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[Facultad y Departamento de Ciencias de la Información: Pirámide del Campus de Guajara - Universidad de La Laguna](#)
38071 La Laguna (Tenerife, Canarias; España)

Teléfonos: (34) 922 31 72 31 / 41 - Fax: (34) 922 31 72 54

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Editorial identity in the Spanish national press: interrelation with the news agenda

Teodoro León-Gross, Ph.D., ([C.V.](#)) Professor at the Department of Journalism of the University of Malaga (Spain) - teo@uma.es

Elena Blanco-Castilla, Ph.D., ([C.V.](#)) Professor at the Department of Journalism of the University of Malaga (Spain) - castilla@uma.es

Abstract: The definition of the identity of the Spanish national press requires the evaluation of the editorial pages and their relation to the news content. Based on a qualitative analysis, this article shows that there is indeed a strong relation between the editorial and news contents (as four of five editorials are related to current news stories) and that the news stories addressed in the editorials are very relevant, as most of them appear in the front page or the first page of a section, and are in average two pages long. These findings suggest that the doctrinal model of the press has lost strength.

Keywords: press; quality press; editorial section; news; news agenda.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Explicit self-portrait. 3. Method and stages. 4. First stage: Formal and thematic characteristics. 5. Second stage: relation with current news events. 6. Conclusions. 7. Bibliography.

Translation by **Cruz-Alberto Martínez-Arcos, Ph.D.**

1. Introduction

The newspaper's editorial, also known as leading article (UK) or leader (UK), has been and continues to be unanimously considered a central element of the quality press (Armentia and Caminos, 2003), especially after the publication of John Merrill's multi-stage work on the "elite press". However, the prestige of the popular editorial model has steadily decreased, as newspapers have favoured the publication of editorial shorts of less analytical development, and have sometimes removed editorials from their discursive structure, as the Spanish newspaper called *Público*, launched in late 2007, recently did it.

Identity is a key factor in what Díaz Nosty (1996) calls the influential press and it is exactly what the editorial excellence aims to modulate. Even though a newspaper's news agenda results more significant in the configuration of its journalistic model and the definition of its key strategies to establish a reader profile and focus its main identifying features, the editorial section of a newspaper also has an important influence in the definition of its ideology and hierarchies, as it reveals the newspaper's degree of tolerance, which may prompt readers to take sides. And while the reading level of the editorial section is low, according to press companies' internal studies, its traditional reputation still lends it an air of prestige. Thus, frequently other media, particularly the audiovisual media, cite the editorials of the quality press, clearly defined here by its referential function (Imbert-Beneyto, 1986).

However, unlike the USA, where the press preserves its strong referential importance and has a very remarkable megaphone effect, the editorial page has largely lost importance in Europe and especially in Latin American countries, where columnists have become more important than the institutional editorial articles, and the opinion section has focused more on the "star columnists", in accordance to a recent journalism logic that will predictably become stronger (Cantavella1999).

2. Explicit self-portrait

The understanding of the editorial section is relevant because it constitutes a self-portrait that is open to the public; it is an explicit reflection of the particular ethos of the newspaper which is implicit in the news pages (Gil-González, 2007). For this reason, although the editorial and opinion section may still be prejudicially seen by academics as a complementary dimension that is far away from the axis of journalism (Benavides and Quintero, 2004), the acknowledgement of the centrality of the editorial section has not decreased. However, there are subtle differences between the opinion and editorial sections: the former section tends to evolve and grow (Casals-Carro, 2004), while the latter, which should be considered as a genre linked to the

evolution of the former, is not progressing. For instance, the size of the editorial section of *El País* just evolved from two-thirds of page to the national standard, which involves a reduction of 20% in editorial space.

Thus, the centre of gravity of the opinion section seems to have definitely shifted to columnists and the most popular solutions, such as editorial cartoons (Blanco-Castilla, 2007), phrases of the day and editorial shorts, from long rhetorically-open editorial texts that are well-written by a competent Editorial Committee, which focused on the most relevant issues, particularly on the international agenda and the issues affecting the health of democracy and human rights. Today, the classic editorial article hardly exists, or merely survives.

