candidate's biography video, from his origins in a Galician village to his achievements in the regional government, gets 4,000 likes, highlighting the impact of the Biospot, which presented the candidate in a close and personal way. All in all, the engagement rate of the PP channel is good, standing at 0.4, close to 0.5, which is considered a positive result.

In the case of Vox, its communication strategy is based on the visualization of audiovisual content and focuses its efforts on social networks to directly reach its voters (Gil Ramírez et al., 2020; Castro Martínez & Díaz Morilla, 2021). The viewing of its spots is ten times higher than that of its political adversaries, PP and Sumar, whose spots achieved a maximum viewing of just over one million reproductions or more than six hundred thousand, respectively, compared to the 11.7 million views achieved by Vox. The engagement of this party is homogeneous, all the videos present a similar number of "likes", in some cases counted by thousands, compared to the hundreds received by the other parties. However, with half a million followers, the number of interactions drops significantly, with an engagement rate of 0.19.

Sumar has similar results to those of the PP, despite the difference in the number of followers between the two parties and the number of spots produced. Sumar reaches one million seventy thousand reproductions, very close to the 1,200,000

views of the PP, and presents a very similar strategy. The campaign launching video obtained 620,000 views (57.7% of the total number of views) and the biography of its candidate reached 440,000 views, representing 98% of the views of all the electoral spots of this organization. It is remarkable the few subscribers of Sumar's YouTube channel compared to the high engagement it presents, since this channel was newly created for the presentation of the formation, although voters did know and disseminated its contents as they came from parties with a long trajectory such as UP, IU or the tides.

It is striking that the PSOE is the party with the highest engagement rate, due to the lower use of YouTube, but this is explained by the fact that having a small number of subscribers, interaction tends to be much more effective, as shown by the study of differences between macroinfluencers and microinfluencers by Marques et al. (2021).

Table 2

Engagement and views of political party videos for the 2023 general elections.

	YouTube Subscribers	Views	Likes	Engagement
PP	114,000	1,207,800	5,613	0.4
PSOE	42,200	17,000	1,184	6.9
Vox	528,000	11,735,000	22,800	0.19
Sumar	9,000	1,073,300	1,869	0.17

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2023).

4.2. The strategy of each party's videos on YouTube

4.2.1. The videos of the PP during the campaign

In the official YouTube channel there are a total of 11 professional spots, out of the 30 published in the period under study. These spots can actually be reduced to 6, since 2 of them are remakes (20-, 30- or 60-second video cuts).

- 1) *Verano azul*: launched on June 22. *Verano azul* was a RTVE series from the 80's that narrated the summer of a gang of teenagers. The PP uses the simile because the elections were held in the middle of summer and blue is its corporate color. The spot is closed by one of the protagonists of the series saying: "Spain deserves a blue summer". The lait motiv is focused on the classic idea of change, where this blue coloring means a different time.

The news impact had more to do with the copyright controversy. Radio Televisión Española (RTVE), the public television, urged the PP to withdraw it for infringing the rights on the trademark, but the PP said

through its spokespersons: “We have bought the musical rights and we are very pleased that Moncloa wants to amplify a friendly campaign of the PP like this one”, referring to the fact that it was more a political move of the incumbent government than an intellectual property rights issue (Martín, 2023).

- 2) Typology of the candidate's biography -Biospot- (10 minutes), from the origins in rural Galicia to being president of the Xunta. This video is the second most viewed, with more than 160,000 views on YouTube. Its objective was to make the candidate known, presenting his personal, family and professional history.
- 3) Campaign launch video (July 7). It includes the slogan: “Es el momento”. (It's time). In its 20-second format it reached the highest number of views: more than one million visits, the other 4 versions of 30 seconds and one minute added up to only 5,000 more visits.
- 4) Under the talking bust typology, this fourth video ranked third in views, as it exceeded 15,000 views. “We may not be your party, but we are the solution”. The candidate, Feijóo, addresses citizens directly for two minutes, appealing to reason and reasoning to vote for his party.
- 5) The videos “Venimos de todas partes” (We come from everywhere) and “El cambio está cerca, #EsElMomento de volver a unir a los españoles” (“Change is near, #IsTheMoment to unite Spaniards again”) close the campaign, appealing to unity to concentrate the vote. Its impact was limited: 6,000 views between the two. It features different candidates from different provinces to represent the territories of plural Spain.

