

Fear-inducing communications in Vox politics: 2022 elections in Castile and León and Andalusia

La comunicación del miedo en la política de Vox. Elecciones en Castilla y León y Andalucía 2022

Comunicação do medo na política Vox. Eleições em Castilla y León e Andalucía 2022

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Abstract

The regional and municipal elections are a great opportunity that political formations take advantage of, not only to try to achieve power, but also to show themselves to the electorate. Those held in Castilla y León in February 2022, as well as those of the Andalusian Parliament, in June of this year, have reported very different results for the right-wing



formation Vox, despite the short time distance that separates them. Santiago Abascal's party has maintained the same strategy that we have seen on previous occasions, typical of modern parties, using emotions as the element that permeates a considerable part of its communication. However, the use of an emotion that prevails over the others in the communication of the Vox candidates, it is about fear. The purpose of this research is to carry out an analysis, and subsequent comparison, of the use that Juan García-Gallardo, in Castilla y León, and Macarena Olona, in Andalucía, carry out, in their corresponding Twitter accounts, of this emotion, obtaining electoral results. very different in two highly representative territories of the national scene, to which many media outlets have granted the power to turn into predictors of what could happen in the next general elections in Spain, scheduled for the end of 2023. Similarly, this study aims to reveal whether the two candidates, in both electoral campaigns, blame the fear on the same subjects, parties or groups before the society to which they are addressing.

Keywords: Political communication; emotions; fear; Vox; Twitter; speech

Resumen

Las elecciones autonómicas y municipales resultan una gran oportunidad que aprovechan las formaciones políticas, no solo para intentar alcanzar el poder, sino también para mostrarse ante el electorado. Las celebradas en Castilla y León en febrero de 2022, así como las del Parlamento de Andalucía, en junio del mismo año, han reportado resultados muy diferentes para la formación de derechas Vox, a pesar de la breve distancia temporal que las separa. El partido de Abascal ha mantenido la misma estrategia que le hemos visto en ocasiones anteriores, propia de los partidos modernos, empleando las emociones como el elemento que impregna una parte considerable de su comunicación. Sin embargo, la utilización de una emoción prima sobre las demás en la comunicación de los García-Gallardo y de Olona, se trata del miedo. La presente investigación tiene como fin realizar un análisis, y posterior comparación, del empleo que el candidato, en Castilla y León, y la candidata, en Andalucía, realizan, en sus correspondientes cuentas de Twitter, de esta emoción, obteniendo resultados electorales muy diferentes en dos territorios altamente representativos del panorama nacional, a los que muchos medios de comunicación han concedido la potestad de convertir en pronosticadores de lo que podría ocurrir en elecciones generales cuya celebración tenga lugar posteriormente en el país. Del mismo modo, este estudio pretende revelar si los dos candidatos, en ambas campañas electorales, responsabilizan del miedo a los mismos sujetos, partidos o colectivos ante la sociedad a la que se dirigen.

Palabras clave: Comunicación política; emociones; miedo; Vox; Twitter; discurso

Resumo

As eleições regionais e municipais são uma grande oportunidade que as formações políticas aproveitam, não apenas para tentar chegar ao poder, mas também para se mostrar ao eleitorado. As realizadas em Castilla y León em fevereiro de 2022, bem como as do Parlamento andaluz, em junho deste ano, relataram resultados muito diferentes

para a formação de direita Vox, apesar da curta distância de tempo que os separa. A festa de Santiago Abascal manteve a mesma estratégia que vimos em ocasiões anteriores, típica das festas modernas, utilizando a emoção como elemento que permeia uma parte considerável da sua comunicação. No entanto, o uso de uma emoção que prevalece sobre as demais na comunicação dos candidatos ao Vox, tratase do medo. O objetivo desta pesquisa é realizar uma análise e posterior comparação do uso que Juan García-Gallardo, em Castilla y León, e Macarena Olona, na Andalusia, realizam, em suas contas correspondentes no Twitter, desta emoção, obtendo resultados eleitorais muito diferentes em dois territórios altamente representativos do cenário nacional, aos quais muitos meios de comunicação deram o poder de se transformar em preditores do que poderia acontecer nas próximas eleições gerais na Espanha, marcadas para o final de 2023. Da mesma forma, este estudo visa revelar se os dois candidatos, em ambas as campanhas eleitorais, culpam o medo nos mesmos sujeitos, partidos ou grupos perante a sociedade a que se dirigem.

Palavras-chave: comunicação política; emoções; medo; Vox; Twitter; fala

1. Introduction

1.1. The success of emotions in modern-day society

The momentousness that emotions have taken on in recent years, fostering them from the earliest educational stages, is undeniable. Colom and Fernández Bennassar (2009) explain that ‘while it used to be emotions that frightened theorists, now it would seem that the lack of an emotional mind is what turns out to be dangerous’ (p. 238). We can notice this emotional development across all age ranges, including in the work environment, where emotional intelligence, as Cruz Portilla (2020) explains, ‘has a significant influence on job satisfaction given that understanding your own emotions and those of others induces a positive attitude at work and leads to good interpersonal relations’ (p. 87).

Several authors have created emotional scales that group the different experiences that human beings can perceive. Jin et al. (2014) speak of: rage, anxiety, apprehension, confusion, contempt, disgust, shame, fear, guilt, sadness, embarrassment, surprise, sympathy. For Ekman (1971), they are: anger, fear, sadness, enjoyment, surprise and disgust. Plutchik (1980) speaks of eight basic emotions and eight advanced ones, as well as attributing an adaptive function to emotions, given that they emerge from reactions that are produced as the result of humans’ exposure to concrete situations. Bisquerra (2003) explains that emotions are ‘a complex state of the body characterised by excitation or perturbation that makes one predisposed to an organised response. Emotions are generated as a response to an external or internal event’ (p. 12).

Marcus et al. (2007) speak of two development systems: one of 'disposition', which monitors and evaluates your interactions with the rest of the community, and a 'surveillance' system, which lets you perceive aspects of the environment, strengthening your adaptive learning and letting you repeat things that were successful in the past and change those things that were not. In the political arena, they explain, 'the emotions that drive forward the dynamics of surveillance with the greatest clarity are those associated with anxiety, worry and fear' (p. 127). In this regard, Mudde (2019) comments that far-right parties create a discourse in which they make an issue a crime for which foreigners are responsible. However, these parties do not blame immigrants as much as supranational organisations, such as Europe and Brussels, which they consider the elites, due to their lax policies that let these citizens into these territories (2019, p. 34).

Emotions emerge as a response to different exposure processes, but also due to learning that is generated involuntarily, a consequence of constant exposure to elements that arouse these responses. Referring to the political sector, it is notable to mention that emotions such as fear are employed to attempt to produce a response of rejecting immigration, as well as rejecting those – who having the authority to stop it – choose to allow it and manage it.

1.2. Controlling emotions in politics

After becoming aware of the importance of emotions, controlling them has become one of the objectives of the gurus of persuasion, unseating attempts to appeal to reason, which is typical in traditional advertising. Garcillán López-Rúa (2015) divides persuasion techniques into two: 'rational and emotional. Some rational techniques would include argumentation, logic and rhetoric, while emotional techniques would be advertising, faith, imagination, propaganda and seduction' (p. 464).