In fact, the editorial section has been weakened by the new dominant forms of journalism. The editorial section has suffered a reduction of its traditional heavy rhetoric, accompanied by a growing de-institutionalisation (without being denaturalised), a more deliberative and open character and a tendency towards an expressive normalisation (Hernando-Cuadrado, 2001), naturally according to the personality of each newspaper (Fernández-Barrero, 2001) but even in newspapers whose model is close to the high-quality model, according to the formula of John Merrill, such as *El País* (Moreno-Espinosa, 2002).

However, the editorial retains some of its former prestige and it is certainly the most stable journalistic genre or at least the most homogeneous in the traditional model (Martínez-Albertos, 1974 and 1993; Gomis, 1989; Casasús, 1991; Núñez-Ladeveze, 1995), and even in the new formulas, always as an opinion piece of institutional authorship (Sánchez and López-Pan, 1998). In fact, the editorial page retains its reputation as a point of reference, which makes it a perfect space to investigate the identity of large media and the tendencies of the media system.

3. Method and stages

This research study is divided in two stages, both of which are based on content analysis. As the classical definition of Klaus Krippendorff indicates, content analysis is an appropriate method to examine the media's systematic lines of action as it can produce rigorous data that, once subjected to statistical analysis, can generate "reproducible and valid inferences that can be applied to their context" (1990: 28). To this end, we examined a wide and representative sample of newspapers published during the first half of 2006: 25-31 of January; 1-7 of February; 7-13 of March; 18-24 of April; 25-31 of May; and 1-7 of June.

The second stage, conducted in 2008, aimed to describe the relationship between the subject matter of the newspapers' editorials and the news content of the same newspapers. In this stage we decided to examine the same sample of newspapers in order to maintain the linearity between the conclusions which should prove revealing under another axiom of this method: the analysis of the texts does not only focus on establishing their meaning, but also provides information about their production or, as Laurence Bardin (1996: 32) puts it, "the production/reception conditions (social context) of these messages".

These two stages are part, and follow the objectives, of the R&D research project entitled "Nuevos escenarios en la investigación aplicada al estudio del sistema de medios" ("New scenarios in research applied to the study of the media system"), financed by the Spain's Ministry of Education and Science (SEJ 2006-141561).

4. First stage. Formal and thematic characteristics

The first stage of this approach to the editorials of the Spanish press (León-Gross, 2006) involved the conduction of a wide-ranging content analysis over a really significant sample of newspapers. The objective of this stage was to identify the external formal characteristics of the editorials in the Spanish press -location, size, average number of daily texts- as well as determining their thematic profile and approach.

The main conclusions of this stage are:

- The editorial section has lost the privileged location formerly conferred by the traditional journalistic culture: the third page, which was accompanied by the op-ed page containing other forms of opinion. In the Spanish national press, only *El Mundo* (and *La Razón* after its last redesign) retains that location (in 2009 *El Mundo* replaced the bottom two editorial columns on its third page with one five-column article placed on the top of the page). The rest of the sample of newspapers has placed the editorial section in even-numbered pages, as it occurs in much of the quality press. In *El País* the editorial section is located in even-numbered pages behind the international news section, opening the Opinion section in the American two-third page format (in a subsequent redesign, in the last quarter of 2007, the editorial section was placed after the national and economy sections, and its size was reduced to the average size in the remaining newspapers). Likewise, in *La Vanguardia* the editorial section was placed after the international and national section. This location in the antepenultimate page of the first booklet is used in major USA newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and also in great international newspapers such as *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *The Guardian* and *Le Figaro*. In the case of *Abc* and (back then) *La Razón*, which are more similar to the opinion press model, the editorial section is located on the fourth page to open the opinion section. The editorial formula of *Abc* and *La Razón* is closer to that of other major Latin-influenced newspapers such as *Le Monde* or *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which place the editorial section in the second page. All newspapers retain the notion of "the editorial page", which is accompanied by editorial shorts and editorial cartoons and is written by the senior staff.
- The largest editorial page (table 1) was published by *El País* (530 cm²), followed by *Abc* (450 cm²). *La Vanguardia* offers the third largest editorial page, which has the average size of the national press: 430 cm². *El Mundo* (410 cm²) and particularly *La Razón* (360 cm²) have reduced the size of their editorial pages. The editorial sections of the Spanish newspapers are still far from achieving the size of the editorial sections of the great American and, to some extent, British newspapers, although they match and even exceed in size the editorial sections of some other cited newspapers. (Subsequent redesigns have changed things: *La Vanguardia* publishes the largest editorial section, of 570 cm², followed by *La Razón*, of 470 cm². Far behind, with average levels, are the editorial sections of *Abc*, with 400 cm², and *El País*

