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The Spanish model of *New Journalism* in a European context

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ABSTRACT

This work deals with the study of the evolution and the historical experience of Spanish journalism in the context of decades of transition between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From the selection of the most relevant cases and the examination of tracking, or not, of models and European patterns of the reference press, singularities and analogies of the historical evolution of the Spanish journalism model may be seen – an evolutionary model fully registered within the framework of Western Europe and in one of its most fruitful phases: the origins and first development of the mass media. Therefore, the following trilogy of reference media is selected covering specified time periods: *El Imparcial*, Madrid, 1867–1933; *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona, 1881; and *ABC*, Madrid, 1903.

KEYWORDS

Spanish journalism; *El Imparcial*; *La Vanguardia*; *ABC*; Western journalism; mass media

Introduction

This work deals with comparative aspects of press history in terms of Cultural Studies, especially in reference to a country like Spain, which is probably unfamiliar terrain for most British and Western European readers. The article shows evolutionary changes in the Spanish press during the 40-year period from 1880 to 1920 in global context. It goes into the subject by focusing on three strategically important newspapers: *El Imparcial* (Madrid), *ABC* (Madrid), and *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona). Thanks to this approach the article shows how Spanish journalism began to be characterized by increased advertising, headlines, sports, gossip, local news coverage, and an all-encompassing business ethic. Circulation rose dramatically and there was a steady shift towards a journalism informed primarily by entertainment instead of pedagogy. This is familiar ground to many press historians, who have observed and written about comparable developments in Britain, Germany, the United States, France, Canada, and elsewhere. The key term “New Journalism” is at the heart of the analysis as well as “informative press” (or its variations). This is shorthand for a press that concentrates on news coverage instead of *predigested* political information. Other key terms are employed: professional press, graphical journals, militant journalism, and sensationalist press, which refers not to “sensationalized” news treatment as such but to the broader dissemination of “information”. Thus the article provides mainly comparative generalizations about “modernist” journalism and the complicated political and constitutional struggles that fractured Spain at the time. Unlike Britain and the United States, Spain was seeking to establish a free constitutional

press during these seminal years while, at the same time, adopting attributes of a commercialized “mass media” which were much more evident elsewhere. This twin focus on state power and consumer preference makes for a conflicting model to begin with.

In this way, the period between 1880 and 1920 saw many changes that affected Spain and, consequently, its journalism. Such changes involved not only the creation of news companies and of their new markets, but also the creation of successful products and experiences that came out of these new endeavors (some of which are still with us today). An overview of the Spanish press during the years between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries thus offers some very interesting lines of research. Going beyond the clearly structural lack of development, the peculiar growth, and the highly individual representatives of this press at this time, such research is connected with the Mediterranean model of journalism (“politicized pluralist”) as proposed by D. Hallin and P. Mancini (2004) in which the triad of journalism, politics, and literature take on a fundamental role. Both of these authors acknowledge that the highly opinionated and politicized Spanish press that came about after the Napoleonic invasion owes much to the French experience and consider that the commercial growth, between 1880 and 1920, was based on the informative journalism of the United States and of Great Britain. As for the role of the state, the Spanish system clearly subscribes to the paradigm of intervention that came out of the French revolution, as opposed to the US and British paradigm based on the US Constitution of 1787.

The subject of numerous studies in Spanish historiography, this decisive period has been analyzed with great care by various researchers and historians. Among these last we find the fundamental studies of J. T. Álvarez, which link this period with the origins of mass media, the works of M^a C. Seoane, M^a D. Saiz, C. Barrera, and J. F. Fuentes, or the more specialized studies of J. C. Sánchez Illán (1999, 2007). All of them contain key points that illustrate the changes in journalism in relation to the previous period and the advent of a new phase – a phase which would be characterized by a profound transformation of the journalistic product which Spanish society in the nineteenth century had grown used to.

Towards a mass press for the few

For many historians, the nineteenth century in Spain came to an end with the great crisis unleashed by the loss of the last colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, while the twentieth century began in 1902 when King Alfonso XIII came of age, thus ending a period of provisional institutional status. Within a political context, these 40 years were shaped by the formation and development of a democratic liberal system known as the Bourbon restoration, a system that began with the return of the Bourbons to the Spanish throne in 1874, the appointment of Alfonso XII as king, and the approval of the Constitution of 1876 (which was effective until 1931 and which remains, to the present day, the most long-lasting in the history of Spain). In spite of the uneven application of this system and periods when it was suspended, this was an era in which both constitutional principles and subsequent legislation enabled a certain European level of maturity in journalism – to the extent that it has commonly been called “the golden age of the press” (Saiz y Seoane 1998, 2014; Pizarroso 2000; Barrera 2004).