Non-professional videos on YouTube generally present clips of the debate between the PP and PSOE candidates (30%), interventions in rallies or media (30%) and others. Shorts format videos are divided into 20% on the candidates' debate, 20% on the candidate's interventions, 20% versions of official videos and 40% of videos criticizing the government's management.

Table 3

PP YouTube channel.

Video	Duration	Views	Engagement	Date of publication	Approach	Topic	Typology
Llega el #VeranoAzul https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kySiKkf4Hqk	20 seconds	5,9 K	124 likes	June 22, 2023	Positive	Political change	Issue
Un #VeranoAzul para todos https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaGN4wVj10s	1 minute	11 K	166 likes	June 22, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Man in the street ads
España se merece un #VeranoAzul https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXWq615UZeU	1 minute	3 K	101 likes	Jun 24, 2023	Positive	Political change	Man in the street ads
Historia del candidato Alberto Núñez Feijóo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tQIRIUZwJ0	10 minutes	160 K	4 K likes	July 2, 2023	Positive	Political change	Cinéma verité /

23J VOTA FEIJÓO - ES EL MOMENTO https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FBmcg6CkCM	1 minute	2,4 K	144 likes	July 7, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Bio spot
ES EL MOMENTO - VOTA FEIJÓO 23J https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUcjuS9V8qU	20 seconds	1 M	92 likes	July 7, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Man in the street ads
VOTA FEIJÓO 23J - ES EL MOMENTO https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1maks5DOM44	30 seconds	2,1 K	102 likes	July 7, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Man in the street ads
ES EL MOMENTO - VOTA FEIJÓO 23J https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NoptAWSt9U	20 seconds	2 K	108 likes	July 7, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Man in the street ads
Quizá no seamos tu partido, pero sí somos la solución. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USY_HIM2FmY	2 minutos	15 K	401 likes	July 14, 2023	Positive / Negative	Political change	Man in the street ads
Venimos de todas partes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOCDRHjFHmY	1 22 minutes	2,4 K	157 likes	July 18, 2023	Positive	Political change	Talking bust
El cambio está cerca, #EsElMomento de volver a unir a los españoles https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U85xht3tOQ	1:37 minutes	4 K	218 likes	July 21, 2023	Positive	Political change	Issue

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

4.2.2. PSOE videos in the campaign

The PSOE launches its first videos the day after calling the elections. A piece with negative treatment, criticizing that its main adversary did not speak English, but it does not publish it on its YouTube channel at any time. In his official channel there is a gap of videos since the last spot posted before the regional elections. From May 26 to June 15, only two contents with interventions of the candidate were published.

In general, the videos of the official channel are cuts of statements in institutions, press, etc., highlighting the work of the PSOE and asking for the vote in more than 30%; 10% are videos on the debate of the candidates of the PSOE and PP; 10% against their main adversary; 10% informative videos (on the postal vote, the functioning of the D'Hont law), while professional videos represent 17%.

- 1) YouTube welcomes the first professional video on June 15, with the title "PSOE / The Best Spain", just over a minute long, which appeals to good, solidary, hard-working citizens who claim their rights.
- 2) The following two videos focus on the issue of LGTBI rights. These three videos were published during the month of June and between them had a reach of 9,000 views.

- 3) The official campaign video, with the campaign claim was published on July 10: “Adelante. Con Pedro Sánchez, España avanza” (With Pedro Sánchez, Spain moves forward).
- 4) Man in the street: “PSOE/Women don't want to go back to another era. For your rights #VotaPSOE”, focused on women's rights won in recent years and the danger of regression if PSOE did not continue.
- 5) The final video of the campaign: “This 23J we have a lot at stake: go forward or go backwards. Voting PSOE is voting to move forward!”, edited with interventions by the candidate and cannot be included among the professional videos. It summarized the whole message of the campaign: if the PSOE did not win, social rights in Spain would go backwards. A classic already used by this formation.