with 370 cm². Meanwhile the editorial section of *El Mundo* has been reduced to 290 cm².

Table 1: Profile of the editorial sections

	Average number of texts per day	Surface of the section (cm ²)	Surface of the text
<i>El País</i>	2.7	530	196.3
<i>El Mundo</i>	1.9	410	215.8
<i>Abc</i>	2.3	450	195.6
<i>La Razón</i>	1.9	360	189.5
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	2.4	430	179.2

- In average, *El Mundo* publishes the largest editorial texts; while *La Vanguardia* publishes the shortest editorials, which are 15% to 20% smaller. The largest number of editorials, on the other hand, is offered by *El País*, which publishes almost three texts per day (two texts since 2007), while the lowest number is offered by *El Mundo* and *La Razón*, with less than two texts per day, because they usually publish two texts (with the 2/3-1/3 format) but sometimes only write a unique editorial to address matters of particular importance. (Eventually *El Mundo* opted for one editorial over three editorial shorts, while *La Razón* and *Abc* opted for two texts of different sizes (see table 1).
- The main interest of editorials is probably the news agenda (table 2). The editorial section is expected to address controversial national current affairs, but, according to the criteria formulated by Merrill in "The Elite Press", it is particularly expected to give an opinion about the main issues on the international agenda. In that regard, the dominance of the "opinion press" over the "news press" is clear. Only *El País* distributes evenly its editorial items, with 47% addressing issues of the international agenda, which only constitute the subject of one third of the editorials of *La Vanguardia*. The presence of international news is much lower in the editorials of the other three newspapers. *Abc* and *El Mundo* address international agenda items in about 25% of their editorials, while *La Razón* does so in only 16% of its editorials. Logically, the focus of *La Razón* in the national agenda, in 83% of its editorials, defines or fits its profile.

Table 2: Thematic profiles

	International						National					
	Total	Politics	Economy	Society	Culture	Sports	Total	Politics	Economy	Society	Culture	Sports
<i>El País</i>	47.0	70.4	14.8	13	1.8		53.0	49.2	14.8	31.1	1.6	3.3
<i>El Mundo</i>	27.2	90.9		9.1			72.8	71.2	8.5	16.9		3.4
<i>Abc</i>	24.0	78.3	13.0	8.7			76.0	69.9	10.9	15.1	2.7	1.4
<i>La Razón</i>	16.3	61.5		38.5			83.7	62.7	4.5	28.3	1.5	3.0
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	33.3	78.8	6.1	15.1			66.7	50.0	10.6	30.3	4.5	4.5