Emotions are employed to create more enduring memories of something, as García-Hípola and Pérez-Castaños (2021) explain, 'because we tend to remember things depending on the emotion we felt' (p. 24). The triumph of emotions is irrefutable in the field of political communications, contributing to creating remembrance in voters' memories.

Innerarity (2018) blames the current context of uncertainty, mistrust and instability on this boom in the emotional component of politics, giving rise to 'exasperated, anxious and irritable societies' (pp. 45-49). This setting, bereft of security and reliability, is where Sartori (2012) introduces the 'emotionalisation of politics', consisting of a way to do politics that is subject to creating and disseminating emotional bombshells.

García-Hípola and Pérez-Castaños (2021) agree that 'in this new, dynamic and ever-changing scenario, emotions seem to have been established as the unifying theme in this new way that some political parties have of communicating' (p. 23). For his part, Lassalle-

Ruíz (2017) views the implementation of this political-emotional culture in modern-day societies as the result of a self-perception that they have been stripped of the successes attained, and he links this trend to the growth of new populist parties (2017).

Gutiérrez-Rubí (2009) explains that 'To lead change, it is indispensable to take charge of others' states of mind. The key to new political communications is the emotional discourse: reaching voters' hearts. Without words and actions that arouse emotion, discourses cannot be articulated' (p. 10). Similarly, Méndez-Muros (2021) justifies that 'for someone to lean towards a product, an idea, a political agenda, etc., those emotions must be activated that motivate them to make one decision or another' (p. 372). Emotions are awoken when they manage to establish a connection that stimulates voters' interest in the party's aspirations.

Crespo-Martínez et al. speak of 'emotionally activated parties' to refer to parties that convey a large number of emotions, adding that, in the specific case of Vox, its electorate has a larger emotional than ideological component (Crespo-Martínez et al., 2022, p 139). In the case of Vox, persuasion attempts have been detected that have made one specific emotion prevail over all others: we're talking about fear. In this regard, Aladro-Vico and Requeijo-Rey (2020) explain:

The party claims that it is protecting voters from fear, but it is the first to encourage it in its speeches and complaints. The strategy of constantly alluding to this feeling is introduced and repetitively brought to the front line, as can be noticed in the motto: 'No fear of anything or anybody!' (Aladro-Vico and Requeijo-Rey, 2020, p. 219)

It merits adding that, to execute the process to transmit emotions, parties today make use of what Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) defined as the 'mediatisation of politics'. While Mazzoleni (2001) himself explains that this mediatisation is mainly about 'the ways in which political players relate to their counterparts and to citizens' (p. 33), the authors also stress the dangers of its excesses.

The excessive mediatisation of political leadership and of political practices, with citizens forced to become consumers and spectators, and the fragmentation of political participation induced by new information and communication technologies, can distort democracy running smoothly (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 250).

Among the tools that contribute to this mediatisation of politics, the Twitter platform looms large. Vázquez-Barrio and Campos-Zabala (2020) show that 'the expansion of the Twitter social network causes a change of paradigm in the field of political communications, becoming a speaker larger than traditional media in the 20th century' (p. 57). Vox is not an exception in using this tool to bring its message to the masses and imbue it with highly personal content. Van Aelst et al. (2012) speak of two types of personalisation that are closely related: individualisation, consisting of the growth of the figure of politicians in media coverage, in detriment to the image of parties and institutions; and privatisation,

through which – he explains – ‘the politician is no longer presented only as a legislator or a representative, but instead as a devoted father or a music lover’ (p. 13).

1.3. Fear

‘A prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind gaining the reputation for cruelty’ (Machiavelli, 1971, p. 34).

Caramelo (2020) explains that ‘although fear is in principle an unpleasant emotion, we must distance ourselves from its dangers, as it is a mechanism of adaptation that makes us react immediately’ (p. 285), which lends it the adaptation capacity mentioned earlier. Valero-Cedeño et al. (2020) also stated that ‘it is normal and healthy to have fears, as they are the brain’s emotional responses to a wide range of situations that could cause us problems, thus preventing us from exposing ourselves to that which could be dangerous. Fear is the main emotion of human beings’ (p. 65). Cárdenas and Lozano (2020) explain that it is the emotion via which we are activated to avoid risk situations and to guarantee our survival (p. 86). Fear acts as a mechanism that ensures that human beings remain alert, although when a reasonable dose is exceeded, it takes on a different tenor.

Bauman (2006) explains that fear is a feeling that human beings share with animals in response to a threat and that, in both cases, the reaction is limited to two options: flight or fight (p. 11). Alastuey (2005) also comments that ‘fear is a purely instrumental emotion typical of situations in which the agent faces a superior power and anticipates potential negative consequences to him- or herself’ (p. 62). Nussbaum (2014) explains that fear can be stimulated through a process of association, after first classifying certain groups as threats, or relating a known concept with an unknown one. The author refers to the combination of rhetoric and politics as a manoeuvre aimed at revealing dangers, sometimes real – like in the case of wars – and at other times nonexistent.

Fear of the unknown can create insecurity. Bauman (2006) defines fear as ‘the name that we give to our uncertainty: to our ignorance of the threat and to what is to be done – what can and what can’t be – to stop it in its tracks, or to fight it back if stopping it is beyond our power’ (p. 10). To Bauman, fear is liquid, becoming unpredictable and uncontrollable. With this definition in mind, Mateo-Girón (2008) considers fear ‘the other name we give to our defencelessness’ (p. 20).

Cárdenas and Lozano (2020) speak of politicians using fear as a persuasion strategy, whose goal is to make society feel impotent to face their fears (pp. 85-91). Nussbaum agrees that ‘fear is a centrifugal force: it dissipates a people’s potentially united energy. What leaders say at these times can make a big difference and bring together citizens around a common project’ (Nussbaum, 2014, pp. 243-379). Thus, a fear that is produced

can forge new unions around a leader or a proposition, acting in coordination against the fear, provided that the group can be understood as having a real possibility of victory.

In recent years, several examples of practicing fear politics can be found. Some of the most studied are those promoted by radical right parties, taking advantage of the native population's ignorance of foreign ethnic groups and cultures, to introduce fear that encourages xenophobia. Arabi (2020) explains it like this:

The neofascist machinery shows its followers a negative image of immigrants. They are presented as a criminal gang and stigmatised by associating them with the economic and social hardships that their countries suffer from: lack of jobs, delinquency, loss of quality of life, loss of cultural identity, etcetera (p. 69)

Mudde (2016) also sees signs of right-wing parties linking fear and immigration:

The threat of terrorism and anxiety due to a massive wave of immigrants from the Muslim world, along with the widespread belief that the EU puts up obstacles instead of helping handle these problems, have created a perfect storm, especially by improving the position of right-wing populists in many countries (p. 25).

George W. Bush's campaign after the 9/11 attacks merits mention, when the former US president spoke of a 'war on terror'. A diffuse and never-ending terror that, as Lakoff (2007) explains, 'presupposes that the masses are terrified, while orange alerts, along with other government measures and rhetoric, keep the framework of terror alive' (p. 70), leaving the handling of fear in the hands of the political elite.