Table 4
 PSOE YouTube Channel.

Video	Duration	Views	Engagement	Date of publication	Approach	Topic	Typology
PSOE / La Mejor España. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrVbjvH3l0	1:18 minutes	3,3 K	216 likes	June 15, 2023	Positive	Social Rights	Man in the street advertisement
PSOE / Orgullosa Familia Socialista #OrgulloLGTBI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFBVTU_sahE	1 minute	3,7 K	254 likes	June 26, 2023	Positive	LGTBI	Ads of a part of life
PSOE / 🇪🇺 Una bandera universal, felicidad, amor y de dignidad. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjyzctA1gvY	43 seconds	2,2 K	194 likes	June 30, 2023	Positive	LGTBI	Issue
Adelante. Con Pedro Sánchez, España avanza. Vota PSOE. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5bf9ulw040	1:10 minutes	6,3 K	330 likes	July 10, 2023	Contrast	Social rights	Man in the street advertisement
PSOE / Las mujeres no quieren volver a otra época. Por tus derechos #VotaPSOE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1wbYZ4ctzA	1:05 minutes	1,6 K	190 likes	July 17, 2023	Negative / Contrast	Women and feminism	Man in the street advertisement

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

In this campaign, the PSOE broadcasted live on its YouTube channel a program presented by the candidate and President of the Government, Pedro Sánchez, where he interviewed his ministers (only those of the PSOE and at no time any of Podemos, his partner in government). They are also broadcast on X, formerly Twitter, (live and deferred) and on Instagram, under the title “Sesión de trabajo. Pedro Sánchez con {name of the minister}” between June 19 and July 5, before the official start of the election campaign.

Criticism was received from the media against this initiative that did not allow the intervention of professionals -they were closed door events-, where they took stock of the Government and even pointed out measures that they would take in the electoral program, being as a Government in office (something that is not allowed by the Electoral Law) and where the President went from interviewee to interviewer. An unusual format in Spain, but well known in Latin America, in populist governments such as Venezuela's with its famous *¿Aló presidente?* or in Cuba (López Macías, 2023; esdiario, 2023; COPE, 2023).

On YouTube, they posted edited summaries of these interviews and obtained between 4,000 and 7,000 views, representing 15% of the videos posted.

4.2.3. Vox videos

Vox's channel opens with its official campaign video, one minute long. During the campaign, the Vox channel doubled, tripled and quadrupled the use of videos and shorts compared to its opponents. The number of shorts being published is 25% higher compared to the other three formations.

It published 4 professional videos that got millions of views: 4.7 million views for the official 30-second spot; 2.7 million, 1.8 million and 1.4 million for the videos asking for votes in the last week. All his videos had thousands of views that we will see in conclusions. Of the 132 videos published on the official YouTube channel, those that stand out are those that, with a careful realization, presented acts and visits of the candidates (especially of their leader) combined with messages-proposals and criticisms to their adversaries. Those of criticism represented 35% of the total, and those focused on speeches of their candidates, total or partial, 45%.

Although all the videos appealed to their voters, the eight professional spots represented 6% of their production, but they were the ones that obtained the highest number of reproductions. Those editing press conferences or media interventions accounted for 10%.

Vox's professional spots focused on three typologies:

- 1) Program video: it includes the commitments of candidate Abascal, in short videos of three or four minutes.
- 2) Official spot in its two versions of one minute and 30 seconds.
- 3) Three mobilization spots for his voters in the final stretch. Their total number of views almost reaches six million reproductions.

Table 5

VOX YouTube Channel.