- Within these major categories, the thematic profiles show that editorials about international topics mostly refer to politics, particularly in *El Mundo*, where they account for 90%, and *La Vanguardia* and *Abc*, where they account for almost 80%. The exception is *La Razón* where there is a strong presence of the international society issues, although in this case this presence was altered by the religious agenda resulting from the death of Pope John Paul II and the election of Benedict XVI. Meanwhile, international economy issues only have a modest presence, and are even absent in some newspapers like *El Mundo* and *La Razón*. On the other hand, the national analysis of the editorials of the sample of newspapers covers the entire thematic spectrum, including sports (although to a very low extent). Politics is the dominant national subject in *El País* and *La Vanguardia* (around 50%) and, to a larger extent, in *El Mundo* and *Abc* (around 70%). This involves an obvious oversight of other areas such as society and economy. Society is addressed in just 30% of the editorials about national issues in *El País*, *La Razón* and *La Vanguardia*, and only in about 15% of the editorials about national issues in the other newspapers). Meanwhile economy is addressed in less than 10% of the editorials about national issues in *La Razón* and *El Mundo*.
- The editorial approach has also been evaluated (table 3). The analysis shows that doctrinal editorials –discourses at the level of ideas– are very rare and are only applied to national political issues. *El Mundo* and *La Vanguardia* did not offer any example of doctrinal editorials; *La Razón* offered the largest number, only two. Meanwhile, analytical editorials intended to present a definitive conclusion seem to be the preferred formula, especially in the treatment of the international agenda. In fact, of the editorials dealing with international news in *Abc* and *La Vanguardia* more than 80% had an analytical approach, and this approach was used in more than 90% of the international editorials of *La Razón*. The international editorials of *El País* and *El Mundo* used the analytical approach more moderately (64% and 59%, respectively). On the contrary, interpretative editorials, of more expository character and no definitive conclusion, were more common in nationally-themed editorials –with the exception of *El País* (where interpretative editorials are more common in internationally-themed editorials) and especially *El Mundo* (where analytical editorials are less predominant). Symptomatically, the opinion press is the most balanced in this parameter, as the newspapers that follow the quality press model, *El País* and *La Vanguardia*, offer more analytical editorials.

Table 3: Editorial approach

	International			National		
	Doctrinal	Analytical	Interpretative	Doctrinal	Analytical	Interpretative
<i>El País</i>		64.9	35.1	1.6	68.9	29.5
<i>El Mundo</i>		59.1	40.9		49.1	50.9
<i>Abc</i>		82.6	17.4	1.4	64.4	34.2
<i>La Razón</i>		92.3	7.7	3.0	52.2	44.8
<i>La Vanguardia</i>		84.9	15.1		72.7	27.3

After the first stage of analysis (focused on the quantitative presence, thematic profile and approach of the editorial articles), the objective of the second stage was to examine the relationship between the editorial texts, conceived as the ideological institutional reflections of their newspapers, and the respective news content. This evaluation was based on two questions: Is the editorial page independent from the general discourse of the newspaper? To what extent are, if any, the editorial texts coherent with or even embedded within the global discourse of their newspapers?

5. Second stage. Relation with current news events

The second stage of the research aims to evaluate the degree of interrelationship between the editorial and news contents. The hypothesis is that this interrelationship achieves significant levels in newspapers of low doctrinal profile, where the basic function of the general news content is reciprocated with the taking of an institutional position by the newspaper towards the most relevant news events, in order to orient the reader.

It seems logical that editorials interrelated to news will be more common than doctrinal editorials, which are generated not by a news event but by a dogmatic motivation. To avoid imbalances in the conclusions on contents, the second stage is based on the same sample used in the first stage.

As table 4 shows, the relationship between the editorial and news contents is very noticeable, generally high but uneven: the percentage of editorials that has a correspondence with the news content reaches 96.3%, almost the totality, in *El Mundo* but only 63.9% in *El País*. The percentages of editorials related to the news content are a bit more homogeneous in *Abc*, *La Vanguardia* and *La Razón*, ranging from 75% to 85%.