Cárdenas (2020) corroborates the good results that the elites can report from using fear: 'Appealing to fear or to xenophobia can end up being very effective, making a highly positive result likely, seeing it reflected both at an electoral level and in the number of product sales' (p. 78). One of the direct consequences is citizens delegating responsibilities to their leaders, when they feel they are incapable, individually, of facing the danger or, in other words, when they acknowledge their vulnerability. The dispatchers of the messages that create these fears are, in turn, those who affirm that they have solutions to them, which let them achieve the social backing they yearn for.

On social media, politicians find an ally to adapt and broadcast these messages. Arcila-Calderón et al. (2020) assures that social media are plagued xenophobic statements that are presented through official discourses (p. 35). For Vox, and more specifically the use the party makes of Twitter, Lava-Santos (2021) explains that 'the communications of this party on Twitter are characterised by having a heavy ideological component; hate messages towards the Arab culture and towards the territorial crisis, have a large presence on its official account' (p. 58).

In light of these statements, we will now try to answer whether the Vox party could obtain any yields from the execution of political-communication strategies, supported by fear, in the analysed elections. To do so, we will delve into questions such as: if the emotion of fear was employed equally in the discourses of both campaigns, what the results were in each case, and whether they both blame the same players for invoking this emotion.

1.4. Objectives

The main objective of this research consists of conducting a comparative analysis of the use that Vox leaders, Juan García-Gallardo and Macarena Olona, have made of fear, including it either directly or indirectly in their discourses on Twitter, during the electoral campaigns for the elections in Castile and León on 13 February 2022, and for the Andalusian Parliament on 19 June of the same year.

A secondary objective consists of studying the discourses that both candidates employed on Twitter during their respective campaigns, to check whether the existence and proliferation of this fear are attributed to the same subjects, groups and organisations.

2. Material and methods

In order to achieve these objectives, a quantitative analysis was undertaken of both leaders' discourses on the Twitter platform, during the pertinent two weeks of each campaign: from 28 January to 13 February, for Juan García-Gallardo, and from 2 to 19 June, for Macarena Olona. This method is defined as the 'systematic and replicable examination of the symbols of communication' (Aranda, 2010, p. 212) and also as a 'research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the evident content of the communications' (Velázquez, 2011, p. 117). It shall work the complete contents that both leaders published in their profiles on the platform during the campaigns, so that we can detect the inclusion of fear-related factors.

The operationalisation and coding of the concept of 'fear' were also created, based on the way in which it is included in the candidates' discourses through their Twitter posts, and the objectives we hope to resolve, giving rise to their identification in the five contextual models detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Presentations of fear

Presentation of fear	
Presentation	Details
Direct presentation	To name fear literally or directly in speech
Current fear	Events that motivate fear in the present day
Future fear	Hypothetical threats that create fear or uncertainty in the future
Fear personification	People or groups that establish and/or spread fear among citizens
Vox as a solution	Appearance of Vox in the speech as a solution to fears

Source: own elaboration

With respect to current and future fears, categories were created that classify how Vox employed fear, after we determined that there are 12 main topics, as summarised below in Table 2.

Table 2. Categories of fear

Categories of fear	
Vehicle of fear	Details
Immigration	As a phenomenon and in reference to the questioning and loss of the sovereignty of Spain as a result of support or concessions granted to foreign territories
Left	Policies that also Vox refers to as 'progressive', 'communist' or 'social communist'
Climate - Agenda 2030	Climate activism and sustainable policies that Vox refers to as 'climate religion'
Youths	References to this group as those who suffer or will suffer
Labor	Fear shown through work, contracts, unemployment and lack of opportunities
Family	Fear for the lack of protection of its members, the lack of aid or the low birth rate
Depopulation	Fear for the demographic, agricultural, livestock, hunting and primary sector situation
Globalism	Fear as a consequence of the country's submission to supranational organizations
Feminism	Laws that, according to Vox, criminalize part of the population. Also as the vulnerability of women and the collectivization of gays and lesbians
Indoctrination	Imposition of ideas in schools tending to the thought of the left or contrary to that of the right
Economy	Fear through economic waste, misuse of public accounts or the granting of favors
Government pacts	(only included in the use of future fears)

Source: own elaboration

To select the tweets of both candidates, and of the two campaigns, Twitter's 'advanced search' tool was used, restricting the tweets to the aforesaid dates. After exporting them to Excel, we then did datamining, detecting, extracting and compiling the required information by using the tool. Subsequently, and also with the help of this software, the pertinent math operations were performed to obtain the results and then depict them graphically. The entire process was executed using computer tools that remove any subjective feature, thus ensuring reliability in the results obtained.

3. Research results

3.1. Analysis of the discourses of Juan García-Gallardo and Macarena Olona on Twitter

On 21 June 2022, García-Gallardo had 30,505 followers on Twitter, compared to Olona's 390,172. During the campaign that culminated with the holding of the autonomous community elections in Castile and León, on 13 February 2022, the leader of Vox made 71 tweets while, in Andalusia, the candidate made 221 tweets during the campaign leading up to the elections for the Andalusian Parliament on 19 June 2022. The campaign in which García-Gallardo participated was for a 17-day period, while that of Olona was 18 days.

3.1.1. Analysis of fear in the electoral campaign in Castile and León

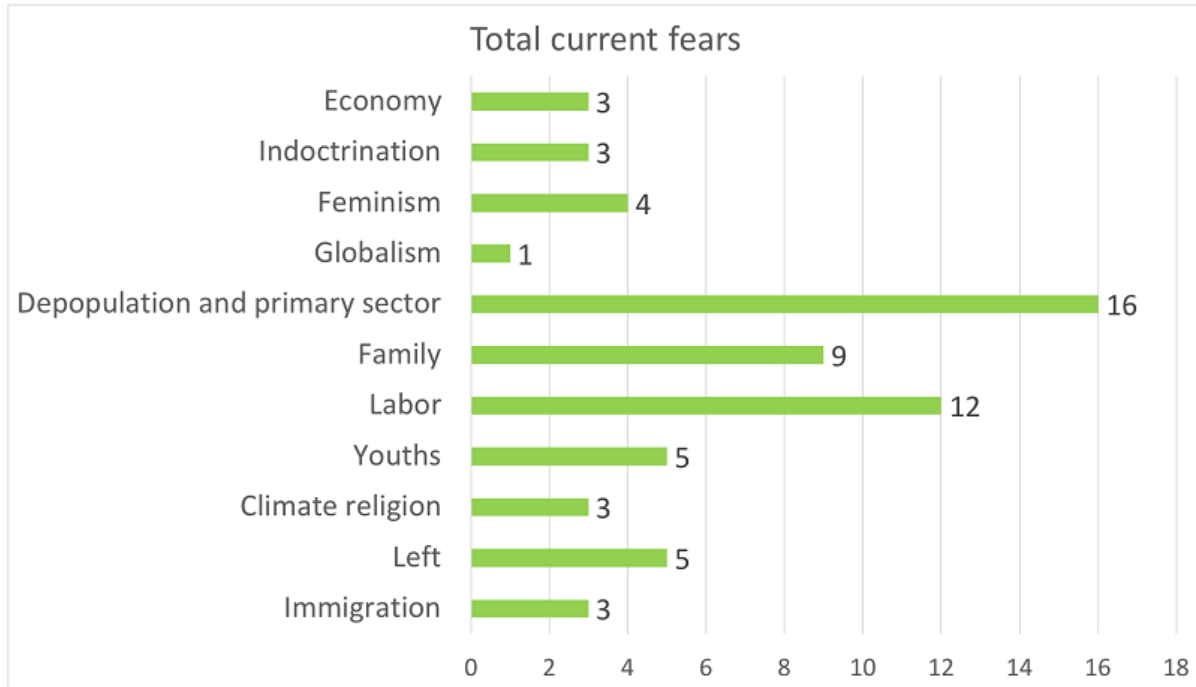
In this campaign, Vox decided on the claim 'sow', aimed at primary sector workers and showing votes for Vox as seeds that would later bear fruits. The opposite of sowing, explains Abascal, is what the rest of the parties longed for on 13 February – the harvest – referring to the trickery involved in promising short-term results in politics.

