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SPAIN'S MEDIA SYSTEM AND THE IMPACT OF GRAFFITI ON PUBLIC OPINION

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ABSTRACT

Spain's media system has a complicated history, having transitioned in relatively little time over the past four decades, from an authoritarian model to a libertarian model. This thesis first analyzes the role of media in society and explains how media systems are structured based on their political environments, financing methods, and levels of regulation. It examines the history of Spanish media from the authoritarian rule of Francisco Franco, beginning in 1939, through current media challenges under democracy. There is a strong focus on the lack of public opinion in Spain's media after a national economic recession in 2008. The recession influenced the formation of media conglomerates, created a shortage of media funding, and limited the diversity of public information. Ultimately, this thesis introduces graffiti as a form of non-traditional citizen participation in the media sphere and validates its legitimacy as a method for the promotion of the free flow of information.

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Chapter 1: Role of the Media in a Democratic Society

Democracies contain a political system composed of executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. These institutions are meant to induce checks and balances on one another and maintain order throughout the nation. However, stability and transparency cannot prosper without the citizen's participation in policy and decision-making. Therefore, the media acts as a fourth unofficial branch of the government in order to administer a watchdog function on all official branches. Countries that grant freedom of speech, expression, and press have liberal media systems that were created "to help discover truth, to assist in the process of solving political and social problems by presenting all manner of evidence and opinion as the basis for decisions" (Siebert 51). Libertarian societies encourage citizens' participation and, ideally, require government to present all factual political information to its constituents for discussion. The marketplace of ideas was a concept first claimed by John Stuart Mill in his book, *On Liberty*, to upkeep libertarianism. He claims that in order for a society to function properly, it must be able to exchange ideas freely, and he grants society the role to decipher the truth. To further explain, he claims that freedom of expression, or the free trade of ideas, is essential to the growth of human knowledge and the rise of a nation. Mill believed that there was an evil in silencing 'wrong' or 'bad' ideas because these perspectives add an essential value to society:

The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race... If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error. (76)

The ability to exchange opinions is beneficial to society because it permits the questioning of past ideas and promotes the formation of new ideas. The role of the media is not only to act as a check on the government, but also to be an instrument of the human race that collects and shares ideas, opinions, and suggestions. It is a tool that allows all citizens to have an uncensored voice and influence within their nation.

1.1 Elements of a Media System

A system is defined as “a collection of interrelated parts in motion that make up a whole” (McKenzie 33). There are many elements that influence a media system and have the ability to constantly change its structure. McKenzie uses a tree metaphor to describe this relation:

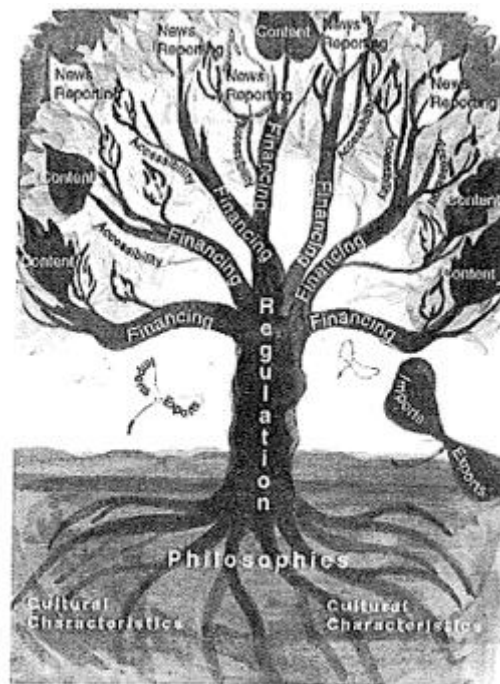


Figure 1, Elements of a Media System, Mihara Lane

He claims that a media system begins at the root of the tree and ends at the leaves. To further explain, he describes how the cultural characteristics are the local and domestic conditions of a

country during a specific time period. The philosophies of a media system can be seen as the general points-of-view that a media source is aiming to project, such as liberal, conservative, or other variations. Regulation is important because, even in a libertarian society, the government imposes unique restrictions on specific types of media, such as licensing for journalists or limited airwave space for broadcasting that decrease the flow of information. Next, financing plays a crucial role in how a media system functions due to its need for subsidies or profit for operation. Accessibility is the degree of access citizens have to a media source. Lastly, news reporting should always aim to be non-objective, but inevitably carries personal ideologies. All these elements function together to create the content that is presented by the media. Media content is defined as “the main point at which audiences mentally come in contact with the media” (McKenzie, 34). Therefore, when analyzing a country’s media system it is important to look under the content and decipher what specifically influences certain ideas from being shared, or not shared, with the public. It is also fundamental to realize that a media system adapts to its environment and therefore is in the process of constant change.

1.2 Authoritarian Media Systems as Basis for Libertarian Systems

Most libertarian media systems are the products of previous authoritarian models that once overtook a nation. The authoritarian theory describes the “function and relationship of the popular press to contemporary society” (Siebert 9). The belief is that the elite, the one(s) in power, have more knowledge than the rest of society and therefore, are in charge of administering information to the public. Using McKenzie’s tree model, the cultural characteristics of an authoritarian government, concentrated power and lack of individual

freedoms, have influence over the philosophy of the media, which is generally forced to be in favor of all governmental policies. The government is able to regulate content through censorship, punishment, and licensure. Financing is controlled because government has the ability to sanction certain media sources for propaganda and anti-policy information. Accessibility of non-censored media is very limited and news reporters fear the consequences of going against governmental norms of publication. Ultimately, the elements work together to produce a system with limited individual expression and one that is centered on supporting the government at all costs.

Siebert further explains, “knowledge thus acquired or developed [through an authoritarian system] becomes the standard for all members of society and acquires an absolutist aura which makes change undesirable and stability or continuity a virtue in itself” (11). An authoritarian regime operates in order to remain in control and aims to create a like-minded population. The people of a nation are essentially pawns of the government that allow it to maintain power and dominion.