Table 4: Hierarchisation of the news events addressed in editorials

	Inside news page	First page of news section	Odd-numbered page	Odd-numbered page +*	Even-numbered page	Even-numbered page +*
<i>El País</i>	63.9	38.6	35.5	33.3	64.5	55.1
<i>El Mundo</i>	96.3	60.5	17.9	8.6	82.1	71.9
<i>Abc</i>	77.9	45.2	12.2	22.2	87.8	69.2
<i>La Razón</i>	85.0	55.0	35.3	54.2	64.7	63.6
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	81.0	53.0	67.9	80.0	32.1	38.5

* Percentage of texts in odd or even numbered pages with more than one page

The data confirming that the editorial section is highly motivated by the news agenda are complemented by other equally revealing data. In average, 50% of the editorials are not only related to the day's news coverage, but also to the main news item located in the first page of a news section. Below the average level are *Abc* (45.2%) and *El País* (38.6%), consistent with their lower interest in the news agenda (38.6). On the contrary, above that average are *La Vanguardia*, *La Razón* and particularly *El Mundo* (60.5%).

It should be inferred from the data from table 5 and the previous analysis that the relationship between the editorial and news contents is particularly associated to national politics. In *El Mundo*, *Abc* and *La Razón* more than half of the news stories addressed in the editorial texts have that origin; so it seems evident that the higher preference for national politics is complemented with a more intense editorial coverage. By contrast, a less polarised editorial agenda is presented by *El País*, which is slightly focused on international news, and especially *La Vanguardia*, where half of the news stories come equally from the international and society sections. The coverage of sports news in editorials is low across the sample of newspapers, unlike the editorial coverage of the culture section, which is inexistent in *El País* and *El Mundo*, very low in *La Vanguardia*, discreet in *Abc*, and a bit more significant in *La Razón* (4.4). In any case, the greatest interrelationship between editorials and news corresponds to the national section, not only because it represents the main provider, but also because definitively the greater the involvement with this section, the greater the relationship between the editorial and news contents.

Table 5: News section providing the editorial theme

	National	International	Society	Economy	Culture	Sports
<i>El País</i>	34.2	35.5	18.4	9.2		2.7
<i>El Mundo</i>	56.4	21.8	12.8	6.4		2.6
<i>Abc</i>	52.7	20.3	12.2	10.8	2.7	1.3
<i>La Razón</i>	50.0	7.4	33.8	1.5	4.4	2.9
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	37.0	25.9	24.7	8.7	1.2	2.5

The evaluation of the hierarchisation of the news also examined whether the news stories addressed in editorials were located in odd or even numbered pages. At first glance the results suggest certain lack of relevance, as the news stories addressed in editorials are placed predominantly in even-numbered pages. With the exception of *La Vanguardia*, with 67.9% of the editorially-treated news located in odd numbered pages, the predominance of the less-visible left page is considerable, even above 80% in *Abc* and *El Mundo*. It is appropriate, however, to relativize these data.

The analysis also measured the length of the editorially-treated news stories, and this analysis allowed us to verify that the majority of the editorially-treated news that were located in even-numbered pages were spread over two or more pages. That is, far from being a negative indicator, this layout is used to give more importance through the effect of the double page that may be further spread. Thus in *El Mundo* and *Abc*, where more than 80% of the news events addressed in editorials are placed in even-numbered pages, the coverage of more than two-thirds of these news (71.9% and 69.2%, respectively) spreads to at least two pages. This also happens in *La Razón* and *El País*, where the coverage of 63.6% and 55.1%, respectively, of the editorially-treated news events spreads to more than one page.

Table 6 highlights the dimensions of the news stories addressed in the editorial section. The average length of the news articles is two pages in *El País* and nearly three in *Abc* (this difference can be attributed to the page size of the latter newspaper). The average length of the coverage in *La Razón* is closer to that of *El País* and *El Mundo*; while the average length of the coverage in *La Vanguardia* is two pages and a half.

In fact, it is only in *El País* where the length of up to half of the editorially-treated news stories (53.3%) is limited to a single page; while in the other newspapers this occurs only in about one-third of the editorially-treated news stories (31.6% in *Abc*; 35.3% in *El Mundo*; 36.6% in *La Vanguardia*; and 41.7% in *La Razón*), which means that the length of about two-thirds of the editorially-treated news is greater than one page.