Shortly after the commencement of the Bourbon restoration period, a collection of laws and decrees were passed which began to reorganize the news or media system, thus creating the conditions necessary for the appearance of the *new journalism* and its consolidation in

the twentieth century. After a first period (1875–1881) in which it was somewhat difficult to obtain consent from the constitutional monarchy, the *Ley de Policía de Imprenta* (the Police Law of Print) was passed on 26 July 1883 in order to develop the principle of freedom of expression proclaimed by article 13 of the Constitution of 1876 (and which remained in effect during all of the restoration). This legal text may be placed within the European policy of liberal press laws which were passed at the start of the 1880s and which began with the French law of 1881.

Under the 1883 law, there was a notable increase in the number of newspapers, despite continuing confusion between newspapers, books, pamphlets, leaflets, political and non-political publications, etc. The last third of the nineteenth century saw a proliferation in the informative press thanks to a variety of factors including the regulations put into place by the law of 1883, improvements in printing systems and the use of raw materials (such as paper), as well as increased distribution and sales via the kiosk or newspaper vendors (which enabled the public to buy individual copies). Added to this was the transformation of the newspapers themselves, which were organized into sections and increased the number of pages, introducing less serious texts and more diverse content. In some cases, they had even begun to use photographs.

Despite the fact that systematic training for journalism did not exist and was not in demand, the increasing professionalization of businessmen and journalists was another factor in the growth of the media. Journalists earned low wages until around 1905–1910 when a new type of business appeared and caused a profound transformation in their work, life, and training. Wages differed according to the publishing companies they worked for and the verbal agreements they achieved; the highest (between 6000 and 19,000 *reales*) were offered by company- and privately owned newspapers such as *El Imparcial*, *ABC*, and *La Vanguardia*. Their owners understood that they had to offer good wages so that their writers had only one job and were able to spend time on their profession. It is worth noting, however, that literature and politics were still the main paths to enter journalism, for both editorial and board positions.

In order to grow, the industrial press had to deal with serious socio-economic obstacles. In 1900, for example, 63.8% of the Spanish population was illiterate (as opposed to 16.5% in France). Symptomatic of general underdevelopment and the great obstacle to the modernization of Spain, such structural illiteracy stands in stark contrast to the factors that led to the rapid growth of journalism in Europe. Another important limitation was the low standard of living which meant that the population had barely enough resources for anything other than basic necessities (Botrel 2002, 111). This explains why, in the early twentieth century, there were still a large number of headlines that were a product of militant journalism and which reflected opinions typical of the previous century.

In spite of everything, such basic problems did not prevent the steady rise of the Spanish informative sector, one driven by political liberalism and the economic dynamism of the time. This was a press for companies and business, fully implicated in the great debate over regeneration and the progress of the nation. Speaking quantitatively, that is to say, in terms of copies and financial returns, the big Spanish dailies did not achieve the same figures as the French or the British (or to a lesser extent the USA). That said, many characteristics of the mass media can be established at a quantitative level, such as the increase in advertising, the use of big headlines, and the inclusion of new sections directed towards a new public (such as the feminine section), with its consequent extension of new centers of informative

interest in sport, fashion, cinema, gossip, entertainment, trips, and even tourism, all alongside more traditional matters such as armed conflicts, diplomacy, politics, or the economy (aubert 2005, 73).

It was within this context of the Bourbon restoration and the beginnings of the mass press that the new journalistic businesses developed. *El Imparcial*, *La Vanguardia*, and *ABC*, to which we could add *El Liberal*, *Heraldo de Madrid*, *El Sol*, *Informaciones*, and others, represent models of news companies that forced themselves to apply the most advanced administrative and management methods of the time in order to achieve a product that was new, competitive, and lucrative. They held a number of aspects in common such as their founders, who were entrepreneurial and modern men motivated to get involved in lucrative and new types of businesses, or their liberal and bourgeois social profile. Added to this were their attempts at professionalizing the informative products they had set up and their interest in the connection with the world beyond national borders, as well as the idea of investing in new technologies and advanced printing systems. In the following, we will examine each one of these examples.

