

The Regional Elections in 12 Spanish Autonomous Communities

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1. The Regional Political System in Spain

Spain is a unitary regionalized state, administratively structured across three tiers: at the first level local tier are 17 autonomous communities – plus the two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla). The autonomous communities are divided into 50 provinces, which in turn are divided into more than 8100 municipalities.

Each autonomous community has its own autonomous government, a legislative assembly (generally known as *Parlamento autonómico*, which depending on the region may also take the name of *Asamblea*, *Corte*, or *Junta*), and a statute of the autonomy, where the competences of the region, together with its structure are established. This allows for regional political systems that are slightly different from one autonomous community to the other and follow different rules.

For instance, in the case of Valencia, the parliament is called *Corts* and is unicameral with 99 deputies elected for four years. Once elected, it is in charge to elect the president of the *Generalidad* (the major Valencian representative institutions) who, in turn, appoints the councilors who form, together with the president and the vice-president, the *Consell* of the *Generalidad*, which is the executive body in Valencia. Navarra, on the other hand, is organized in a slightly different way. Like in Valencia and most

other autonomous communities, voters elect the parliament that, in turn chooses the president of the government. But in Navarra there is also another specific body who is in charge of the financial situation of the region, plus another institution, the Defensor of the People, who is in charge to surveil on the protection of the rights of people living there. Another example of procedural differences in the political system is the Community of Madrid, where voters elect the members of the assembly and after that the president of the region is nominated by the president of the Assembly, while in other communities the regional presidents are chosen by the deputies of the newly elected parliament.

The differences between autonomous communities do not end with the structural aspects of their political systems. A peculiarity of some autonomous communities lies in the very parties that sit in the regional parliaments, especially in some autonomous communities.

It is very common, for instance, for Canary Islands and Balearic Islands, not only to have parties running there and not elsewhere (PANE, partidos de ámbito no estatal)– but even to have lists that run in one of the islands and not in the others (e.g., Més Menorca or Més Mallorca). Indeed, in 2023 regional election in Canary Islands, there were more lists uniquely present in Canary Islands (e.g., Coalición Canaria, Nueva Canaria, Socialista Gomera, Drago Verde Canaria, Unidos Por Gran Canaria), than those running in all territories – and the same can be said about the parties that obtain seats, since several of such parties managed to get representation. Once again, Navarra is a useful case and perhaps the most interesting. Here, of the first five parties, three are local parties or better PANE (Unión del Pueblo Navarro, Euskal Herria Bildu, Geroa Bai) and only two are national (PAE), namely the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (hereinafter PSOE, second most voted) and the Partido Popular (hereinafter PP, fifth most voted).

Further differences of the regional political system in Spain across autonomous communities are related to the electoral system, which is explained in the next paragraph.

In this report I focus on the regional elections of 12 *Comunidades Autonomas*: none of them are *Comunidades Historicas*, namely with the highest levels of autonomy. However, some of them have higher degree of local autonomy than others and more specific local culture such as the Canary and Balearic Islands and Navarra.

2. The Regional Electoral System

To begin with, every four years, the 17 autonomous communities elect their representatives in the respective regional parliaments. While not all autonomous communities go to the voting booth to elect their local representatives in the same year, the last round of regional elections on May 28, 2023, took place in the twelve autonomous communities of Aragon, Asturias, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarre, and Valencia. The remaining autonomous communities held their last regional elections in the previous years – Andalusia and Castile and Leon in 2022, Catalonia in 2021, and Galicia and the Basque Country in 2020.

The Spanish regional electoral system is mainly regulated by the Organic Law for the General Electoral System (LOREG), a law in force since 1985, that directly applies to all autonomous regions, which since then underwent a series of reforms and was last modified in 2018. On top of that common legislative basis, each autonomous community is entitled to issue and implement further legislation and, as a matter of fact, all autonomous communities except for Catalonia have done so (Fittipaldi, 2022).