Authoritarian governments have a tendency to collapse once citizens rebel against the lack of personal freedoms. The nation can transform into a democracy where citizens are granted freedom of speech and the role of the media shifts from covering government propaganda to becoming a watchdog for the public sphere. However, a problem with the transition is that:

Government in a democracy is the servant of people. As such it occupies a much different relationship to its adherents than does the authoritarian government. Yet even though the government is a subservient to and responsible to the public at large, it is not thoroughly trusted to identify its ends with the ends of the citizens.

(Siebert 50)

The effects of an authoritarian system carry over to the new media structure because citizens want to ensure their individual freedoms and limit the power of government. This new system allows for all citizens to exert a certain degree of control of their governmental figures and institutions.

1.3 Faults with the Libertarian Media System

Although the libertarian media, in theory, allows citizens to be involved in the knowledge and discussion of information, there are presently many shortcomings to the system. To further explain, when libertarian systems first started, written press was the only form of media available. It was diverse, locally owned, and had a community focus. The goals were to adhere to the wants and needs of the community and to provide information prevalent to that locality. However, Peterson explains that due to technological advances and industrialization, the structure of the media has transitioned from being a local commodity to being a national product:

Technological advances increased the size, speed, and efficiency of the old media and brought new ones – movies, radio, and television. Industrialization was accompanied by urbanization, and the large numbers of persons brought together helped to make newspapers of large circulation. Gains in education and the number of citizens tremendously expanded the market for products of the press (77-78).

Technological advances created new media that later became part of conglomerations, which decreased the diversity of media and limited consumable sources of information for the public. In addition, since industrialization greatly increased the audience for media outlets, content had

to become relatable to most socio-economic classes in order to make profit, creating a shift towards entertainment-based news. To further explain, Peterson discusses the specific seven criticisms of present-day libertarian media:

1. The press has wielded its enormous power for its own ends. The owners have propagated their own opinions, especially in matters of politics and economics, at the expense of opposing views.
2. The press has been subservient to big business and at times has let advertisers control editorial policies and editorial content.
3. The press has resisted social change.
4. The press has often paid more attention to the superficial and sensational than to the significant in its coverage of current happenings, and its entertainment has often been lacking in substance.
5. The press has endangered public morals.
6. The press has invaded the privacy of individuals without just cause.
7. The press is controlled by one socioeconomic class, loosely, “the business class,” and access to the industry is difficult for the newcomer; therefore, the free and open market of ideas is endangered. (Peterson 78)

Peterson claims that the market of ideas is jeopardized due to ownership, content, and financing issues. Ordinary citizens are disempowered because they are not being provided with enough sources of information to be able to actively participate in policy discussions. The challenge for libertarian media is to balance being both a check on the government and a source of profit making. It can be hypothesized that the present-day media system resembles certain

qualities of authoritarian media, but instead of the media being influenced by the government it is reliant on self-financing.

Chapter 2: Past and Current State of Media Systems in Spain

Introduction: Spain's Media During Authoritarianism

During the Second Republic (1931-1936), Spain was governed by an unstable, but democratically elected coalition, for five years until Civil War broke out within the country. In 1936, General Francisco Franco, leader of the rebel Nationalist party, took control as Head of the State and Commander-in-chief of Armed Forces via a military coup after three years of war. It was not until 1975, with death of Franco, that steady transitional democracy began to flourish. Spain was able to slowly re-develop its political and economic system, with communications media following suit. During authoritarian rule, free flow of information was suppressed, a strict system of censorship was established, and freedom of expression was suspended. In 1978, along with a new democratic constitution, freedom of speech was granted to the public and media communications changed drastically (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 3).

Due to Spain's complicated history, it is inevitable that its media system was, and continues to be, affected by politics. During the regime of Francisco Franco, or the period of time called *franquismo*, the government was initially ruled by military means. It went into international isolation, or economic autarky, which contributed to national poverty, food rations, and limitations of jobs. Throughout the authoritarian rule, there was government control over radio, television, and press. It was not until the last ten years that newspapers were offered limited freedoms. The Press Law of 1938, relevant to all national territory only after

Franco won the war in 1939, required state authorization for any content to be published and enabled the government to suspend any publication without acceptance of appeals. In addition, the government had the power to control, by firing, editors and managers of newspapers that were both publically and privately owned. Journalists were registered, and therefore, held accountable for their publications. The government created media agendas and instructed journalists on how to interpret the news. Franco's regime partnered with the Falangist Party and the Catholic Church to produce its own press, on top of controlling the private press sector. The "*Prensa del Movimiento*, operated by the Francoist National Movement, was created during the Spanish Civil War out of publishing facilities confiscated from parties, trade unions and business firms that had supported the Republic" (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 5). The government took over old infrastructure to create a publication apparatus that supported the totalitarian regime. The Catholic Church also had 34 newspapers that further acknowledged Franco's rule with its most famous newspaper, *Ya* reaching a circulation of over 100,000. However, with many different newspaper sources, readership was low compared to other European countries. The reason for this was the monotony of domestic news, the lack of criticism on the government and its policies, and a weak education system (that the short-lived Republic had hoped to reform) that contributed to high illiteracy rates. In addition, heavy advertisement was present in all of the press, which contributed to lack of valuable content.

In the 1960s, the Catholic Church insisted on a more bureaucratic system with less media censorship. Autarky policies decreased and the international world became more prevalent with the allowance of tourism in Spain. The reinvented Press Law of 1966 was an effort by Manuel Fraga Iribarne, who took control of the regulation of communications media in 1962. Intellectual freedom was granted to universities, which allowed them to publish in print media. The Press

Law, referred to as the *Ley Fraga*, eliminated prior censorship and granted publishing houses to appoint their own managers and editors. However, journalists and media outlets were still held accountable for publishing information that was controversial towards the government. Thus, the limited liberation of the press enacted a sense of self-regulation because governmental sanctions included “heavy fines, confiscation of newspaper and magazine issues, and, on occasion, the closure of offending publishing houses” (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 7). The fear of punishment that was instilled among journalists created an indirect media censorship. However, many newspapers and magazines started to cover subjects such as protests, riots, and alternatives to current policies.