***El Imparcial*, first outstanding newspaper in Spain of the Bourbon Restoration**

In 1898, the Disaster (a concept which alluded to the loss of the last Spanish colonies – Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Philippines) marked the end of the liberal cycle, a period that had begun with the first parliament in Cádiz (1812), and the beginning of the *regeneracionista* (regeneration) cycle in Spanish history. Regeneration became both a new symbol and myth that permeated all aspects of public life. At the turn of the century, the Spanish press was faced with a new panorama in which business began to reorganize itself in order to deal with the crisis in general and that of newspapers in particular. A pioneer in this process and in innovation in general was the Madrid daily *El Imparcial* (1867–1933).

Regarded as the most influential newspaper in Spain during the last third of the nineteenth century and the first few years of the twentieth century, *El Imparcial* was founded by the politician, journalist, and intellectual Eduardo Gasset y Artalejo (1832–1884). The Gasset family were completely Francophile in a literal sense of the word. As with all the elites of Madrid of the nineteenth century, they had been brought up with French culture and were assiduous readers of the Parisian dailies. Established as a limited liability company, with a majority family holding, *El Imparcial* published its first issue as an informative evening newspaper on 16 March 1867 (there was no late edition until 1868). In its early stages, the paper was the most influential voice of the *Sexenio Democrático* (Six-year Democratic Period) (1868–1874). With its printing house converted into a propaganda center for the September Revolution of 1868, the paper became the first of supporters for the new monarch a madeo I of Savoy and came to recognize the First Republic.

It would come to be considered as the main newspaper that began the great transformation of the modern Spanish press. Throughout its career, the paper always paid close attention to the latest innovations. With such a vocation, *El Imparcial* was the first daily newspaper in Spain with its own network of correspondents and the first to have used the telephone (since 1880, as readers were proudly informed). In addition, it was the first to use a rotary press and linotype for its composition, and also to introduce photography for use in journalism.

From an initial run of half a thousand copies daily, circulation jumped to 18,000 and by the end of this period had reached 40,000. With one of the highest circulation figures of the Spanish press at the time, the paper not only became the readers' favorite daily but also the cheapest. Yet with this daily, the Gasset family also established quality journalism in Spain, one which was well-informed and professional and which cultivated an ambitious and modern image of the news: a paper of democratic convictions that sat halfway between scepticism and extremism.

In formal terms, *El Imparcial* was a classic daily broadsheet of four pages, various columns, and a light, discrete typography. While the first page contained two or three in-depth articles as well as the daily chronicle, the rest of the paper covered national and international affairs, commerce and industry, book reviews, entertainment, human interest, and other assorted interests. At the same time, it published an already established serial in the lower third of the first pages. The fourth page was left to advertisements that had initially occupied very little space.

The end of the *Sexenio Democrático* on 27 April 1874 saw the publication of the first issues of *Los Lunes de El Imparcial*. This was to later become the most famous weekly literary supplement of its time, one which called on the best writing talents in the country to submit articles of scientific interest, literary criticism, theatre, art, and creative activities.

Initially hostile to the Bourbon restoration, the paper ended up advocating a type of realism or politics of the possible, all the while maintaining an independent and broadly liberal position. Its full integration into the system, however, would force some of its main journalists to lead a split. The result was the foundation in 1879 of *El Liberal*, which competed from a position more republican and more to the left.

As a great shaper of public opinion and one of the most important businesses in journalism of the restoration, *El Imparcial* would continue to be among those dailies which had the most prestige and highest circulation, providing the most intellectual aspect of the national press. With the most famous of names collaborating in its pages, the quality of its articles on politics, economics, and literature guaranteed its influence. Indeed, it was later said that an article from the paper could bring down a government, while publishing in its literary supplement became the highest aspiration of Spanish writers.

However, by its going back and forth in political positions the daily lost its reputation for independence, although it still had the prestige that came with its weekly supplement and with the 140,000 copies it was publishing around 1900, a time when the paper reached the zenith of its popularity. By 1906, however, circulation would drop to 80,000. With the arrival of the new century, the paper attempted to improve its situation through various attempts at graphic and illustrated journalism but they failed due to differences in the valuation of shares and ideological and political positions.