The following table shows that the size of some editorially-treated news stories is considerable, which confirms that the editorial section effectively feeds from relevant news stories: 14.8% of the editorially-treated news items in *El Mundo* are three pages long, while 14.8% of the editorially-treated news items in *La Vanguardia* are four pages long. In *Abc*, the length of 19.1% of the editorially-treated news items is five pages or more, which is considerable although the size of its pages leads, in good logic, to more extensive treatments.

Table 6: Page coverage

	Number of inside page coverage					Nº of columns of 1-page-long news stories				
	1 p	2 p	3 p	4 p	5 / +	1 c	2 c	3 c	4 c	5 c
<i>El País</i>	53.3	16.5	8.9	11.8	9.5	5.3	11.8	5.3	51.3	26.3
<i>El Mundo</i>	35.3	27.6	14.8	9.7	12.6	1.3	23.1	6.4	24.4	46.2
<i>Abc</i>	31.6	33.1	9.1	7.1	19.1	1.4	16.2	32.4	52.7	
<i>La Razón</i>	41.7	32.9	8.4	6.9	10.1		5.9	17.6	32.4	44.1
<i>La Vanguardia</i>	36.6	25.5	13.3	14.8	9.8		3.7	12.3	53.1	30.9

Table 6 also includes complementary and equally important data to identify the strength of the editorial section based on the relevance of the news items it addresses. In most cases, more than 75% of the editorially-treated one-page news stories have outstanding dimensions: five or four columns. *El Mundo*, *El País* and *La Razón* oscillate around this percentage, while *La Vanguardia* and *Abc* surpass it (with 84% and 85.1%), although in the case of *Abc* we are talking about three or four columns due to its format.

These notoriously significant and revealing indicators of the importance of the editorially-treated news stories are confirmed in table 7, which explores this relationship with respect to the front page, which is the magnifying lens used by the newspaper to showcase the news items it considers to be more important and relevant. This level of analysis confirms and reinforces the previous views since the percentage of editorials with front-page coverage is certainly high.

In fact, the average percentage of editorials with front-page coverage exceeds 50% -only *La Vanguardia* is under that average (47%). *El Mundo* stands out with a prominent 81.5% of editorials with front-page coverage.

This idea that editorials are given important front-page coverage could be counteracted by the examination of the dimensions of that front-page coverage, which indicates that the front-page coverage of editorials in *El Mundo* often, in 57.5% of cases, has small dimensions, i.e. of one or two columns or even just listed in the table of contents. However, this presumption is refuted by the fact that the front-page coverage of editorials in small dimensions occurs more often in *El País*: in 73.8% of cases. On the other hand, larger texts, of four or five columns, predominate in *La Razón* (64.3%) and *La Vanguardia* (53.2%); while texts of three or four columns predominate in *Abc* (60%).

Table 7: Editorials with front-page coverage (percentages)

Newspaper	With informative text	Top of front page	Main news item	Number of columns					With Photo	Number of columns				
				Table of contents/ 1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	5 C		1 C	2 C	3 C	4 C	5 C
<i>El País</i>	51.3	65.5	50.8	44.3	29.5	4.9	14.8	6.6	14.3	5.9	23.5	35.3	29.4	5.9
<i>El Mundo</i>	81.5	74.2	69.7	22.7	34.8	13.6	21.2	7.6	27.2	4.5	9.1	77.3		9.1
<i>Abc</i>	52.6	62.0	48.0	28.0	12.0	16.0	44		21.1	15.0	25.0	45.0	15.0	
<i>La Razón</i>	52.5	78.5	23.8	21.4	4.8	9.5	21.4	42.9	25.0	25.0			30.0	45.0
<i>Vanguardia</i>	47.0	72.3	32.0	23.4	6.4	14.9	21.3	31.9	28.0	39.3	21.4	3.6	32.1	3.6

These unequal inclinations probably reflect the different front page layouts, partially induced by formats, rather than disparate journalistic criteria. These differences do not question the general assessment of the relevance of the front-page news addressed in the editorials. This assessment has been in fact reinforced by the analysis dedicated to photography.