Radio did not enjoy the same limited liberation as did the print media in the 1960s. After the Civil War, the overtaking of previously pro-Republican stations led to the creation of *Radio Nacional de España*, which was used to broadcast general governmental propaganda. Private stations were required to play government-created content twice a day and did not have the freedom of expression. Most of the stations during this period were owned and operated either by the government or the Catholic Church. Likewise, television, which became the main entertainment and information medium for Spaniards, was heavily regulated and used as the primary source of government propaganda. In communities without financial means to afford television technology, “tele-clubs” were a rural phenomenon set up so citizens could gather to catch up on local governmental programming. Radio and television broadcasting in authoritative governments are, for the most part, the most controlled forms of media because information is passed through electromagnetic waves and cannot be post-censored. In addition, “a second problem inherent in the nature of broadcasting is the internal control of signals emanating from outside the national borders of a state” (Siebert 36). Other countries are able to protrude their

stations into an authoritarian nation, creating problems for the government and limiting their censorship efforts. Therefore, neighboring airwaves are sometimes illegally “jammed.”

During *franquismo*, “the primary impact of media control was to secure the passive acquiescence of the Spanish population, rather than to re-socialize the citizenry into active participatory roles” (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 9). Media distrust, fear of punishment, and the lack of engaging news further demobilized Spanish society and decreased motivation for political mobilization of citizens against the regime. However, during the 1960’s, when industrialization and modernization were taking place, the allowance of limited political and governmental criticism created an early model for the future of Spain’s media system. Nevertheless, censorship was still present, but the press was able to use international stories to portray democratic ideals. For example,

While clashes between political ideologies, or the basic nature of parliamentary democracy could not be openly discussed with specific reference to Spain, press coverage of elections or parliamentary struggles in Italy, France or Britain was relatively free from censorship, and thus could be used to teach Spaniards about the underpinnings of democratic politics (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 9).

The arrival of foreign press through tourists was eye opening for Spaniards. The ability to compare international political systems was of great value to citizens who demanded social reform and craved an alternative to *franquismo*.

2.1 Spain's Transition into Democratic Media

After 36 years of Franco's stringent rule over Spain, his death led to the appointment of Juan Carlos I as king of the nation in 1976. Juan Carlos quickly generated political reform, including the restriction of his own powers, the empowerment of democratic institutions, and the signing of a new constitution in 1978. The freedom of speech and expression were declared a human right and the media was liberated from censorship. In addition, "in October 1977, the government divested itself of its monopoly on radio and no longer required broadcasts of governmental news" (Tilson and Perez). However, there was still strict oversight of radio channels and the state monopoly of public television did not end until 1987, well into the democratic period.

Print media became diversified following the new constitution as newspapers and magazines started to flourish. *El País* was one of the most influential newspapers to be established during this period. It began publication in May 1976 and took full advantage of the freedom of speech by publishing articles and editorials that promoted democratization. It "served as a vehicle for disseminating the opinions of progressive reformers within the regime, as well as those of representatives of the moderate opposition groups (liberals, social democrats and Christian Democrats)" (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 13). *El País* changed journalism for Spain because it modeled methods of being critical of government. Magazines also became a crucial part of supporting democracy due to their less supervised nature and smaller circulations. At first, they were more easily able to escape government scrutiny over pro-democratic stories. However, when newspapers were delegated the same freedoms, magazine readership declined and many of them fell into financial hardships.

Radio broadcasting went through major changes in the post-Franco period because stations were finally able to write and broadcast their own stories without government interference. Competition was created within the broadcast media system when radio stations fought to be the first to cover breaking local, domestic, and international news. Radio audiences increased as content became more valuable and entertaining to everyday life. Television remained under control of the Ministry of Information until 1987, but the regulated content did portray democratic transformation processes and kept citizens informed about electoral candidates.

In general, the political transition of Spain was greatly aided by the media: “Perhaps the most important political function performed by the communications media during the period of the transition was to help to re-socialize Spain's adult population to acknowledge the legitimacy of the new regime and to internalize fundamental norms of democratic behavior” (Gunter, Montero, and Wert 17). It taught citizens democratic values, fostered debate, and set a political agenda. To further explain, “in societies based on libertarian principles the status of the press becomes a problem of adjustment to democratic political institutions and to the democratic way of life” (Siebert 50). During the past authoritarian system, citizens were subordinate to the government. The transition to democracy was also a social transition because the people now controlled the government and had to be taught new tactics to ensure that the system remained functioning and viable.

2.2 The Current Media System in Spain and its Complications

During the beginning of democracy, five main newspapers were in publication. Spain has grown to have ten national papers with *El País* and *El Mundo* being the most read and having the most diverse content. Radio stations have since been diversified and *Ser* ranks as the most listened to station, providing constant news and entertainment to the public. Public broadcasting on television is widely viewed on channels TVE 1 and La 2; however, cable and satellite have brought on a more globalized entertainment focus for programming. A current problem with the present-day media system is that the elimination of censorship and the granting of the freedom of the press have created a concentration of ownership. Democracy is being threatened because conglomerations are starting to limit the diversity of media outlets. To further explain, “PRISA, perhaps the largest [conglomerate], owns the top-ranked *El País*, the *Ser* radio network” (Tilson and Perez). The most widely read newspapers and the most listened to radio station are part of the same company and they naturally promote similar ideals. This ownership is dangerous because citizens are at risk for becoming manipulated by a few companies who hold the power of distributing information.