Video	Duration	Views	Engagement	Date of publication	Approach	Topic	Typology
#DecideLoQueImporta El primer compromiso de Santiago Abascal es https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ue90FaYGkfc&list=PLV9zP7Df1nvnYf11vnYaDe8ZLGEQqf4kX&index=29	3:21 minutes	423 K	2,4 K likes	June 29	Contrast	Political change and economic and social electoral proposals	Cinéma verité
Spot electoral de Vox #VotaLoQueImporta https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtGFtUC1cO4	1:02 minutes	62 K	3,3K likes	July 7	Negative	Political change	Cinéma verité / Bio spot
Spot electoral de Vox para las elecciones del #23J https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPbb--BxhNI&list=PLV9zP7Df1nvnYf11vnYaDe8ZLGEQqf4kX&index=57	30 minutes	4,7 M	2,4 K likes	July 7	Contrast	Political change	Cinéma verité / Bio spot
#DecideLoQueImporta El segundo compromiso de Santiago Abascal es https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUU71ZT113Y&list=PLV9zP7Df1nvnYf11vnYaDe8ZLGEQqf4kX&index=58	4:58 minutes	264 K	1,4 K likes	July 7	Contrast	Political change and economic and social electoral proposals	Cinéma verité
#DecideLoQueImporta Tercer compromiso de Santiago Abascal https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8Q0cWudx8k&list=PLV9zP7Df1nvnYf11vnYaDe8ZLGEQqf4kX&index=98	2:43 minutes	386 K	1,1 K likes	July 16	Contrast	Political change and economic and social electoral proposals	Cinéma verité
Llega la hora: Vamos a echarle https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ38fPMtgYE&list=PLV9zP7Df1nvnYf11vnYaDe8ZLGEQqf4kX&index=95	1:28 minutes	2,7 M	5,6 K likes	July 17	Negative	Political Change	Issue
Este 23J una España diferente es posible https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQa5qr10_T4	1:30 minutes	1.8 M	2,3 K	July 20, 2023	Positive	Political change	Issue
Porque tú sabes lo que importa... #23J	1:56 minutes	1.4 M	4,3 K	July 20, 2023	Positive	Political change	Cinéma verité

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqeZ4xCeWZE							
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Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

4.2.4. Sumar videos

Sumar's official YouTube channel has a 70-30 distribution between videos and shorts, with a clear prevalence of short videos. Twelve videos were published and 50% of these productions are professional, which can be explained by the recent creation of the Sumar platform and its smaller budget. Out of these 6 videos, 2 stand out for their dissemination capacity. The first one, "Este #23J es por ti (This #23J is for you)" launched at the beginning of the campaign (July 7), and got 620,000 views. The rest, from July 16 and 21, practically daily, obtained between 1,000 and 4,000 views.

The second video that stands out for its reproductions is "Díaz y Pérez. La historia de Yolanda Díaz" (Díaz and Pérez. The story of Yolanda Díaz), which exceeded 440,000 views. Under the classic bio-spot typology, it narrates the life of the candidate and her origins, highlighting the values and teachings that were instilled in her, seeking an intimate portrait of Yolanda Díaz.

Sumar's videos did not obtain a special impact in the traditional media.

Table 6

Sumar YouTube Channel

Video	Duration	Views	Engagement	Date of publication	Approach	Topic	Typology
Este #23J es por ti https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4v8uueGzPVs&list=PLcje8drG6cs4Y9PIFKizE-jTuQsvyGRTm&index=1	30 seconds	620 K	279 likes	July 7, 2023	Contrast	Rights	Talking Bust
El FEMINISMO del 99%, el feminismo de SUMAR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tmu-QNyVN9o	1:55 minutes	1,1 K	93 likes	July 16, 2023	Contrast	Feminism and LGTBI	Testimonials
DÍAZ Y PÉREZ La historia de YOLANDA DÍAZ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f1Q1ZKd5-8&list=PLcje8drG6cs4Y9PIFKizE-jTuQsvyGRTm&index=2	1:56 minutes	441 K	580 likes	July 17, 2023	Positive	Policy	Cinéma verité /
Es por ti Spot SUMAR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2RtbkMEp7Y&list=PLcje8drG6cs4Y9PIFKizE-jTuQsvyGRTm&index=3	1:27 minutes	3,7 K	300 likes	July 18, 2023		Rights	Bio spot

