

An analysis of architecture-related content in the Spanish digital press. The case of *ABC.es* in 2019

Análisis de los contenidos de arquitectura en la prensa digital española. El caso de ABC.es en 2019



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Abstract:

This study has analysed architectural texts published in 2019 in the digital version of the newspaper *ABC*, which is *ABC.es*. The main objective of the research is to gain in-depth knowledge into the coverage of this content in one of the oldest national newspapers in Spain. The methodological technique used has been content analysis. The selected sample consists of 117 texts in the category of "Architecture" published between January and June of 2019, which have been analysed according to the following variables: the section of the website where the text is located, the journalistic genre, the type of architectural work or event addressed, the name of each author (specifying the professional profile of the most prolific writers), as well as the number of images, image galleries, and videos accompanying each text. The most enlightening results for gaining in-depth knowledge into the coverage of the content are those obtained from the analyses of the journalistic genre of the text and the type of architectural work. Among the conclusions, one that stands out is the scarce presence of architecture criticism in *ABC.es*.

Keywords:

Cultural journalism; digital journalism; Architecture; architecture criticism; *ABC.es*.

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Resumen:

La presente investigación analiza los textos de arquitectura publicados en la versión digital del diario ABC, es decir, en ABC.es, a lo largo del año 2019. El principal objetivo de este estudio ha sido conocer en profundidad el tratamiento de estos contenidos en uno de los diarios de tirada nacional de mayor antigüedad de España. La técnica metodológica utilizada ha sido el análisis de contenido. La muestra seleccionada está integrada por los 117 textos etiquetados como "Arquitectura" y publicados entre los meses de enero y junio del año 2019, que han sido analizados en función de las siguientes variables: la sección de la web en la que se localiza el texto, el género periodístico, el tipo de obra arquitectónica o evento de arquitectura sobre el que trata, el nombre de cada autor (especificando el perfil profesional de los que más escriben), así como el número de imágenes, galerías de imágenes y vídeos que los acompañan. Los resultados más esclarecedores para conocer en profundidad el tratamiento de los contenidos han sido los extraídos del análisis del género periodístico del texto y del tipo de obra arquitectónica. Entre las conclusiones destaca la poca presencia de la crítica de arquitectura en ABC.es.

Palabras clave:

Periodismo cultural; periodismo digital; Arquitectura; crítica de arquitectura; ABC.es

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1. Introduction

1.1. State of the research

Architecture is a discipline with major social repercussions that is simultaneously shaped by and dependent on a diversity of fields, such as politics, economics, technology, ecology, and sociology. However, despite its strong impact on the lives of citizens, only a scant amount of research has been carried out on architecture from a journalistic-cultural point of view. For this reason, it is essential to perform a study that delves into the coverage that architecture receives in the press.

Texts devoted to architecture are part of cultural journalism and, for that reason, they are usually found in the culture section of newspapers and in their cultural supplements. The purpose of a culture section is to “channel the information generated in the world of culture and give it standardised coverage as a differentiated specialisation, disseminating such information in order for it to reach the usual consumers of other types of news” (Rodríguez Pastoriza, 2006: 10). Weekly supplements, on the other hand, are reserved for the publication of texts that detach themselves from current news and invite reflection by experts and journalists who use specialised sources, and consequently,

The production routines of specialised information are ostensibly distanced from the routines and times imposed by official sources and, as a result, the former prioritise the contrast and verification of the informative data distributed by the large news agencies over the immediacy imposed by mainstream journalism. (Quesada, 2012: 71)

In this way, cultural supplements play a fundamental role in setting criteria within the cultural ecosystem, as they still enjoy a more leisurely type of journalistic practice that makes it possible to contrast and verify the data transmitted by the official sources, or in other words, by interested sources. Moreover, we must not forget the following:

In today's society, with entertainment programmes strongly directed at mass audiences, these shows generate a lot of revenue, which reinforces their influence on the information society. The most immediate consequence is their impact on the media agenda which, in addition to self-promotion, offers a large variety of content on shows as well as everything related to the broad spectrum of entertainment. Thus, there is an emergence of superficial products, shallow information, and a diverse offering of messages for quick consumption with minimum effort (Xosé López, 2004: 383).

Unfortunately, advertising and sponsorship are becoming increasingly important on the cultural agenda of newspapers, a situation that has increased even more over the years, and is clearly visible in both the digital versions of newspapers and digital natives as well. Moreover, these texts are affected by another negative practice typical of the web –clickbait. This has encouraged the digital press to publish increasingly biased headlines and to prioritise the number of visits over the quality of the content itself. In general, the texts of cultural supplements are more protected from this trend, although the number of such publications is unfortunately decreasing in all newspapers. Nevertheless, “the traditional print media do not disregard them as platforms of prestige, but see them as a tool for cultural stirring and reflection on creation more than anything else” (Ruiz Mantilla and Garbisu Buesa, 2019: 29). At this point it should be emphasised that cultural supplements only exist in the traditional media, or in other words, none of the Spanish digital native newspapers has a cultural supplement and, in fact, some of the latter have a very poor culture section, which is not even comparable to

the quality of any traditional newspaper. However, as Professor Xosé López (2004) states, the media should not forget the following:

Those who want to offer products containing quality information related to today's society can hardly do so without a good culture section or cultural news department. Although this type of information is not one of the strong points of most media, which give a limited number of pages or very limited space to the world of culture, the fact is that the most demanding citizens expect quality cultural content in their daily newspapers (389).

Among the cultural content of the media, it is essential for architecture to be present, especially when its mission as an artistic and practical endeavour is to respond to a social need. In his book *Why Architecture Matters* (2012), architecture critic Paul Goldberger, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 1984 for his articles published in *The New York Times*, linked the three issues of art, function, and social purpose as follows:

Architecture as art arises from the desire to do more than solve a functional problem. In a sense, this deeper desire is itself the ethical function of architecture, a statement that the art of a building exists not just for the sake of art, not as art for art's sake, but art with a social purpose (76).