More than half of financial revenue from newspapers comes via advertising. With technology and the Internet creating competition for readership, many print circulations have been declining and newspapers have been losing profit from direct sales and advertisement revenue. Therefore, there is “a tendency towards diversifying entrepreneurial activity and transforming the enterprise into a communications company that diversifies into several media and develops other activities that provide complementary sources of finance” (Mateo 220). The new market structure financially threatens newspaper companies and creates pressure for them to purchase additional media outlets in order to increase profits and stay in business. However,

these companies originally participated in an unofficial social contract with the public to be a watchdog of society. If profit making is taking priority over content, then the media is not acting as a quality check on the government or protector of citizens' rights. As conglomerates are formed, there is less diversity of news and the media becomes primarily a business rather than a public service. Advertising also skews the morals and reliability of these companies because the needs of the advertisers take priority over the requests of the public. Generally, advertisers want to be associated with neutral stories, and prevent journalists from writing controversial pieces, so that their product or service can appeal to more buyers. Lastly, citizen participation becomes limited because as media companies grow in size, the less available they become to address and listen to local needs.

Peterson's previous criticism included that, "the press is controlled by one socioeconomic class, loosely, "the business class," and access to the industry is difficult for the newcomer; therefore, the free and open market of ideas is endangered" (Peterson 78). Media companies are no longer locally owned and the business class, with its profit making agenda, is now in control of the information in Spain. The conglomerates make it impossible for new sources of media to enter the public domain because they will never be able to compete in the current media oligopoly. Currently, there are six main conglomerates in Spain that are jeopardizing the free flow of information: PRISA, Planeta, Unedisa, Zeta, Mediapro, and Godo. PRISA, being the biggest conglomerate, reaches 85% of the Spanish population (Psychogiopoulou 162). The issue that arises when sources of information become concentrated is that they cannot represent a public effectively because their content must adhere and be neutral towards a large population.

Chapter 3: Freedom of Expression in Spain

Introduction: Spain's Freedom of Press

Reporters Without Borderers is the largest non-governmental press freedom organization with a consultant status in the United Nations. It was founded in 2002 in France to gather information containing attacks on press freedom and to publish its findings each year in the World Press Freedom Index. The Index “spotlights the negative impact of conflicts on freedom of information and its protagonists.” Reporters Without Borders also evaluates the impact of a nation’s political environment because “the ranking of some countries has also been affected by a tendency to interpret national security needs in an overly broad and abusive manner to the detriment of the right to inform and be informed” (Reporters Without Borders). The country in which journalists and the press are granted the most freedom is Finland, which has been number one for the past four years. There are generally no limitations on speech and publications, however, it is important to note that the country has been at peace since World War II and has not experienced major issues affecting national security. Eritrea is the lowest-ranked country due to high levels of war and governmental corruption with maximum censorship on information and non-existent freedom of speech. Spain’s rank is 35; it is in the high middle category and it is currently considered a country in a “satisfactory situation” (Figure 2). Since the Index has been in formation, Spain’s lowest rank was 44 in 2009 and the highest was 29 in 2002. These rankings correspond to the rightward shift in national power from the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party to the People’s Party. Overall, it can be concluded that Spain’s freedom of press for the last decade has been relatively stable. However, it is important to comprehend that the Freedom of Press Index scores countries in six areas: pluralism, media independence, environment and self-

ensorship, legislative framework, transparency, and infrastructure. One key component missing is citizen participation, which includes the amount of information that citizens of all socio-economic statuses are able to contribute to media content.



Figure 2. World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders

3.1 Public Opinion in the Spanish Media Content

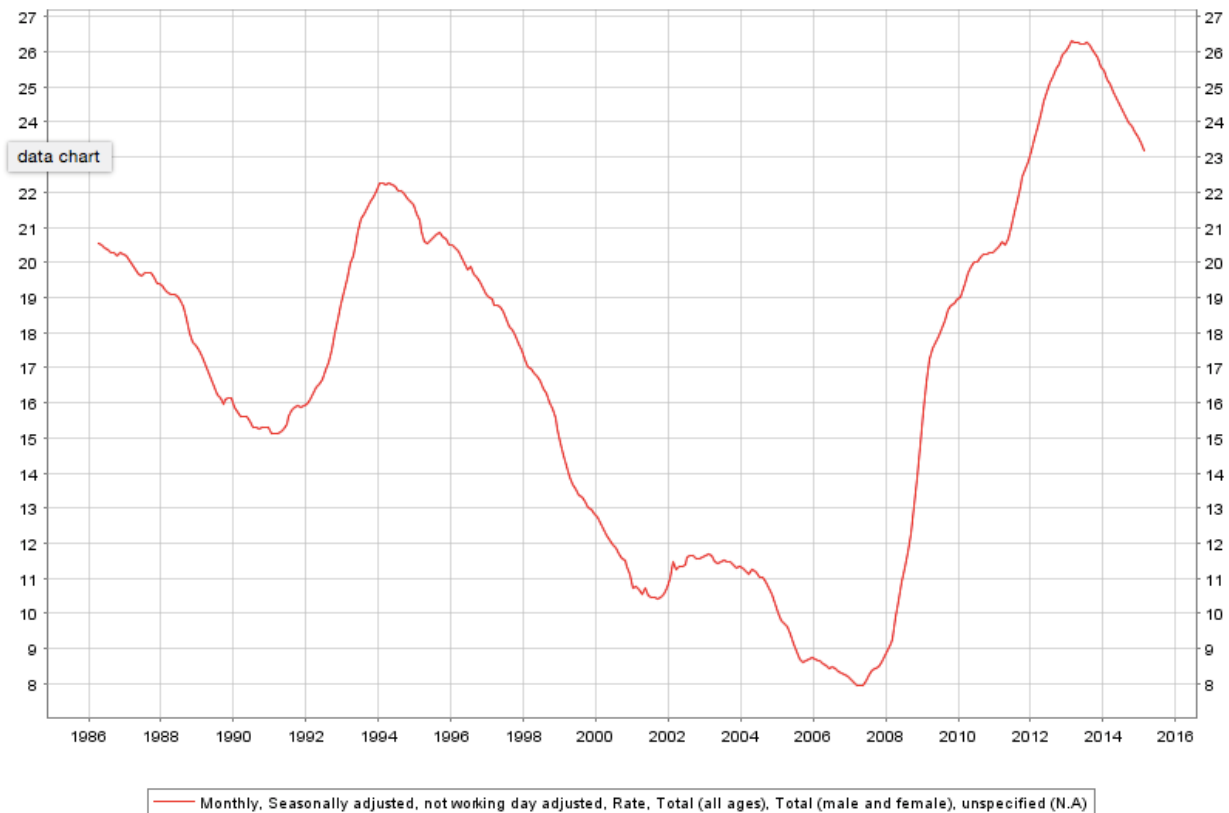
Public Opinion is form of citizen participation and is defined as “an aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community” (“Public Opinion”). Sociologist Charles Horton Hooley further