Among the 71 posts García-Gallardo made on Twitter, the presence of fear was detected in 43 of them, representing 60.56% of the total. In these 43 posts, fear was directly and literally stated in García-Gallardo's discourse three times, or 6.98%. This number represents 4.23% in comparison with his total posts on Twitter during the electoral campaign period, meaning out of the 71 tweets.

Fear, as a current feature, is also intrinsically present in García-Gallardo's discourse, albeit indirectly. In 32 of the 71 posts, fear was included as an emotion that is happening at present, representing 45.07% of total posts, while it was positioned in future contexts in 14 posts, or 19.72% of the total messages published. There can be, and this occurs, posts in which fear is presented in both ways.

Regarding the different ways in which the Vox candidate included fear in his communications on Twitter, a total of 64 initiatives including this emotion were detected through different concepts, thus achieving its indirect positioning. Graph 1 summarises the total distribution of the use of fear in these 64 posts, according to the concept employed to introduce them.

Graph 1. Total current fears

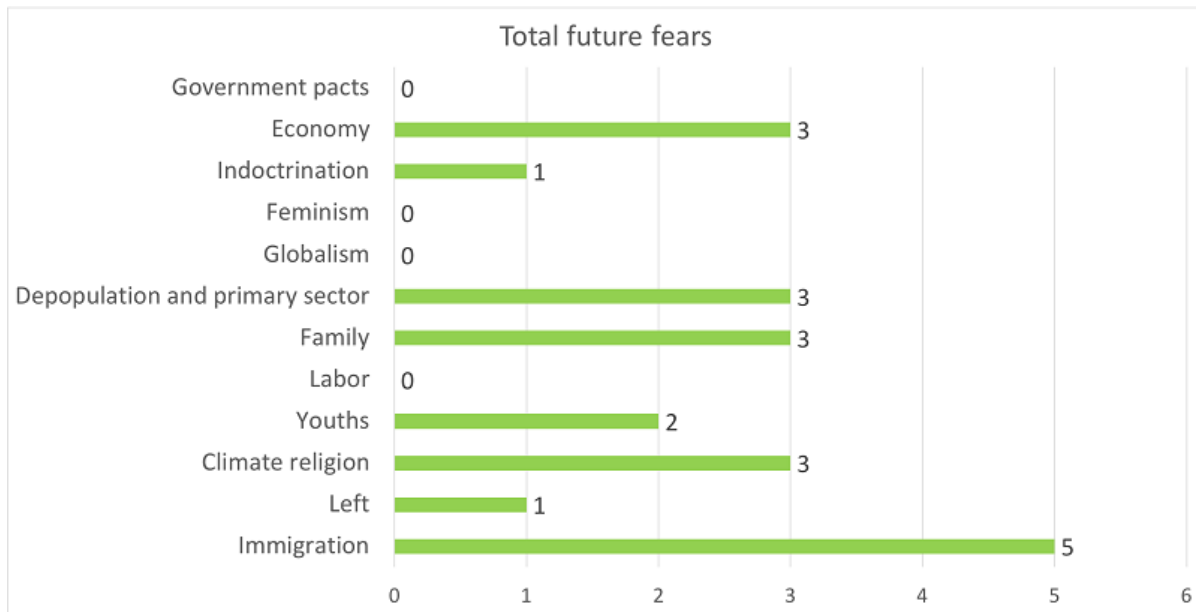


Source: own elaboration

In some tweets, more than one instance of indirectly positioning fear was detected in a present-day setting. We confirmed that depopulation, employment and the family are the main contexts that the Vox candidate used to introduce fear, inserting it into the present.

Regarding future fear, this was found in 14 of the 71 posts, representing 19.72% of total messages. There were 21 attempts found to present this emotion in an upcoming time. Graph 2 shows the total distribution of the inclusion of fear in the future, inserting it indirectly through these concepts.

Graph 2. Total future fears

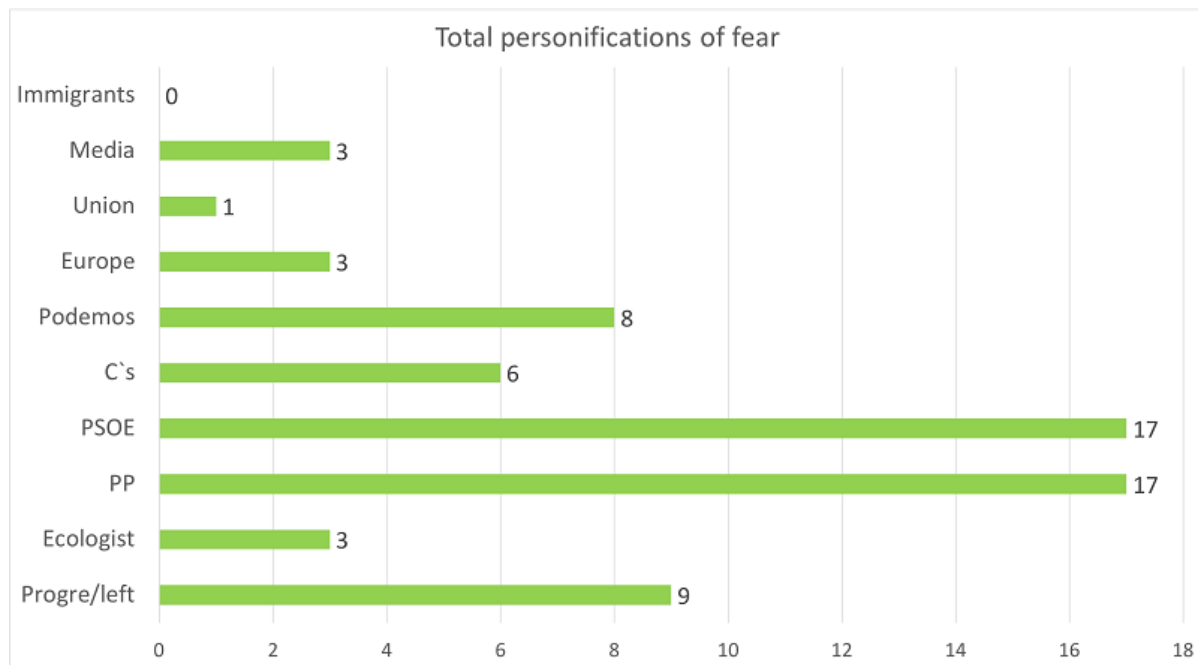


Source: own elaboration

For García-Gallardo, immigration is the main threat that will have an impact on the future. The Vox candidate positions fear mainly on this topic, making it the number one problem that Castile and León residents should fear, while a spreading of fear was detected to a lesser degree through other subjects like the family, the economy, depopulation and 'climate religion'. It is noteworthy that feminism and globalism were not mentioned to implant future fears.