While legally entitled to pick their own electoral system, all autonomous communities have established to have their voters elect the representatives in the regional parliament using a multi-member proportional system with closed lists. The D'Hondt system – the same also adopted for the Spanish general elections – regulates the allocation of seats. It is common for the autonomous communities to establish a legal threshold (ranging from 3 to 6%), to be applied either at the constituency level or at the regional level.

In most cases, the constituencies coincide with the administrative entities of provinces and the number of seats that compose each regional parliament as well as the distribution of seats across constituencies is regulated by the regional statutes or regional electoral laws. Currently, the total number of representatives in the regional parliaments ranges from a minimum of 33 representatives (that is the case of smaller communities, such as La Rioja or Castile-La Mancha, both participating to the last round of regional elections), to a maximum, of 135 and 136 representatives in, respectively, Catalonia and Madrid – although the Regional Statute of Madrid does not establish a fixed number of seats but rather has it vary depending on the number of residents in the community (Fittipaldi, 2022).

All citizens of each autonomous community are entitled to vote in these regional elections, including those who reside abroad. Moreover, since 2007, the lists need to be gender balanced between men and women, meaning that there should be at least 40% and maximum 60% candidates of each gender.

3. Regional Political Competition and Campaign

The electoral campaign for these regional elections lasts fifteen days, starting on before mid-May and ending a couple of days before the election day. The two-week window for campaigning is the period in which, as it happens also before general elections, organized public debates are streamed and one representative for each party invited gets to openly outline the stances of their party on each topic on the agenda.

In some autonomous communities the public opinion had the chance to get more familiar with the different stands of the different parties on several issues by watching only one debate – as in the case of Asturias, Castile-La Mancha, and Extremadura. In other regions, such as Balearic Islands, Madrid, or Navarre, three or more debates were organized within such a short period of time. Such debates are useful tools for many reasons. On the one hand, they are an occasion for parties to campaign for their policy goals and attempt to increase consensus, on the other hand, they are the easiest way for citizens to be more informed about the electoral supply and main party differences; finally public debates also offer relevant insights about the hot topics in each community and overall, in the country at that point in time.

The list of parties and coalition that ran for the 2023 regional elections is clearly not the same across autonomous communities. While some parties tend to be present in all regions – and within them, they also tend to run in all constituencies – there are some other parties that run in just one or a few of them.

Those that are virtually always present are the mainstream and PAE (partidos de ámbito estatal) parties– the center-left PSOE and the center-right PP. As of today, they still are the parties that in most cases collect the majority of the votes. Yet, the bipartidism that characterized the Spanish political arena for decades both at the national and at the subnational level, starred by those two parties, gave way to a different party competition dynamic. Indeed, part of the electoral basis of the PSOE and PP was captured by relatively new parties that by now also show up in virtually all constituencies – moving from the left to the right, mainly Podemos (often running with Izquierda Unida only, often together with other lists), Ciudadanos, and Vox.

Furthermore, there are parties (PANE) that exclusively run in one autonomous community and not in others, often collecting even more votes than most of the abovementioned parties, for example, Unión del Pueblo Navarro (first party in Navarre in the current electoral round, as reported in the results section below) or Coalición Canaria and Partido Regionalista de Cantabria (currently second parties in, respectively, Canary Island and Cantabria), just to mention a few.

The programs presented by the parties in the different autonomous communities were quite consistent regarding salience and stance on the issues covered. It is true that the specific policies and measures proposed to tackle certain issues may vary depending on the autonomous community involved as some regions require special attention to tackle issue other regions might not be dealing with at all, or some regions seem to be a potentially fertile territory to experiment with novel policies that have never been introduced elsewhere. However, beyond such a so-to-say physiological variation in the programs and campaigns, the parties that own a certain issue are likely to maintain their substantive stance on it regardless of the autonomous community they operate and despite changes in the regional political arena, even though the concrete policy goal may vary.

Among the most salient issues emphasized in the campaign across the country, many where – and unsurprisingly so – related to the economy (e.g., unemployment, taxes, social policies). Other debated issues were, among others, healthcare, housing, climate change and the environment, immigration, and civil rights – e.g., gender equality, LGTBI+ rights. While it would be challenging to detail the position of each party on every single of the abovementioned issues, the following paragraphs offer an overview of the stances and proposals of the main parties.