defines it as, “a process of interaction and mutual influence rather than a state of broad agreement” (“Public Opinion”). It is a collection of ideas that portray varying viewpoints of a society. Public opinion grants citizens the opportunity to participate in policy formation and have an influence in governance. The main entity that is responsible for conveying these opinions is the media because it is supposed to function by the people and for the people. The media’s inexplicit role is to be the main liaison between the citizens and the government.

Starting in 2008, Spain fell victim to the European recession and eventually went into economic depression. The *Plan Nacional de Vivienda* (National Housing Plan) further continued the economic decline because its goal of building and providing large amounts of housing for new city migrants failed. John Hooper explains a downfall of the plan in his book *The New Spaniards*, “[the government] relied on property developers to supply most of the housing they sponsored, the authorities had a limited say in the type of accommodations produced... there was always a tendency for the property developers to go as far-up market as the guidelines would allow” (Hooper 321). The housing that was developed under the plan included mostly expensive, high-class buildings that citizens could no longer afford once the recession started. Post-collapse and after economic inflation, many Spaniards became unable to pay their mortgages and mass evictions became common. This situation left many Spaniards homeless and in great dismay with the government.

In addition, the recession instigated an unprecedented amount of general unemployment that continued to increase from 2008 to 2012, reaching its highest level of 26% in 2012 (Figure 3). The construction industry rapidly grew popularity during the first years of the plan and many citizens acquired high paying construction jobs after high school, only to become unemployed with no transferable skills once the recession hit. In 2012, youth unemployment started to rise

above 50% with a high of 57% in 2013 (Figure 4). Spain's unemployed youth ranged from 18-40 years of age and about half of the youth possessed undergraduate degrees among other higher-level education diplomas. They are considered the "lost generation" because they are unable to acquire independent financial means and are either living without income or moving to other nations for job opportunities.



Source : Statistical Office of the European Commission (Eurostat)

Figure 3. Spanish Unemployment, Statistical Office of the European Commission

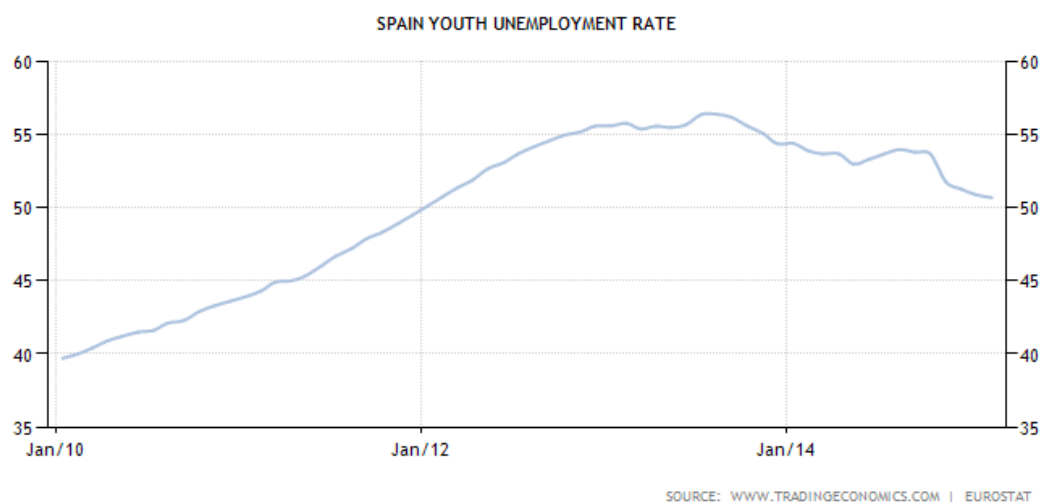


Figure 4. Spain Youth Unemployment Rate, Trading Economics

When the recession and unemployment first started to occur, the government failed to warn its citizens about the anticipated economic outcome of the country. To further explain, in 2008 right before the recession hit, “the socialist government of prime minister Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero ... had been refusing to admit that Spain's economy was in trouble, as if hoping that the looming global financial crisis would all go away. And then, in just one month, Spain's unemployment rate leapt from seven to 16 per cent” (“The Lost Generation of Spain’s Unemployed Youth”). Journalists were not always well-positioned with visibility to investigate and report on the projected crisis because the recession caused the media industry to become financially vulnerable.

Public opinion was limited during the recession because the media in Spain suffered from lack of advertisement funding, loss of resources, and reduction in staff. In other words, “the crisis impoverished and weakened traditional news media. As their debt increased and their resources diminished, they grew more dependent on the largesse of powerful special interests” (Sala de Prensa). Due to the need for money, the media switched roles from being a medium that represented society’s opinions to a channel for addressing commercial needs as a survival tactic.

The bleakness of the housing collapse and unemployment was not documented in its entirety and commercial interests influenced more stories than the public outcries of the recession. The press started to self-censor content in order to not upset the limited advertisers that allowed it to function. In addition, the government financially supported some media during this time forcing content to adhere to their political agenda. Overall, content gravitated towards entertainment media, rather than political news, because it attracted more readers (Figure 5) and provided a neutral platform that pleased advertisers.