Regarding the personification of fear, this was found in 32 of the 71 posts, representing 45.07% of cases. Like in the previous analyses, more than one responsible party or generator of fear can be found per tweet. In this case, the total number of subjects, groups and organisations that García-Gallardo blames for these fears jumps to 67. Graph 3 depicts the total results.

Graph 3. Total personifications of fear



Source: own elaboration

As was to be expected, the main players whom García-Gallardo blames for the present and future fears of Castile and León citizens were political rivals. The Vox candidate holds both parties equally responsible, much more than the progressive left and the party Podemos. Immigrants, as such, were not blamed for the inherent threat, given that García-Gallardo did not point them out as promoters of fear, unlike Europe, present among these stokers of fear, although to a lesser degree than others.

3.1.2. Analysis of fear in the electoral campaign in Andalusia

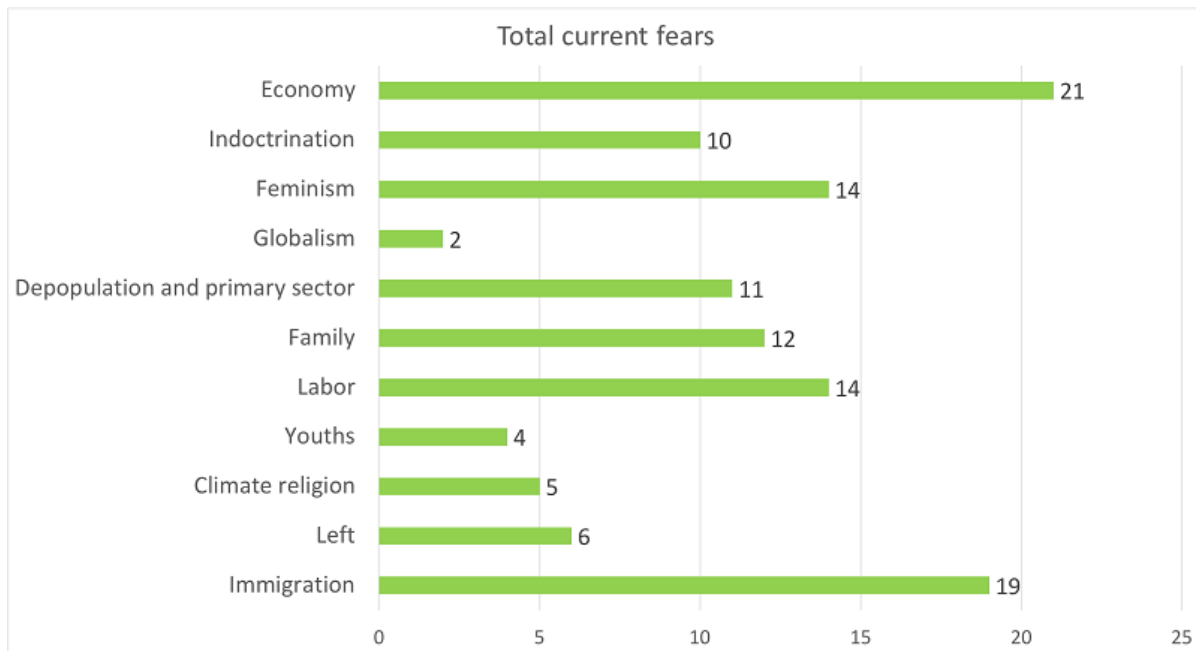
In the elections for the Andalusian Parliament on 19 June 2022, Vox chose the claim 'Real Change'. A motto that demonstrates – despite the results obtained in Andalusia in 2018 that gave power to the right – that the expected change has still not taken place. Olona speaks of fear in 95 tweets out of the 221 she made on her Twitter profile, or 42.99%. Of these 95 posts, seven present fear directly or literally, equal to 7.37% of them, or 3.17% if we scale the total messages spread by the Vox leader.

Here fear is also presented indirectly, placing it in a modern-day setting, in 75 posts of the 221 total, representing 33.94%. Indirect fear in future scenarios was found in 26 posts,

equal to 11.77%. Like the previous case, it merits mention that posts were found in which fear was presented in both ways.

The number of items counted for the Vox candidate to indirectly insert fear into present contexts reached 118. Graph 4 summarises the total distribution of posts in which Macarena used fear, through the concepts analysed herein, letting her put it indirectly into her posts.

Graph 4. Total current fears

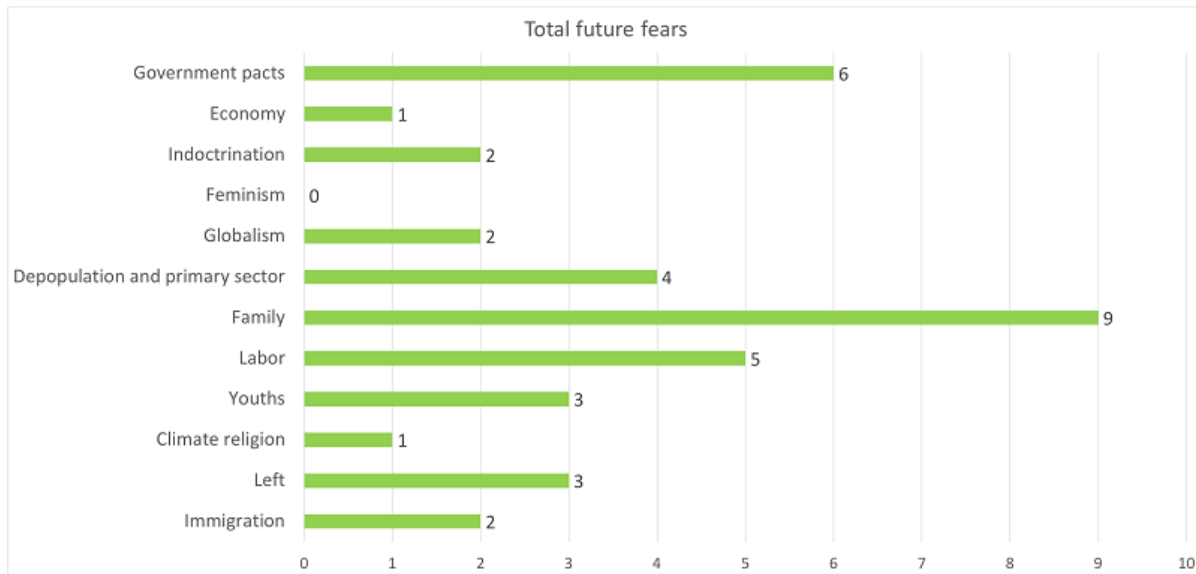


Source: own elaboration

The economy is the main recipient that Olona uses to speak of the fear that the Andalusians are currently experiencing. Nonetheless, immigration is ranked second, with only two fewer mentions. Both are the preferred instruments of the Vox candidate for this proposition, above feminism and the labour issue, situating them as current problems that Andalusia is already suffering and fearful of.