Taxation is where the divide between left-wing and right-wing parties is perhaps the most evident. The former stand in favor of inheritance tax and wealth tax, while the latter propose to either progressively or drastically remove both and propose some deductions for families and freelancers.

Contrasting unemployment, as a valence issue, was a shared concern for virtually all parties in all autonomous communities. Each party had some points in their program to address unemployment, aiming to tackle the issue from a different perspective – PSOE, Podemos, Izquierda Unida would focus more on fostering the employment of female, young or disabled individuals, (re)integrating the vulnerable workforce, and generally improving working conditions; PP and Ciudadanos put more emphasis on modernization, training, and technology; Vox on supporting freelancers and incentivizing firms to offer stable positions to Spanish citizens. Perhaps as a consequence to the new working habits that were tested during the Covid-19 pandemic period, some parties even proposed to introduce new policies regulating smart-working and introducing the four-day workweek or the 32- or 35-hour workweek – e.g., PSOE and Més Mallorca in Balearic Islands, Geroa Bai in Navarra, Compromís in Valencia, (Unidas) Podemos in several regions.

Turning to healthcare, the left-wing parties consistently proposed to allocate more resources to primary care to reduce waiting lists; there is general agreement on prioritizing mental health, with the left-wing parties offering

to guarantee to citizens public psychological and psychotherapeutic support. Both PP and Vox proposed to hire more healthcare workers. Vox campaigned in favor of welfare chauvinism, meaning nationals citizens should have priority over non-nationals in accessing healthcare services (among others); and to defend the right of healthcare workers to refuse to provide treatment that causes abortion, euthanasia, or sterilization when against their beliefs.

Also, part of the 2023 campaigns was the housing issue, traditionally a key element in the program of (Unidas) Podemos – or else the list built around it, whose composition varied across different autonomous communities – which stands for allowing citizens to enjoy their right to access decent and adequate housing, as stated in article 47 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978. This is an issue often debated in relation to tourism as one of the measures often proposed by left-wing parties is to limit the diffusion of short-term rental contract to tourists at the expense of affordability of long-term housing for locals. The solutions proposed by Podemos included publicly intervening on the rent prices or preventing the issuing of new permits for touristic housing. PSOE proposed, among other things, to support some social groups paying rent with monthly bonuses and to contrast gentrification. These policies are condemned by the opposing parties who claim they curb tourism – a central element in the economy of many Spanish regions. When it comes to housing, both Vox and the PP propose to clear out the houses that are currently occupied, and in some regions (e.g., Madrid) propose plans to allow young people to access more affordable rents.

Tourism is an issue often debated through the lenses of environmental protection. In fact, regarding climate change, Podemos, Izquierda Unida, and PSOE (together with other local parties with akin ideology) advanced proposals on transitioning towards a more sustainable format for tourism. Moreover, they campaigned in favor of renewable energies and circular economy; new legislation for the ecological transition; opening new departments and offices specifically dedicated to environmental protection; fostering environmental education and the adoption of pro-environmental behaviors. The PP and Vox, on the other hand, included in their programs to abolish or reduce airport taxes, taxes on fuel, touristic taxes, and generally speaking any tax that may hinder tourism. Vox proposed to abrogate the law on climate change and, generally speaking, any legislation that prevents local institutions from fostering tourism and exploiting natural resources.

Immigration is another issue that is highly debated at the national level and parties did not miss the chance to campaign on that too in the occasion of the regional elections. On this issue, Podemos and Izquierda Unida propose in most regions to guarantee access to good quality social services for immigrants and actively fight against racism and xenophobia. PSOE

proposes to offer housing to immigrants. On the other hand, Vox's position on the issue of immigration is quite well-known: deporting undocumented immigrants or immigrants that repeatedly commit crimes and abolishing the policies that, according to the party, generate a pull effect and attract them to live there to begin with.