In May 1906 a new company was set up as *Sociedad Editorial de España* (soon to be known as *the trust*). The idea behind this was to enable liberal newspapers in Madrid to compete together in the global market, negotiating with suppliers of goods and services and at the same time taking on the big rival dailies (such as *ABC* in Madrid and *La Vanguardia* in Barcelona). Without a doubt, it was also a political move that was designed to form a liberal bloc against the rise of new extreme conservatism. *The trust* was to be made up of two morning dailies (*El Liberal* and *El Imparcial*) and one late edition (*Heraldo de Madrid*). This was shortly extended into provincial areas.

The newspaper thus ceased, once and for all, to be impartial and it immersed itself in the game of official bipartite politics. In essence, it began to be a platform for projects set up by Rafael Gasset and his nephew, the famous philosopher José Ortega y Gasset. For Rafael, the key was applying the hydraulic policy without political reforms, thus achieving a *regenerationist* philosophy in education and in food production (“escuela y despensa” was the motto). For Ortega, the alternative was the process of Europeanization by means of science: *Europa es ciencia, España es inconsciencia* (“Europe is science, Spain is unconsciousness”).

The outbreak of the First World War put an end to the fascination with Europe and opened the way for the new intellectual generation of 1914, one with very different perspectives. Other types of newspapers also started to appear and, for *El Imparcial*, the good times receded into the past. It began holding a neutral position, simultaneously displaying support for Germany (via its Nobel prize winner Jacinto Benavente) and support for the allies (via its Paris correspondent, Manuel Ciges a paricio). With the funding that came its way, however, the paper finally passed over to the German side.

Under the dictatorship of general Primo de Rivera (1923–1930), *El Imparcial* found itself on the verge of absolute ruin with 9000 subscribers and barely 1500 copies sold on the street. In 1933, under ownership of the Banco de Construcción, and after a long, prosperous, and influential existence, *El Imparcial* finally disappeared.

La Vanguardia, the Catalan Times

In 1881, two Catalan businessmen, Carlos and Bartolomé Godó Pié, founded a newspaper under the banner of *La Vanguardia* (Calvet 1971; Huertas 2000, 2006; Guillaumet 2006; Pla 2010). With family connections to the burgeoning Catalan textile industry, the two brothers set up their business in Barcelona and in the Basque country (where they both got married). In the port of Bilbao, there was a flourishing trade in natural fibers which substituted the supplies of Russian hemp which had been interrupted by the Crimean War and it was in Bilbao that the brothers first made contact with the Constitutional Party (liberal) (Carol 2006, 274). The Carlist Civil War (1872–1876), however, obliged them to redirect their attention to their textile businesses in Catalonia (and added railway businesses). All these activities led them to associate with (or marry into) some of the families of the *haute bourgeoisie* in Barcelona (such as the patrons of the architect Antoni Gaudí, the Milá family). The brothers were active members of a local faction of the Constitutional Party and also held various positions in the local government of the region. In addition, both Bartolomé and Carlos were deputies to the Spanish Parliament (in 1881 and 1886, and in 1893 and 1896, respectively).

While *La Vanguardia* was founded without any previous experience in journalism, it did have a political purpose, one which was linked to the transmission of liberal ideas during the mayoral elections for Barcelona at that time (a customary practice during this period). The first copy was published entirely in Spanish on 1 February 1881, and beneath the slogan *Daily politics, advice and news* the public was informed that the paper was the regional voice of the Constitutional Party (or liberal Party). From the very beginning, local politics provided the newspaper (with an initial print run of 1000 copies) with a strong link to the city's issues and its increasingly influential class of bourgeoisie.

La Vanguardia was launched with much ceremony on 1 January 1888, coinciding with the celebration of the Universal Exhibition of Barcelona. On this day, the paper changed

structure and format, transforming itself into a small 24-page daily that resembled any other paper of the time, with a morning and afternoon edition that cost 5 cents a copy. The daily also renewed its contents and softened its links with the Constitutional Party in order to present itself as a moderate, conservative, and plural newspaper that defended the Bourbon restoration and the Constitution of 1876. Replacing the previous slogan with that of *Independent Daily*, the editorial openly admitted that the paper was modeled on *The Times* of London and carried out a general reorganization of the newspaper, drawing on contributions from great writers and providing up-to-date information from Madrid and the main European capitals. Following in the wake of the sensationalist press in Britain and France in which information was a business, the paper abandoned its adventures in party politics in favor of endeavors of a more commercial and businesslike nature, ones which required large investments and all the machinery of bureaucracy. Over time, *La Vanguardia* came to be a daily which offered information and services, in terms of both journalism and advertising (such as obituary notices) (Casasús 2006, 276).