Regarding the indirect positioning of fear in events yet to be experienced, a total of 38 attempts were found, divided between 26 tweets, meaning that this practice appeared more than once in several posts. Graph 5 shows the distribution of the total results for the concepts in which fear indirectly orbits, in Olona's discourse on Twitter.

Graph 5. Total future fears

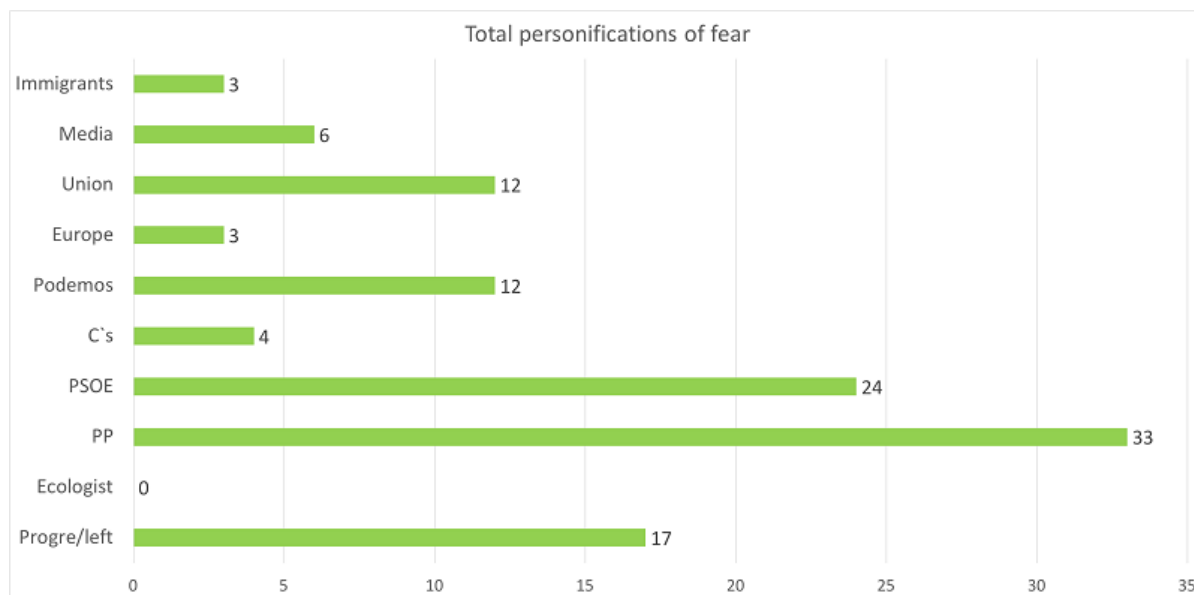


Source: own elaboration

Macarena makes use of the family as the main bastion for inserting fear of the future. The uncertainty to which this group is vulnerable is repeated nine times, followed by government agreements, with six mentions. Once again, fear of the future was never focused on feminism, meaning that the candidate did not employ this topic as a potential threat. Olona herself published some tweets with excerpts from the televised debate, where she is seen addressing the left-wing candidates, declaring that they have little time left to keep their feminist policies.

Regarding the personification of fear, in 72 of the 221 posts Macarena made, she blamed one person, one group or one organisation for the existence or expansion of this emotion. That represents 32.58% of the candidate's total posts. In parallel, in these 72 tweets, 114 attempts were found to personify fear. Graph 6 shows the distribution of the personification of fear made by the Vox leader.

Graph 6. Total personifications of fear



Source: own elaboration

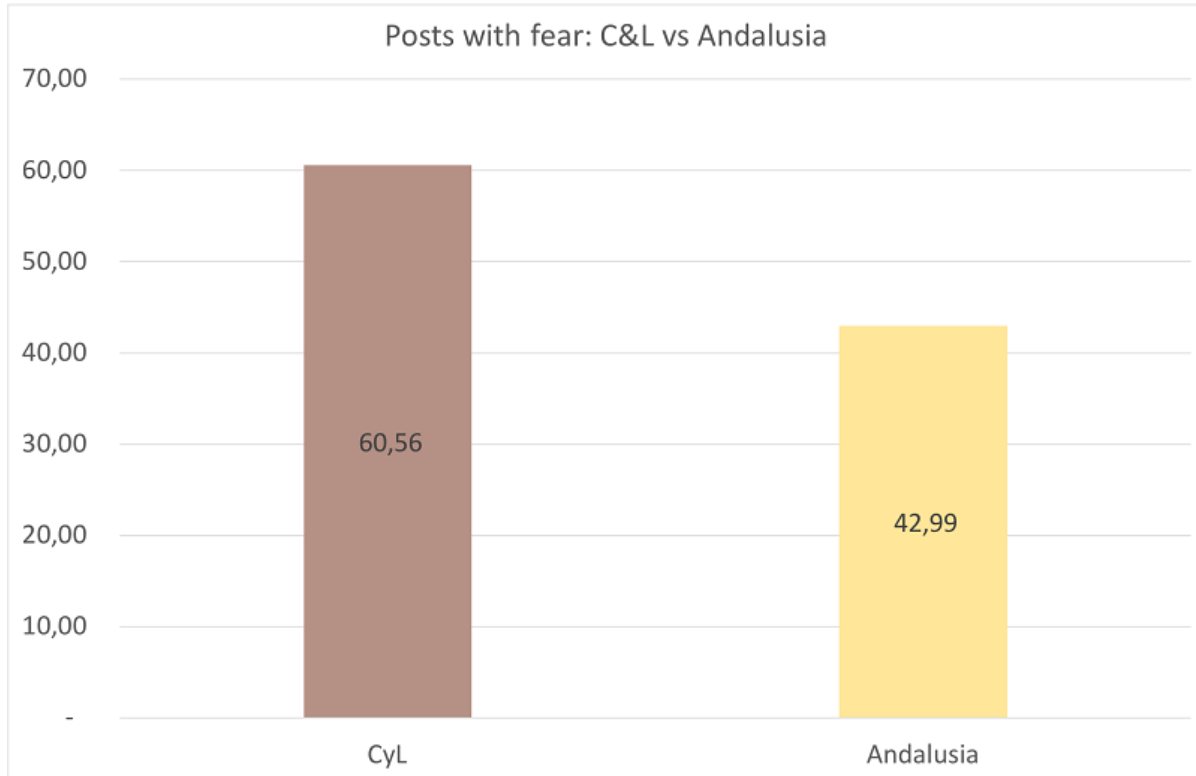
Despite its significant proximity on the political spectrum, Macarena blamed the PP as the party most responsible for the fears of Andalusian society. With considerably fewer mentions, the candidate pointed to the PSOE and, in third and fourth places, we respectively find the left and Podemos, in a draw with the unions. We found no environmentalist associations among the main promoters of fear in Olona's discourse, although her pointing the finger at the media is noteworthy.