	Oct 2000- May 2001	Oct. 2008 -May 2009	Growth (readers)	Growth (%)
National press published in Madrid	3,336	4,786	1,450	43.5
National press published in Barcelona	1,435	1,470	35	2.4
Regional and local press	6,753	6,927	174	2.6
Sports press	3,721	5,371	1,650	44.3
Financial press	146	188	42	28.8
Free sheets	221	5,987	5,766	2,609.0

Figure 5. Readership of the Top 50 Newspapers, Mateo, Berges and Garnatxe

Entertainment media appealed to many Spaniards because “newspaper-reading is a reflection of a country’s wealth and the levels of educational achievement wealth brings” (Hooper 349). As Spain’s citizens became poorer due to the recession and educational and professional achievement diminished, interest in popular media increased. Entertainment media served as a distraction from the complications of daily life and allowed for the simplification of national problems. In addition, due to the media’s financial setback, many investigative journalists were laid off and replaced with low-cost new undergraduate journalists that did not possess the skills to efficiently cover political content. The financial structure of the media and the change in content limited the industry from publishing public opinion. Likewise, the

journalists' inexplicit constitutional role of providing Spaniards with access to current events along with varying governmental criticisms was weakened.

Previously considered the unofficial fourth branch of government, the media no longer acts as a trustful check on the government and does not represent society's interests. The recession-based media structure is not likely to change in the future because traditional media is currently competing with other cheaper forms of communication such as the Internet journals, blogs, and social media. These mediums of communication became increasingly popular because they allowed for public participation and the sharing of ideas with minimal commercial pressure.

The social function of journalism as a watchdog, as a mechanism for the control of power, as the guardian of the right to information and freedom of expression as essential ingredients of democracy, lost strength in the new scenario of the Information Society and with the dynamics discussed in the media industry. Instead, media and journalism inside these groups act as the watchdog or guardian of the interests of power, of corporate interests (Mateo, Berges, and Garnatxe 271).

The access to freedom of speech is more apparent and tangible in these new technological-based forms of media than in traditional ones. Spaniards have found a new method of mobilizing society and publishing information that is faster, more efficient, and less biased.

3.2 Press Freedoms During Times of 'War'

The recession created economic hardships for the media, but the political environment of Spain aided in the decrease of freedom of speech and the lack of disclosure of public opinion.

Siebert mentions that when countries go into war-mode, whether within their own borders or between opposing nations, freedom of speech naturally limits itself due to the need to protect national security and continue peace.

Freedom of information is being especially threatened today. The experience of governments during the Second World War when the press had to accept severe curtailment of its liberty, and the special requirements of security in the succeeding “cold war” account for partly the tendency towards Press restriction. The fact that some countries are technically still at war helps justify controls not only for themselves but in neighboring countries. (30)

He uses the example of the United States during the Second World War and the Cold War to verify that the libertarian press can become temporarily authoritarian in order to ensure safety of citizens. Spain’s was at war within itself because housing evictions and unemployment created a displeasing socio-economic gap and opposition towards the government. In addition, Spain wanted to remain favorable on the world stage and attempted to rescue itself from international criticism. In order to prevent bad publicity, riots, violence, and mass opposition, the government pre-censored many topics of information and created restrictions for acquiring national statistics. The following situation occurred during the Spanish recession:

Public officials are under no legal obligation to open their books, reports, or statistics to inspection, and requests for them to do so, whether from citizens or journalists, are routinely denied or ignored. Reports prepared with public funds on everything from day-care inspections to crime statistics are available only for those who can prove a “need to know,” and a direct relationship to the information. (“Spain’s Not-So-Free Press”)

In a democratic state, national statistics and reports are generally transparent for the public. However, Spain created massive red tape and enforced strict preventative rules, which demotivated journalists to investigate and report on current issues. The secrecy of these facts and figures were aimed to protect national security but also directly enhanced society's distrust in the government.

After public complaints about the lack of transparency, Spain's Socialist Party proposed a law for the public's right-to-know. The Law of Transparency, Access to Public Information, and Good Governance was passed in 2013 after almost two years of debate and it is ultimately considered a giant disappointment to the nation. Spain was one of the last nations in the European Union to institute a public-right-to-know law and it currently ranks 66th out of 90 nations, being below communist China (Sierra 33). Instead of making national information transparent, the law justified governmental and commercial silence and further created frustration within the country. The following are the criticisms of the law that continue to limit public access to information:

1. It excludes a clear set of sanctions for those who break the law.
2. It preserves the legal principle of "administrative silence," by which the lack of response to requests ought to be interpreted as a rejection.
3. It limits access to information, including a long list of subjects such as economic interests, monetary policy, and protection of the environment.
4. It excludes public administrations from publishing inventories of their assets, requiring them only to reveal their real estate properties.
5. It established an implementation period of one year for the central government and two years for autonomous and local administrations (Sierra 33)

The national government in Spain did not listen to the public's demand for open information and continued to promote censorship with a legal transparency law. The trust in government sharply decreased from 33% to 18% during the year of the law was enacted (Figure 6). Without transparency of facts and figures, the media becomes unable to effectively report on the current state of the nation and loses its credibility within society. Likewise, Spaniards become uninformed and less able to participate in their government, which endangers democratic ideals.