A very significant percentage of the front-page news are also illustrated with photographs (table 7) -at least one of every four in *La Vanguardia* (28%), *El Mundo* (27.2%) and *La Razón* (25%); one of every five in *Abc* (21.1%) and slightly less in *El País* (14.3%)- and are also generally presented with embossed letters, although always according to their characteristic designs: in *La Razón*, 75% of the editorially-treated front-page news are presented across four or five columns; in *Abc*, 60% are presented across three or four columns; in *El Mundo*, 77.3% across three columns; and in *El País* and *La Vanguardia*, more than one third are presented across four or five columns, although this last newspaper also stands out for the frequency of one-column images.

6. Conclusions

1. In the Spanish national press there is a strong interrelationship between the editorial section and the news content. In average, 80.1% of editorials, or four of every five, are connected to current news stories.
2. The high interrelationship extends to all national newspapers, although with noticeable differences: thus, *El Mundo* has the highest percentage of editorials connected to one of its news stories: 96.3%; on the contrary, in *El País* the percentage of editorials connected to news stories reaches 63.9%, which means that one-third of its editorials are motivated by past news or by an ideology.
3. The national news section is the main provider of inspiration for the editorial section. In *El Mundo*, *Abc*, and *La Razón* the national news section provides more than half of the themes for their editorials. Therefore, there is a certain relationship between this phenomenon and the so-called opinion press.
4. The interrelationship between the editorial section and the news content also reveals that the news stories addressed in the editorial pages are very relevant. Thus, the news stories of 57% of the editorials in the national press are located in the front pages.
5. The hierarchy of the front-page news addressed in editorials is uneven: large sizes are prevalent in *La Vanguardia*, *La Razón*, and *Abc*, but not in *El Mundo* and *El País*. In addition, more than 23% of the front page news are illustrated with a photograph.
6. The relevance of the news stories addressed in editorials is also manifested through the hierarchy values of the inside pages: thus, 50% of the news stories that motivate an editorial are located in the first page of a section. These types of news stories are the motivation for 60% of the editorials in *El Mundo*, and only 38.6% of the editorials in *El País*.
7. The size of the news articles that serve as reference for editorials is also a significant indicator of their importance: the average is two pages in *El País* and almost three in *Abc*. *El País* is also the only newspaper in which more than 50% of the editorially-treated news stories do not exceed one page in length.
8. The national section is the dominant referential space for the editorial section and its impact is twice as much as that of the international section (22.2% in average in the national press) and society section (20.4%). The relevance of the economy section is modest (1.7%); while the importance of the culture section is very low (7.3%), even lower than that of the sports section (2.4%).
9. The international section, considered a distinguishing feature of the quality press by the nature of the agenda and its cosmopolitan vocation, is the main source of news stories only for the editorials of *El País*. In *La Vanguardia*, the importance of the international section is eleven percentage points below the national section; this difference is larger in the rest of the press

in Madrid: over thirty percentage points in *El Mundo* and *Abc* and even forty points in *La Razón*.

10. While the national and international sections are predominant in the Spanish press, the editorial application of the rest of the news is very low: economy achieves an editorial presence of only 10% in *Abc*, and just 1.5% in *La Razón*; the editorial presence of culture news is inexistent in *El Mundo* and *El País* and below 5% in the other papers; the editorial presence of sports news is marginally in all papers. Meanwhile, the editorial coverage of society news (with the exception of the editorial coverage in *La Razón* due to religious motivations) is discreet in *La Vanguardia* and *El País*, and low in *El Mundo* and *Abc*, which results in the absence of key issues such as environment, technology, science and research from the editorial section because it focuses too much on the political agenda.

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