3.1.3. Comparison of Castile and León vs Andalusia

Based on these data, and due to the large differences separating both leaders, the results shown below are provided in percentages to make their comparison simpler, avoiding the difference caused by each candidate's total number of tweets, endowing their contents with greater importance.

As shown in Graph 7, the presence of fear was detected, in at least one of its forms, in García-Gallardo's Twitter posts in 60.56% of them, while the percentage drops to 42.99% for Olona.

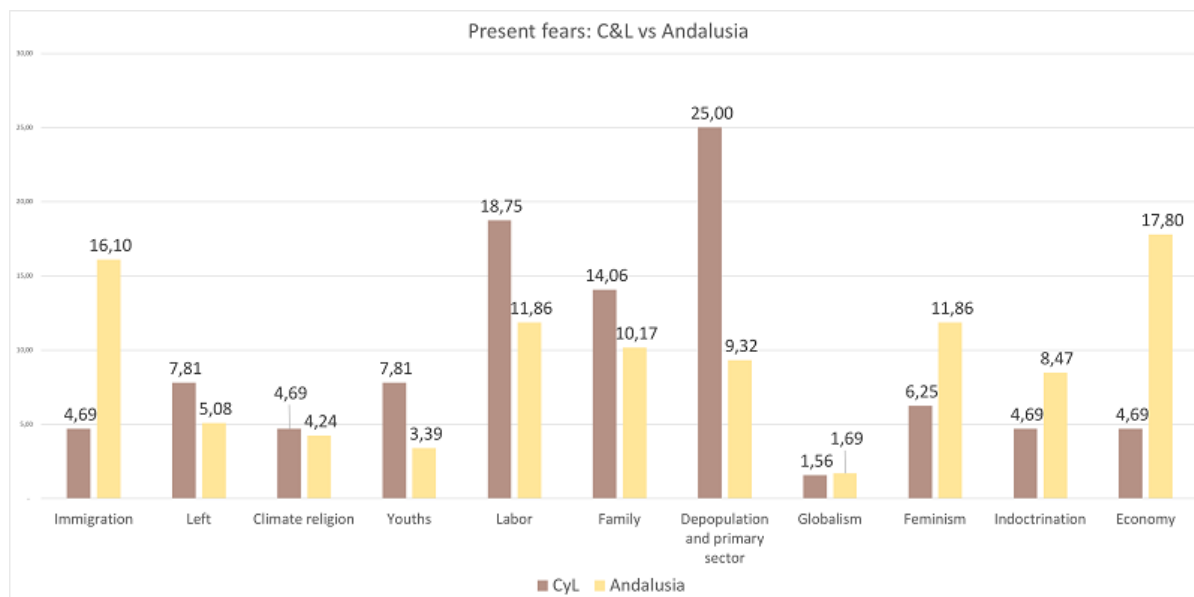
Graph 7. Posts with fear, C&L vs Andalusia



Source: own elaboration

Direct allusions to fear were detected in 4.23% of cases in the Castile and León campaign, compared to 3.17% for the Andalusia campaign. Indirect mentions of fear in a present-day context total 45.07% for Castile and León, compared to 33.94% for Andalusia, leading to a distribution of indirect fear through the concepts depicted in Graph 8.

Graph 8. Present fears, C&L vs Andalusia



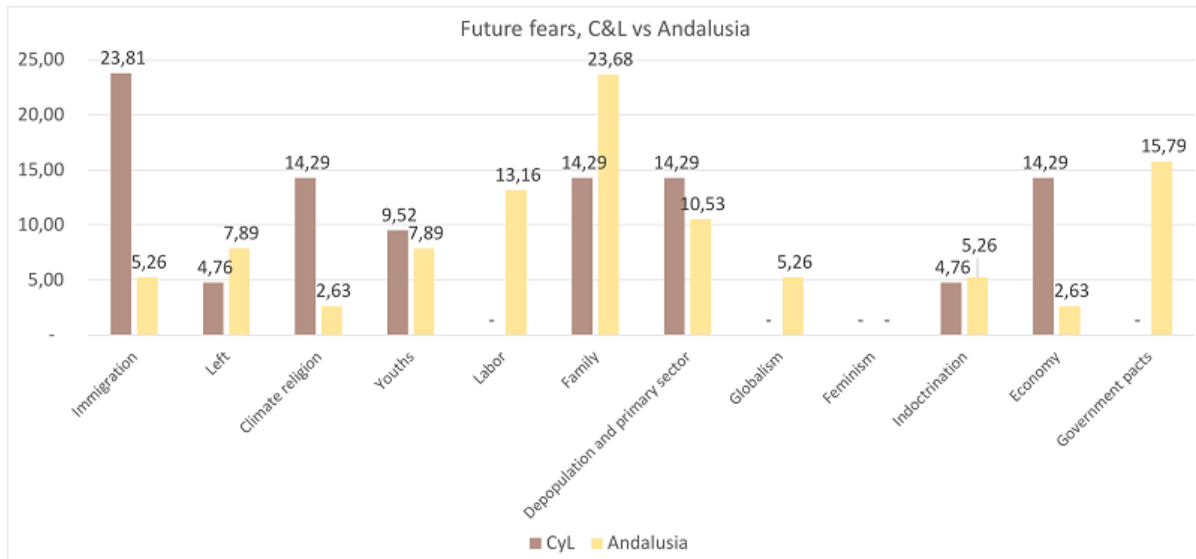
Source: own elaboration

Of the 64 posts to which we referred, 25% addressed depopulation and the primary sector, the main topic over which García-Gallardo made communications based on present day fear. In second place is the labour issue, present in 19% of the 64 tweets that includes: work in the rest of sectors, unemployment, wages, etc. In third place, García-Gallardo positioned arguments that produce fear currently through the concept of family, representing 14%. Following, there are resources like the use of fear through the young and left-wing, with 8%.

Olona positioned fear indirectly and in a current setting, primarily through the economy. She did it in 17.80% of the total cases in which she introduced some factor that encourages fear in the present. Almost at the same level, in 16.10% of these cases, was fear based on immigration. In third place, we verified that Macarena equally alludes to the labour environment and to feminism, with each standing at 12%. Promoting fear through the family, with a 10% presence, as well as depopulation with 9%, were next in these results.

Regarding the indirect use of fear, placing it in the future, García-Gallardo employed this practice in 19.72% of his total posts, while this percentage was 11.77% for Olona. Graph 9 breaks down the concepts that both candidates employed to indirectly put fear into their discourses.