Esto acaba de EMPEZAR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rrcx1zzRucE	1:30 minute s	3,4 K	247 likes	July 19, 2023	Positive	Rights	Issue
VIENTO SPOT final de SUMAR https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwJdFx59ARM&list=PLcje8drG6cs4Y9PIFKizE-jTuQsvyGRTm&index=4	1,52 minute s	4,1 K	370 likes	July 21, 2023	Positive	Policy	Testimonials

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2023.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Following the study approach and the research questions posed, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

- Political parties in Spain have been diversifying the offer of electoral spots, overcoming the obsolete LOREG that regulates this issue, to give way to the digital spot, taking advantage of technology, Internet and the reach of social networks.
- The networks allow to broadcast videos without time or space limit, under different treatments and typologies and combine professional pieces with others elaborated by the communication teams, closer and with more informal formats.
- The digital spot, designed by the party, after commissioning experts or specialized companies, is one of the audiovisual contents that remain as a disseminator of the campaign message, spread in the official accounts and adapted to different formats to achieve an amplification of the message in other networks and platforms.

Regarding the specific conclusions of this research and answering the research questions posed, it can be said that:

- The four parties under analysis, which obtained more than 92% of the votes, published 333 videos on their official YouTube account, during the two months of pre-campaign and electoral campaign in 2023. It should be noted that Vox agglutinated 50% of the videos published, disseminating an average of 2.85 videos per day, while the other three formations generally published one per day.
- The professional, planned spots, i.e. those considered traditional spots, occupy less space and on average represent 11% of the total videos on their YouTube accounts, although they achieve a lot of impact and a reasonable engagement with the voter. In the case of PP, for example, it represents 85% of its visualizations or, in the case of Sumar, 98%.
- The data show that Vox is the party that focuses its efforts more on digital channels, getting more views than its opponents: its spots get ten times more views (11.7 million) than its opponents; PP and Sumar, which reach just over one million views of their videos. Vox is the party with more

subscribers (528,000), quadrupling the second party in followers, PP with 114,000 subscribers and far from PSOE with 42,200 or Sumar with 9,000.

- Regarding the engagement of the accounts under analysis, it is striking the low level of the three parties with more followers and volume of publications, whose engagement is below 0.5%, when the average on YouTube is 2 to 3%. This low result can be explained by the fact that political content has less followers than entertainment or informative content, which is more abundant on digital platforms. It seems that the general disaffection of citizens with politics is also reflected in their behavior with these contents.
- With respect to our research question, what strategy, typology or approach do these productions present? It is revealing that the most watched electoral spots have been, together with the campaign launching spots where the position of the party was presented, the productions of the typology Bio spot of the PP and Sumar candidates, focused on the biography of the candidates, from their origins in two Galician villages, which reviewed their personal and political trajectory and their values. It is a suitable typology for new candidates who have to make themselves known and adds the emotional-affective dimension that always works in political communication.
- The party that was governing, the PSOE, was the one that used YouTube the least for the dissemination of its videos. This could be explained by the fact that, being in government, it had greater access to traditional media. In this campaign, the PSOE used the broadcast of interviews that the candidate and president of the government, Pedro Sanchez, conducted in his party behind closed doors, sending the post-produced clips to the media so that they could insert in their news some total about this initiative. This operation was criticized but achieved a plus of visibility for the party and the candidate.
- In short, it seems clear that the videos disseminated through YouTube obtain an acceptable percentage of views, as evidenced by the engagement rate and the number of reproductions that reached hundreds of thousands (and even exceeded 4 million) in different videos, among the 35 million voters in Spain in 2023. It is also clear that in the July 2023 campaign, the party in power (PSOE) is the one that uses this broadcasting platform the least and the most active is Vox. These data would confirm that, when parties have space and visibility in analog media, they focus their efforts on these media, while the parties with less presence in traditional media increase their diffusion in digital platforms.

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