Finally, when it comes to civil rights and women rights in particular, left-wing parties propose plans to prevent violence against women, foster affective-sexual education and the integration of women who abandon prostitution, or guaranteeing the right to safe abortion. Some parties even propose reducing the VAT tax on menstruation products from 10 to 4%, (*Més per Menorca*). The PP generally proposed to reduce the gender gap in the job market and provide support to survivors of gender violence. Vox campaigned to abrogate the law on gender equality and to contrast the maternity gap as it forces women to postpone pregnancy.

4. Turnout and Electoral Results of the 2023 Elections

Regional elections take place on the fourth Sunday of May every four years for most of the Autonomous communities and on the same day voters are called to the polls to also elect their municipal councilors¹. While it goes beyond the scope of this contribution to also analyze the results of the municipal elections, their outcome is definitely relevant to keep this information present when looking at the results for the regional elections. In fact, based on what outlined by the theory of multilevel congruence (Bolgherini et al., 2021), the closer together two elections of different levels are held (for instance, regional and municipal elections), and especially if they are held on the same day, the more similar the electoral results tend to be (vertical simultaneity).

Before zooming into the detail of the results, Table 1 reports the participation rate in the twelve regions, calculated as the percentage of those who expressed a vote out of those who had a right to do so. The table reports in the second column the number of valid votes, that in Spain corresponds to the sum of votes casted for a candidate party plus the blank ballots – in other words, the total number of expressed votes minus the invalid votes. In this round of elections, both the invalid votes and the blank ballots amounted to, on average, 1,5% of all the expressed votes.

As shown in the third column, the turnout ranged from a minimum of 50,4% in Canary Island to a maximum of 72,5% in Castile-La Mancha. Overall, the

¹ Indeed, every 20 years, this double electoral contest becomes a triple appointment since voters also elect the European Parliament, as it occurred in 2019.

participation rate across the autonomous communities did not differ much from the turnout recorded in occasion of the last general elections that were held before these regional elections, back November 2019 – both being close to 65%. Except for a few electorates, such as that of La Rioja whose turnout at the regional elections in 2023 was 5.5 percentage points higher than in the 2019 national elections, the turnout in the regional elections was mainly a few percentage points lower than the turnout in the general elections. Such results do not come as a surprise, and if anything corroborates the theory on second-order elections, according to which voters would be more likely to show up and vote at general elections compared to elections held at other levels (i.e., European, regional, municipal), given that they perceive the national level as the one where there is more at stake (Reif & Schmitt, 1980).

Even if we compare with the 2019 regional elections, the average turnout was approximately 65%. In that occasion, the participation rate ranged from a minimum of 52,6% in Canary Island (where, as mentioned above, the lowest turnout was registered this year as well) to a maximum of 73,7% in Valencia. In this sense, similarly to what La Rioja confirms an increase of more than 5 percentage points in participation between the last two regional elections, while a decrease of a similar magnitude occurred in Valencia.

Tab. 1 – Electoral Turnout

Region	Voters (N)	Valid Votes (N)	Turnout (%)
Aragon	1.019.050	669.775	66,5
Asturias	958.658	537.023	56,9
Balearic Islands	828.278	450.644	55,1
Canary Islands	1.778.285	879.903	50,4
Cantabria	507.438	324.728	65,3
Castile-La Mancha	1.535.735	1.072.883	71,1
Extremadura	889.836	612.096	70,4
La Rioja	234.267	167.919	72,5
Madrid	5.211.944	3.379.477	65,5
Murcia	1.098.543	684.817	63,3
Navarre	518.998	329.861	64,4
Valencia	3.730.659	2.466.986	67,0

Source: own elaboration based on data from official websites of the Ministry of the Interior, Junta Electoral Central, and individual Autonomous Communities.

As for the results, Tables 2 to 13 report the vote share and number of seats (if any) obtained by the main party lists in each autonomous community², plus the blank ballots.