Its director Modesto Sánchez Ortiz (1888–1901) had two strategies. On one hand, he aimed to strengthen ties with the ruling classes and intellectuals of Catalonia and, on the other, to broaden information on the big worldwide issues. Very soon writers, thinkers, and artists were contributing to *La Vanguardia* (as were also some politicians, although many of these had their own means of communication). While it counted upon writers, including such names as Emilia Pardo Bazán, Leopoldo Alas “Clarín”, Azorín, or the philosopher Miguel de Unamuno, many of them adherents of the so-called *Generation of 98*, the paper also drew upon artists (such as a young and novice Pablo Ruiz Picasso). Gradually the paper started to become a reference point in the vigorous modernist movement, one strongly linked to its counterparts found mostly in France and Germany (Permanyer 2006, 15). Art and journalism came together in a way that presented Barcelona as a great cosmopolitan city and great cultural center, one which some have called “the city of wonders”.

By 1903, such strategies had led to success. Under the presidency of Ramón Godó Iallana, deputy (1897–1906) and First Count of Godó (a clear parallel to the British *Lord's Press*), the paper shifted its headquarters to a modernist building in the new district of Ensanche, in the heart of Barcelona (which would in time become one of the city's emblems). In addition, it acquired a Koenig and Bauer printing press that was able to print photographs from 1904 onwards and, in 1912, established its first paper mill in order to free itself from the monopoly held in Spain by *La Central Papelera* (Busqué and Bursó 2012, 36). During the first years, economic losses by such spending were covered by the textile business. A new period of growth thus began, bringing the paper into competition with other large local media companies, particularly *Diario de Barcelona*, one of the oldest of the European press. With a press run of 80,000 copies daily, *La Vanguardia* gradually became the highest-circulating regional newspaper. Inspired by the Anglo-Saxon example, it was governed by a board made up of three members.

The First World War fueled this growth and daily circulation increased to 90,000 copies. Pursuing its policy of international information, the paper placed a correspondent in Paris and Berlin, making it the very first Spanish newspaper to do so (Soria 2006, 16). Both Paris and Berlin had been important centers for all types of news for years and, prior to the war, there had been strong informative ties with both these cities. Over time, the paper published articles by (among others) Winston Churchill, Herbert Hoover, Benito Mussolini, León Trotsky, and Calvin Coolidge. Acting in the manner of the Anglo-Saxon owner-editor, Ramón Godó

steered *La Vanguardia* towards positions which were increasingly conservative, Germanophile, anti-Catalan nationalism, and anti-worker. Taken over by the autonomous Catalan government during the Civil War (1936–1939), the paper later collaborated with the Franco regime. From the Transition (1978) onwards, it has been characterized as an informative daily with a center-right and pro-Catalan nationalism editorial policy.

ABC: basic journalistic principles

As we have pointed out already, Spanish newspapers at the end of the nineteenth century were usually a new type of businesses that had liberal tendencies but which offered dubious economic gains. Their promoters were thus open-minded individuals who were ready to run financial risks. Indeed, it seems that some of the success that the newspaper *ABC* experienced from its inception was due to the personality of its founder Torcuato Luca de Tena y Álvarez Ossorio, a journalist-businessman whose family connections had accustomed him to the world of the press. Ideologically close to the liberal party, he ran as an independent candidate in 1893 and was elected deputy of Jaén, occupying the seat in various elections until 1903. After that, he abandoned Parliament after concluding that his work as a journalist was incompatible with a position as deputy. His fame and social standing, however, led him to be elected as senator and he was even nominated for ministerial positions (which he rejected in order to remain independent of any type of political connection).

The daily *ABC* was first conceived in the heart of the famous illustrated journal *Blanco y Negro* which was established in 1891. While the *ABC* itself came out in 1905, Luca de Tena had been planning since 1902 to produce a newspaper in Madrid which was different from others, and which was at once illustrated, informative, literary, and easy to manage. In the belief that images would greatly attract the reader's attention, Luca de Tena clearly presented the format and contents in a different way, their distinguishing feature being graphic information. He also wanted the paper to be smaller and thus lighter than the classic broadsheet, in spite of being aware of the risks involved in producing a small-page daily with photographs. Another novelty was the name of the paper: *ABC*, a name that distanced itself from the expressive qualities of other mastheads. While this did not mean much to the average reader, Luca de Tena wanted this banner to illustrate the idea behind his new product: the *abc's* of modern journalism, that is, the rudimentary or basic principle of journalistic knowledge without political implications. From the very beginning, he had maintained a clear editorial policy: the paper would be politically independent but in favor of the monarchy, because its owner believed that it was the most adequate institution for Spain. A total of 40,000 copies appeared in the first edition at a cost of 10 cents each, double the cost of other dailies (Guereña 1982).