Graph 9. Future fears, C&L vs Andalusia



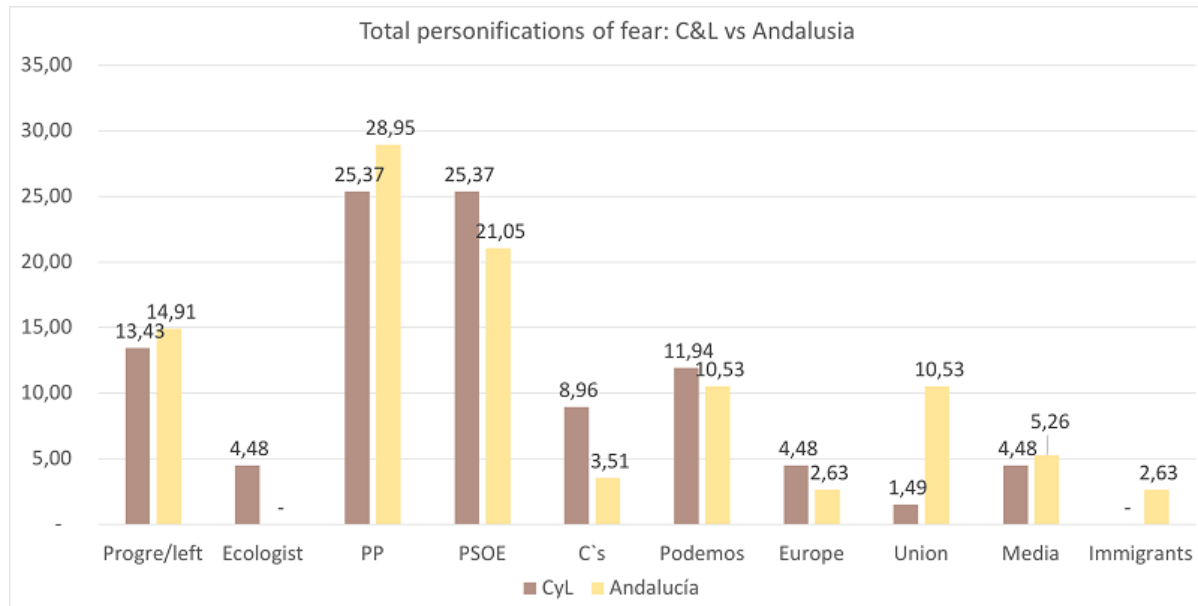
Source: own elaboration

For García-Gallardo, fear mainly resides with immigration, accumulating 24% of the total in the 21 posts in which the Vox leader included future fears. Second place goes to a draw between four concepts, all with 14% usage frequency: what Vox calls ‘climate religion’, the family, depopulation and the economy.

For Olona, future fears were primarily detected in the concept of family, representing 24% of the cases in which the candidate used this term. In second place, with 16%, we find fear in the uncertainty of the agreements that the parties could make after the elections. Fear of job uncertainty is also notable, standing at 13% or third place, as well as the demographic issue, with 10%.

If we look at the distribution of results referring to the personification of fear in both electoral campaigns, we verified that while García-Gallardo implemented it in 45.07% of his posts, Olona did it in 32.58% of cases. Graph 10 shows the different public figures or groups that both leaders pointed out to blame them on the fear.

Graph 10. Total personifications of fear, C&L vs Andalusia



Source: own elaboration

Both in the Castile and León and the Andalusian campaigns, the two parties that make up bipartidism (centre-left Socialist Workers Party, PSOE, and right-wing People's Party, PP) were proclaimed as the main promoters of fear. In Castile and León, both with 25% of the total of the 67 people responsible for promoting fear. In Andalusia, the PP totalled 29%, while the PSOE figure stood at 21%. Distant, with 13% in García Gallardo's discourse and 15% in Olona's, were the times the left was blamed as encouraging policies, ideologies, actions and discourses typical of this trend. Both candidates also matched in placing Podemos in fourth place, in a draw with unions in Andalusia. Thus, there is significant homogeneity in this result.

Moreover, the use of the Vox party as the solution to fear was found in both candidates' Twitter posts. In García-Gallardo's discourse, Vox appeared as the solution to fear in 19 tweets, representing 26.76% of the total. However, if we restrict ourselves only to those posts in which the Vox leader directly or indirectly mentions fear (43 tweets), this percentage rises to 44.19%. This, though, does not mean that the party's name did not appear in the rest of the posts, just that it wasn't always done to solve a situation of fear or insecurity.

On her part, in Olona's discourse on Twitter, the presence of Vox as a solution to the fears suggested was detected in a total of 34 posts. This represents 15.39% of the total issued by the party spokesperson, a number that jumps to 41.46%, if we scale it to the total number of tweets in which Vox directly or indirectly introduces the fear factor.

4. Discussion

The present research was instigated based on two main objectives: to determine how Vox makes use of fear in its discourse on Twitter, through its candidates for the presidency, both for the autonomous community elections in Castile and León, on 13 February 2022, and for the Andalusian Parliament, on 19 June of the same year. On another note, the second objective aimed at analysing both candidates' posts to verify if they attributed the existence and proliferation of fear to the same individuals or groups.

Regarding the first objective, and remembering the words of Sartori (2012) on the predominance of emotions in politics, by Crespo-Martínez et al. (2022), on their presence in the Vox discourse, and by Nussbaum (2014) on the role of fear to generate groupings, we have verified that this party regularly makes use of the fear emotion, particularly indirectly and in the present day. Nonetheless, it is true that the results favour García-Gallardo in introducing this emotion more, both in present and in future scenarios.

Both candidates reveal similarities in the vehicles employed to introduce fear in their discourses, although they did it differently. Immigration and the family were set out as the two related and priority concepts employed by both candidates, the former as a threat to the latter. García-Gallardo situated fear in the family first, because of low birth rates and, in the future, positioned it with immigration as the threat that would offset this low natality with its arrival. On her part, Macarena put immigration as a fear that Andalusia is already beset with, while the family will be endangered in the near future, due to the entry of immigrants who cause insecurity, as Mudde (2019) explained, and job shortages. The labour issue in Andalusia and depopulation in Castile and León are precisely the two arguments both candidates employed for placing fear, after immigration and the family.

We conclude – answering the questions that we made at the beginning of this study – that the use of fear has indeed given Vox political yields, especially in Castile and León, where despite making fewer tweets, the candidate turned to this strategy more, obtaining enough seats to take government office. For Andalusia, despite undergoing an increase in the number of seats, this was not enough, although it is true that the use of fear was more limited in this campaign.

Regarding the personification of fear, both campaigns are totally even, with the People's Party blamed first for this emotion, followed by the Socialist Party, then the left in third place and, in fourth, the party Podemos.

Finally, if all posts are counted in which fear is included, Vox outcomes are 44.19% in García-Gallardo's tweets, compared to 41.46% in Olona's posts, thus complying with the comments of Aladro-Vico and Requeijo-Rey (2020) about the party revealing itself as a protector of citizens from the fear that the party itself had previously presented.

To summarise the findings, while Vox enemies were identical in both cases, a more intensive use of fear by García-Gallardo in Castile and León provided Vox with better results than more frequent communications, like those executed by Macarena Olona in Andalusia. Despite this, we corroborated that Vox acts as an extreme right party, making fear an emotion with a heavy presence in its discourse.

In light of these results, recommended future lines of research are the study of the use of fear in the discourse of the classic Spanish parties, which would cast light on how widespread this practice may be in politics today. Similarly, conducting a study on how other emotions are employed could be advisable, such as humour, which could have a high presence in current politics, primarily those in which the populist parties are involved.

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