² The tables always report the results for those parties that ran – alone or in coalition with

First of all, a quick glance through the tables immediately reveals that the first political force in this electoral round was the PP. On the other hand, the PSOE also performed relatively well, winning considerable amounts of votes and seats even in those assemblies where the PP was more successful. Indeed, these two parties remain the first two parties in most autonomous communities, rarely losing one position to another party – PP to Coalición Canaria, PSOE to Partido Regionalista de Cantabria and Más Madrid running with Verdes and Equo. The most interesting exception in this sense is the case of Navarre, where the first force was the Unión del Pueblo Navarro (28%), second came the PSOE (20,7%), followed by Euskal Herria Bildu (17,1%) and Geroa Bai (13,2%) and only after them, as a fifth political force came the PP with only 7,3% of votes and 3 seats out of 50. However, besides that exceptional case, the results of this regional election do not contradict the tradition of the PP and the PSOE as the first two political parties in the country.

A second element revealed by the results is the growth of Vox, which in most autonomous communities emerged as the third political force, recording a growth of few percentage points in all regions except for Madrid. The region where it performed the best was Murcia, where with almost 18% of votes, it managed to get one fifth of the seats in the regional parliament (9 out of 45). Other regions where Vox got considerable support were Balearic Island (almost 14% of votes and seats), Valencia (roughly 13% of both), Castile-La Mancha (13% of votes and 12% of seats).

Thirdly, Podemos and Izquierda Unida and the various coalitions they belonged to performed quite badly overall, often getting no representation at all in the regional parliaments, and in some cases just a handful of seats. Such left-wing parties got the highest share of seats in Extremadura and La Rioja (with 5-6% of votes and 6% seats). Overall, this election compared to the previous one signals a clear decrease in support for the Left.

Fourth, the 2023 regional elections show the complete defeat of Ciudadanos, that did not get one single seat in any regional parliament and did not even collect 1% of the votes in at least five autonomous communities. Only in Cantabria, Ciudadanos managed to reach 2% of votes.

Fifth, as it is often the case, most PANE parties performed well enough to get representation and, in some cases, even better than some of the mainstream PAE parties. This is particularly the case in Canary Island, Cantabria, Navarra, and Valencia.

other parties – in all regions, even if they did not gain any seat nor reach 1% of vote share. Those parties are PP, PSOE, (Unidas) Podemos, Vox, and Ciudadanos. The results of other parties are reported only when fulfilling one of the following conditions: they either gained at least one seat or they have reached at least 1% of the votes.

In Canary Island, Coalición Canaria obtained 19 seats and almost 21% of the votes, being second only to the PSOE, which got 23 seats and around 30% of votes (see Table 5 below). The third party was the PP (15 seats), followed by another PANE party – namely, Nueva Canarias (5 seats). This result did not come as a surprise, since in the previous regional elections the performance for those PANE parties was substantially the same.

In Cantabria, the main PANE party – Partido Regionalista de Cantabria (PRC) – was also the second most voted party (this time after the PP, which obtained 15 seats), although it obtained a very similar percentage of votes (almost 21%) and the exact same number of seats (8) as the third party – the PSOE (see Table 6). Contrary to what we said for Canary Islands, in Cantabria this result differs quite significantly from that of the 2019 regional elections, where the PRC was quite stronger and the first party in the region, with 14 seats, followed by the PP (9) and PSOE (7).

The case of Navarre is peculiar not only for the strength of PANE parties, but for the amount of those parties that actually manage to get representation in the local parliament. In fact, as shown in Table 12 below, out of the first five parties that obtained representation, three (the first, third, and fourth) are local parties that only run in this region – respectively, the Unión del Pueblo Navarro (UPN), with around 28% of the votes and 15 seats; Euskal Herria Bildu (EHR), with 17% of the votes and 9 seats, and Geroa Bai, with 13% of the votes and 9 seats. As for the main PAE parties, PSOE is second and the PP only comes fifth. Similarly, to what occurred in Canary Islands, this outcome resembles pretty much the results of the previous regional elections – the only main difference laying in the fact that HER got a bit stronger, perhaps at the expense of Geroa Bai which lost two seats.