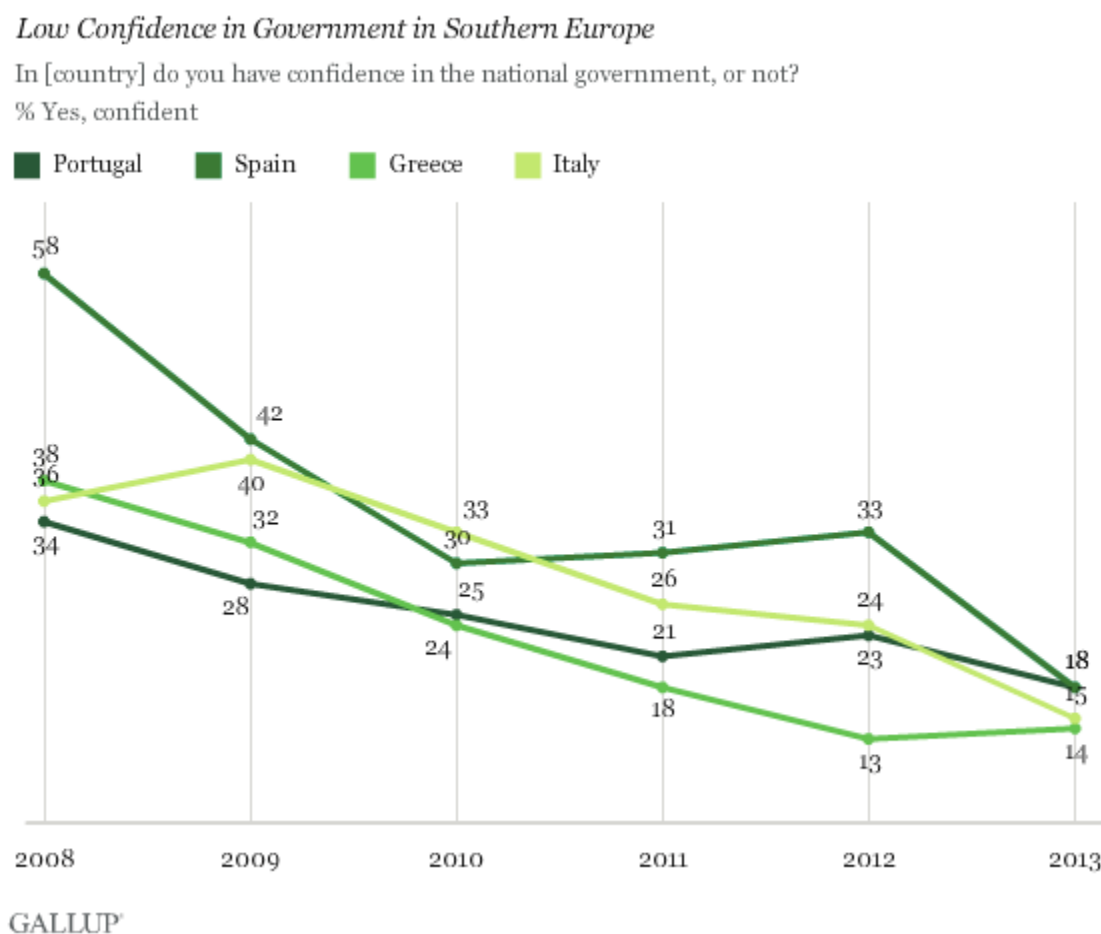


Figure 6. Low Confidence in Government in Southern Europe, Gallup

Chapter 4: Emergence of Non-traditional Media in Spain

Introduction: Defining Non-traditional Media and its Actors

When a traditional media system is unreliable due to governmental and commercial bias, non-traditional media often emerges to fill the gap of information. It increases citizen participation of middle and lower classes and allows for their public opinion to be shared. In addition, non-traditional media “challenges, at least implicitly, actual concentrations of media power, whatever form those concentrations may take in different locations” (Couldry and Curran 7). Media communication avenues, such as community radio, Internet bloggers, citizen journalists, and street art, subvert traditional media because power is given to the underrepresented and competition is created between the minority and the elites that are in control of national news.

It is important to note, however, that many of these emerging mediums of information have questionable legitimacy. Traditional media was, and continues to be, held to professional ethics and usually requires a formal Press code to be followed. Journalists must adhere to rules against falsity, libel, slander, and obscenity, whereas non-traditional media fabricators have few restrictions on speech or publication. Generally, the only restriction of speech that graffiti artists have is the potential threat of criminal prosecution for the destruction of property. Another main difference to keep in mind is that traditional sources function to create a profit, which is why they sometimes fail to create informative content. Non-traditional media does not commonly generate profit since its main motive is to gain popularity and mobilize a society towards a

movement. Therefore, without heavy speech restrictions and financial motives, it can be hypothesized that non-traditional media is a more pure form of freedom of expression and of public discourse.

4.1 Street Art as an Alternative Form of Mass Communications

Graffiti, or street art, is commonly recognized by symbols, slogans, or clichés on walls, buildings, or other public spaces in a community. Graffiti is illegal in most countries and is viewed by many as a lower-class vandalism crime that deteriorates an environment, decreases property value, and reduces the sense of security in a neighborhood. However, graffiti does have merit of delivering information to a society. Lyman G. Chaffee explains that, “as one of numerous information sources, it should be viewed as one dimension of the multimedia, multi-format communication system. It gives expression to groups that otherwise could not comment or support current perceived social problems” (3-4). In regards to media, street art serves a function of providing a voice for the minority of the population that is underrepresented in traditional technology-based news communications because access to streets does not require money. The main goal of street art is to inform and persuade a population towards action about a specific cause or a certain public policy issue that affects daily life. In addition, graffiti is a tool “in understanding conflicts between the state and civil society” and has the ability to “shape and move human emotions and gauge political sentiments.” (Chaffee 4) Overall, street art is utilized to describe a truthful public opinion of the current state of the nation and its people and attempts to create change in a community.

Chaffee goes on to explain how graffiti should be considered a mass medium of communications due to five distinct characteristics. First, it is a primarily collective process where groups organize to identify problems, question values, make claims and suggest alternatives. The individual graffito or a graffito group generally has sponsorship and support from the outside public, making the process of graffiti-art a communal effort. Large graffiti pieces take time and organization that allow many members of society to become involved in the creation of messages against standard community norms. Secondly, street art is a partisan, non-neutral, political medium because it generally criticizes without weighing facts or values in order to advance an idea. Thirdly, graffiti has a competitive, non-monopolistic, and democratic character because the art is accessible to all and has the ability to cover many political ideologies, as well as topics of information relevant to the minorities. Fourthly, graffiti is considered to have direct expressive thought; messages are clear with no obscurity or aims of manipulation. Lastly, street art is a highly adaptable medium, being able to function in an authoritarian system as a form of resolving political questions and in a libertarian society by reflecting on social, political, and economic problems (Chaffee 8-9).