It was precisely because of the paper's novelty format and its graphic-journalistic style that success came quickly. *ABC* was a serious paper but with a modern style next to the successful graphical journals. Numerous events of the time were covered, such as the weddings of Alfonso XIII and Victoria Eugenia de Battenberg in 1906, *La Semana Trágica* (the Tragic Week) in Barcelona in 1909, or the many social events of the upper class and aristocracy such as weddings, baptisms, fashionable events, and obituaries. The paper also distinguished itself with a good selection of staff and contributors, as well as international information via its correspondents and agencies.

The success experienced by the Luca de Tena family with its various mastheads led to the creation in 1909 of the company *Prensa Española*, which would include *ABC* and the magazines *Blanco y Negro*, *Gente menuda*, *Actualidades*, *Gedeón*, and *Los toros y el teatro* (Iglesias 1980). a business network was thus established with diverse products that attempted to cover the different sections of the public who were literate and who had relative acquisitive power.

During the period of the First World War the newspaper's contents oscillated between its most conservative journalists' Germanophilia and an editorial line defending the liberal monarchies of the West, such as Great Britain. In spite of its traditional monarchic trend, *ABC* survived through republican times (1931–1936), although with some problems related with its insistence on defending the monarch. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, the paper kept this position with the edition published in Seville (the town occupied by Franco's army). But in Madrid, capital of the republic, *ABC* set out to defend from its pages the official government. This was a unique case in the Spanish press, as it represented the two Spains: Franco's Spain (the *ABC* of Sevilla) and republicans' Spain (the *ABC* of Madrid).

During Franco's dictatorship *ABC* was set up as one of the most read papers. Its subsequent history is long and while this goes beyond the period that concerns this article *ABC* may be regarded as having had a relatively homogeneous and stable career.

Conclusion

The hypothesis that arises is that the model or the Spanish newspaper companies' experience continued in intersecular decades, but with a relative delay, those journalistic success formulas that came primarily from Paris and, to a lesser extent, London and New York, since French was the language of access to the outside world for the Spanish elite of the period. The Madrid of the restoration, in this sense, has as a mirror the Paris of the Third Republic, so that it can be said that journalistic innovations were reaching Spain through the filter of French culture.

Global phenomena such as circulation war, sensationalism, the renewal of language, formats, and journalistic genres, or the impact of the second industrial revolution have their reflection in the Spanish press's reference, with varying levels of effectiveness. In some cases, the debts owed by the main Spanish media companies regarding patterns of success of Paris, London, and New York will be more obvious; in others, a certain originality will be observed. From the comparative and synchronic point of view, it may be assessed methodically what of the genuine and of imitation exists in this fertile and exciting historical stage of Spanish and Western journalism.

To sum up the three cases presented in this paper, we can affirm that they were journalistic projects that aimed at economic success but that were also linked to liberal political positions that attempted the regeneration of Spain. The newspapers' owners, cultivated men of the liberal bourgeoisie, tried to modernize the sector and incorporate it into the European tendencies of the professional press – a press which was innovative and adapted to new technologies in order to make the news more attractive to the public. They certainly achieved this to a large extent, as can be observed in the reception that the three mastheads received among Spanish readers and in the long careers that two of them have had – *La Vanguardia* and *ABC* – until the present day.

The three large media companies played a historical role in the most recent history of Spain. In fact, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* nowadays remain in circulation and are clear references to extraordinarily relevant sectors of public opinion in Spanish society: the most traditional and consolidated conservative bourgeoisie of Madrid and Barcelona, respectively. In the case of *El Imparcial*, it should be emphasized that its business model and its intellectual and political project had continuity, from December 1917, with the major newspaper of the progressive bourgeoisie of Madrid *El Sol*. However, this newspaper would continue, in a certain measure, its career after the end of Franco's dictatorship, with the launch of the newspaper *El País* in May 1976, the medium that has been rated – how Gramscian-like – the “collective intellectual of the Spanish transition”.

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