One last case worth commenting on is that of Valencia, whose results are reported in Table 13. Here, we get perhaps an outcome that summarizes the results of the 2023 regional election: the two strongest parties are still the PP and the PSOE (with, respectively, 40 and 31 seats). Quite behind these two, but definitely of relevance, we find Vox, which got stronger compared to the past and obtained 13 seats – and yet not strong enough to perform better than the PANE parties, in those regions where these are historically relevant and supported by their electorates. In Valencia, that is the case of Compromís, which got 15 seats – two more than Vox, a gap that shrank compared to the 2019, where there was a 7-seat difference between those two, Compromís having 17 seats and Vox “only” 10.

Overall, what seems to emerge is a scenario where the two PAE mainstream parties PP and PSOE are still leading respectively the right and left bloc (Pereira, 2023). In the right bloc things have changed from 2019, when PP would have to cooperate mostly with Ciudadanos to form governments. Now

Vox has a more influential position, since Ciudadanos did not even manage to get representation in the regional parliament. In the left bloc, no party is currently as strong as Vox is for the right to clearly become a competitor for or partner of the PSOE. There is a variety of left-wing relatively small parties that often run alone. However, perhaps also taking into consideration their performance at the regional elections of May 2023, many of them converged into the coalition Sumar for the general elections that were held two months later, and so doing they managed to be more competitive and get roughly the same percentage of votes as Vox, confirming their nature of second force in the leftist bloc.

Overall, the regional electoral results seem to mirror to a certain extent the results of the municipal elections held on the same day (Pereira et al., 2023), thus corroborating the idea that vertical simultaneity might have played a role in increasing multilevel congruence.

As for the local governments that resulted from this round of elections, it is worth briefly mentioning that in many cases they did imply some drastic shifts or coalitional changes. In fact, only in five out of 12 cases, the incumbent governing party remained in power (Asturias, Castille-La Mancha, Madrid, Murcia, and Navarre). As for the rest – except for Canary Islands, where the PANE Coalición Canaria went back to power (and with the same president who governed from 2015 to 2019) after losing it to the PSOE in the previous election – in all other regions, the change was in favor of the PP, which replaced the PSOE government in Aragon, Balearic Islands, Extremadura, La Rioja, and Valencia, and the PANE party PRC in Cantabria.

Tab. 2 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Aragon.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	35,5	28
PSOE	29,6	23
VOX	11,2	7
CHA	5,1	3
EXISTE	5,0	3
PODEMOS-AV	4,0	1
IUA	3,1	
PAR	2,1	
CS-TÚ ARAGÓN	1,3	
Blank ballot	1,6	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta Electoral de Aragon, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 3 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Asturias.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PSOE	36,5	19
PP	32,6	17
VOX	10,1	4
IU	7,6	3
PODEMOS	3,9	1
FORO	3,7	1
SOS	1,1	
CS	0,9	
Blank ballot	1,8	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta General del Principado de Asturias, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 4 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Balearic Islands.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	35,8	25
PSOE	26,5	18
VOX	13,9	8
MÉS PER MALLORCA	8,4	4
MÉS PER MENORCA	1,4	2
PODEMOS	4,4	1
SA UNIÓ	0,4	
EL PI	3,8	1
CS	1,4	
Blank ballot	1,6	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Boletín Oficial de las Islas Baleares, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 5 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Canary Islands.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PSOE	29,8	23
COALICIÓN CANARIA	20,6	19
PP	19,7	15
NUEVA CANARIAS	7,5	5
VOX	7,9	4
SOCIALISTA GOMERA	0,4	3
HERREÑA INDEPENDIENTE	0,1	1
UNIDAS SÍ PODEMOS	3,6	
DRAGO VERDE CANARIAS	3,3	
UNIDOS POR GRAN CANARIA	1,7	
CS	0,4	
Blank ballot	1,6	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta Electoral de Canarias, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 6 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Cantabria.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	35,8	15
PRC	20,8	8
PSOE	20,6	8
VOX	11,1	4
PODEMOS – IU	4,1	
CS	2,3	
CANTABRISTAS	1,7	
Blank ballot	1,8	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta Electoral Provincial de Cantabria, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 7 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Castile-La Mancha.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PSOE	45,7	17
PP	34,1	12
VOX	13,0	4
UNIDAS PODEMOS	4,2	
CS	1,0	
Blank ballot	1,5	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta Electoral de Castilla-La Mancha, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 8 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Extremadura.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PSOE	39,9	28
PP	38,8	28
VOX	8,1	5
PODEMOS – IU – AV	6,0	4
JUNTOS POR EXTREMADURA	2,0	
CS	0,9	
Blank ballot	1,4	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Junta Electoral de Extremadura, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 9 – Electoral results for the main party lists in La Rioja.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	45,5	17
PSOE	31,9	12
VOX	7,6	2
PODEMOS – IU	5,1	2
PRE+E	3,6	
PLRI	2,6	
CS	0,9	
Blank ballot	1,4	