The public has an interest in the functionality of democracy and, therefore deserves a right and a public space to oppose governmental disloyalty to democratic standards. Graffiti creates a public space of unrestricted information to be disseminated locally, nationally, and globally. Its rebellious nature allows for the formation of personal opinions on issues that are not commonly discussed in society. Most importantly, street art remains in place for a period of time, permitting long intellectual conversations to be had, instead of setting a daily news agenda. To further explain, “the role of [traditional] mass media function is “information,” whereas that of the post-mass media function is “communication” (Lemos 404). Graffiti does not solely

compile facts to distribute to citizens for acceptance, it allows for continuous interaction; starting from the collaboration of artist and outside surface, then the interface of the art and passing audience, and ultimately by word-of-mouth spreading of information and public discussion. Graffiti is an important mass medium in present-day democracies because it allows the underrepresented to voice their public opinion whenever they want through defiant means.

4.2 Examples of Graffiti as Media Source in Spain

The idea that graffiti provides a public space for flow of conversation is extremely important to Spain because Vilaseca states that after the recession, public territory has been treated as property of the State. Local governments have been attempting to resist the flow of information of the opposition in order to make cities more attractive towards visitors. He further explains, “City councils dictate, to an excessive degree, what activities can and cannot occur in public space” (Vilaseca, 1) giving examples of the prohibition of balcony laundry hanging and sleeping on benches. The main motivation for governmental control over public space is to clean up major cities to make them appealing for tourism. Spain has been ranked the as the third country with the most international tourist arrivals in 2013 (“World Tourism Organization”). In order to increase the economy through this method, graffiti has become less acceptable and more punishable by Spanish authorities. The strict laws toward public space depict the gap between the poor and the elite and, therefore, serve as a motivation for the minorities to further protest against government power. Figure 7 demonstrates the further revolt on the lack of freedom in a public place. It translates to “THIS WALL IS MINE.”



Figure 7. Esta Pared Es Mia, Escif (Valencia)

The contradiction is that the large message disallows other forms of graffiti to be painted in the same space. This graffiti is a direct result of the strict public place laws that were passed in Valencia, one of them heavily punishing street art. The conversation of allowing more free space with less regulation was started by this graffiti in an effort to influence policy.

Another example of citizen discontent with the government is the rapid increase of low-cost tourism. Tourists are storming into cities, investors are buying whole apartment complexes, and Spanish culture is at jeopardy of diminishing. *The Local*, an independent Spanish online newspaper, explains the discontent of a large sector of society: “There is a growing undercurrent of opinion that Barcelona could be becoming 'the new Venice', a city so overrun by visitors that it is losing its soul. Tensions over rampant tourism flared recently when locals in the tightly-packed seaside neighborhood of Barceloneta took the streets against the ravages of 'low-cost tourism’” (“Is Tourism Destroying Barcelona?”). Protests formed in favor of the protection of culture and peace, which the government neglected to consider when advocating for an increased economy via tourism. Park Güell, a popular tourist destination commemorating

Gaudi's architectural and artistic skills, has been targeted as a main space to advocate for change. Figure 8 reads "TOURIST GO HOME OR DIE" and is written right near the main entrance of the park.



Figure 8. Tourist Go Home or Die, Flickr user Joey Z1

The text is written in English so that most tourists are able to understand and become offended by the content. The goal of this graffiti is to scare tourists from entering a public park that holds sentimental value for Spaniards in Barcelona. In addition, the death threat creates an extremely hostile entrance into the vicinity that forces visitors to become aware of the anti-tourism movement in the city. Barcelona residents were unsuccessful through their petitions to officials and mass protests; therefore, they created a method to voice their opinion and leave it open for the interpretation of the tourists, hoping to scare them back home.

Lastly, the Housing Collapse, caused by banks giving out underestimated loans to homebuyers, created many foreclosures and left a large percentage of Spain's population homeless. The government's National Housing Plan to increase the economy via real estate and the inability of Spaniards to afford the new homes helped fuel the recession of 2008. Citizens were furious, banks had to be bailed out, houses remained unoccupied, and the country became chaotic due to homelessness. In 2012, "the government decreed a two-year moratorium on eviction of families that meet hardship criteria, such as having a disabled member, expired unemployment benefits or very young children" ("Spain Still Suffering Fallout From Housing Bust"). However, public consensus remains that not enough was done to help citizens. Many graffiti signs such as Figure 9 remain present on bank walls. BBVA, one of the main banks responsible for the faulty mortgages, are being blamed of being "ROBBERS" (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Ladrones, REUTERS/Susana Vera

Spaniards are still suffering from the Housing Collapse and the recession and government has been slow to aid the population. Since corporate banks, the government, and traditional media are partnering together to resist mass rebellion, graffiti provides power to the citizens to accuse whom they feel is responsible for the nation's downfall.

Conclusion

Spain's media system went through a transition from an authoritative model to a libertarian model. This process granted Spanish citizens the freedom of expression and encouraged them to participate in governmental criticism and policy building. However, due to the recession of 2008, the housing collapse, unemployment, and the formation of media conglomerates, public opinion in media content has been on steady decline. Traditional media channels are struggling to finance their operations and, therefore their content is created to increase sales and please advertisers.

Graffiti provides a temporary method of expression and allows for the mobilization of society. However, graffiti is not a sustainable form of public participation. Due to its illegal and anonymous nature, it becomes difficult to verify authors and determine if sources of information are diverse. Although graffiti does promote the sharing of underrepresented ideas and creates conversation in communities, it is challenging to determine the actual amount of citizens it influences. With no method of calculating readership, it is impossible to know its direct influence on society. In addition, graffiti is imposed on a society and it forces people to consume ideas without their prior consent. This type of deliverance of information can be dangerous because it can be used against society as a means of manipulation and propaganda.

There is little research on the long-term effects of graffiti as a media source but it can be concluded that it benefits society in the short-term by being a source of representation for unpopular opinions. Graffiti adds to the free flow of information, and therefore bolsters Spain's democratic values. However, graffiti does have the potential to become an authoritative form of communication if it starts to impose discourse, rather than promoting the collection of ideas.

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