Source: own elaboration based on data from La Rioja official webpage, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 10 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Madrid.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	47,3	70
MÁS MADRID – VERDES – EQUO	18,4	27
PSOE	18,2	27
VOX	7,3	11
PODEMOS – IU – AV	4,8	
CS	1,6	
Blank ballot	1,0	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Boletín Oficial de la Comunidad de Madrid, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 11 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Murcia.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	42,8	21
PSOE	25,6	13
VOX	17,7	9
PODEMOS – IU – VERDES – AV	4,7	2
MC REG	3,0	
CS	1,5	
MR – VE	1,3	
Blank ballot	1,2	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Región de Murcia's official page for regional elections, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 12 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Navarre.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
UPN	28,0	15
PSOE	20,7	11
EHR	17,1	9
GEROA BAI	13,2	7
PP	7,3	3
PODEMOS – IU – BATZARRE – AV – EQUO	6,1	3
VOX	4,3	2
CS	0,4	
Blank ballot	1,8	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Boletín Oficial de Navarra, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

Tab. 13 – Electoral results for the main party lists in Valencia.

Party	Votes (%)	Seats (N)
PP	35,7	40
PSOE	28,7	31
COMPROMÍS	14,5	15
VOX	12,6	13
UP – EUPV	3,6	
CS	1,5	
Blank ballot	1,3	

Source: own elaboration based on data from Diari Oficial de la Generalitat Valenciana, retrievable via Junta Electoral Central.

5. Conclusion

For almost two decades, between 1993 and 2011, the party competition in Spain was characterized by a *de facto* bipartidism, where the majority of voters would either support the PP or the PSOE, and the vote share of the two together would amount to more than 75-80%. Then, from 2015 to 2019,

in the general elections, the total vote share resulting from the sum of the votes obtained by the PP and those obtained by the PSOE, plummeted to less than 50%. While it cannot be said that the situation is even remotely similar today to how it used to be in the 1990s or 2000s, yet the results of the regional elections held in twelve autonomous communities in Spain in May 2023 certainly do not show a marginalization of the two mainstream parties that are still the first two political forces in the country also at subnational level. Acknowledging the existence and relevance of other parties (first and foremost, given the results of Vox), it can still be said that the two mainstream parties are still leading respectively the right and left bloc.

Four further points emerge from the analysis of the electoral results. First, the PP performed much better than the PSOE and it managed to emerge as the first party in most regional parliaments. Second, Vox gained relevant support compared to the previous round of elections, so much so that it is now more influential towards the PP and within the right-wing bloc. In fact, while in some cases the PP managed to form a regional government by its own, in some others it had to cooperate with Vox. This is even more the case given that (third point) Ciudadanos completely disappeared from the picture, by not getting even a seat in any regional parliament. Fourth and final point, within the left-bloc, besides PSOE there is a high degree of fragmentation, due to the many parties and lists running on their own and not in coalition. Perhaps also in light of that, before the 2023 general election, many of those parties decided to unite under the same cartel – Sumar – and eventually managed to be a valid competitor for the PSOE.

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