However, this ethical function of architecture described by Goldberger is not, on some occasions, neither the driving force nor the focus from which texts published in newspapers are written. This is even less so in the digital ecosystem where the text itself is sometimes less important than the images, and at times is even used exclusively to describe the images. Consequently, what often happens is that architecture is overshadowed by frivolity in some articles as a mere superficial issue, and is not even the main focus. However, the media cannot forget that this highly complex discipline always involves the creation of a social space, and therefore must be explained with rigour, as it has a great influence on the lives of citizens.

1.2. Objectives

This research analyses the content of architecture texts in the Spanish digital press, specifically, those published during 2019 on the website of the *ABC* newspaper. As mentioned above, the texts devoted to this subject are part of cultural journalism. However, although many of the articles are found in the culture section of the newspaper or its cultural supplement (*ABC Cultural*), they are also present in other sections such as Madrid, Spain, Travel (*Viajar*) and, less frequently, in those of Family (*Familia*), Opinion (*Opinión*), Science (*Ciencia*), and International (*Internacional*). They can also be found in the newspaper's blogs, as well as in *Summum*, which is the portal for trends, fashion and leisure.

The main objective of this study is to analyse in-depth the nature of texts labelled "Architecture" in *ABC.es* to gain knowledge regarding the journalistic coverage of the content of such articles in the newspaper. However, this research also aims to highlight the benefits of publicising architecture in the press so that citizens might create emotional ties with the environment and, consequently, have a greater interest in its conservation. The fact is, with regard to its endeavour as a public service, the press must not forget the undeniable reality described by Alexandra Lange (2012), who has been a contributor to newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine, as well as an architecture critic on the portal known as *Curbed*:

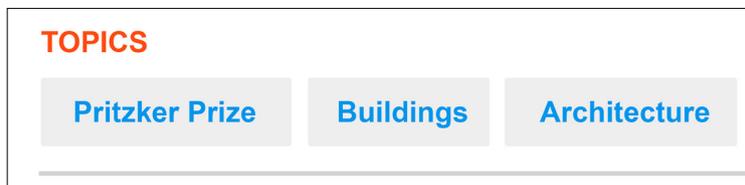
Buildings are everywhere, large and small, ugly and beautiful, ambitious and dumb. We walk among them and live inside them, largely passive dwellers in cities of towers, houses, open spaces and shops we had no hand in creating. But we are their best audience. Owners, clients and residents come and go, but architecture lives on, acting a role in the life of the city and its citizens long after the original players are gone (8).

Architecture lives on much longer than we do, sometimes for several centuries, like the monuments of ancient times that today represent a valuable heritage and arouse the cultural interest of citizens from all over the world. For this reason, it is vital that the media not only report on architecture, but also evaluate it rigorously, and select their content appropriately.

2. Methodology

Content analysis has been used as the methodology for this research. Firstly, the *ABC.es* media and the period of study (2019) were selected. Next, the research was focused on all the texts from this period labelled “Architecture”, which were published at the following web address: <https://www.abc.es/cultura/arte/arquitectura>. In the following image (Fig. 1), one can observe the “Architecture” label on the website. Moreover, these texts always have other labels, which in this case are “Buildings” and the “Pritzker Prize”.

Figure 1. Example of the label “Architecture” appearing at the end of the texts on *ABC.es*



At this point, it should be emphasised that the newspaper also publishes texts with other labels related to architecture, such as “Urbanism”, “Building Works”, “Housing”, and “Monuments”, but not all of them are labelled “Architecture”. Due to the fact that architecture is such a diverse, complex activity and its practice is closely related to other disciplines, it is not always easy to draw a dividing line when it comes to classification. However, the address of the link where *ABC.es* publishes its content labelled “Architecture” (outlined in detail in the previous paragraph), reveals that the newspaper considers the discipline to be one of creative authorship from an artistic-cultural approach. In fact, when carrying out this analysis, it has been observed that the newspaper gives priority to these issues when including texts under the label “Architecture”, but relegates some of them to the other aforementioned labels. Therefore, although they are linked to architecture, the newspaper associates these texts with other fields such as, for example, infrastructure or economics. For this reason, it is necessary to emphasise that this research has focused on the analysis of the texts labelled “Architecture”, which were published on the web during the period mentioned. Table 1 shows the monthly figures and the total:

Table 1. “Architecture” articles published each month in 2019 on *ABC.es*

Number of texts labelled “Architecture” on <i>ABC.es</i> in 2019												
Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total
14	11	23	22	27	20	19	12	16	21	22	21	228
117 texts						111 texts						

Source: Prepared by the author

As shown in Table 1, the newspaper published 228 articles labelled “Architecture” throughout the year. Specifically, the present study has carried out an in-depth analysis of the 117 texts published in the first half of the year from January to June. The methodology used was content analysis, taking into account the following variables that are directly related to the main objective of the research: the section of the website where the text is placed, the journalistic genre, the type of architecture work or event covered in the writing, the names of the authors and the professional profiles of those with the most publications, and the resources used to illustrate each text: images, image galleries, and videos.

3. Results

The following is an analysis of the sample of 117 texts based on the variables indicated in the previous section.

3.1. Placement of the architecture texts

In the culture section of *ABC* and its supplement, *ABC Cultural*, 46 texts labelled “Architecture” were published (25 and 21, respectively) in the first half of 2019, as can be seen in Table 2, together with the number of publications in the other sections.

Table 2. Placement of texts labelled “Architecture” in ABC.es in 2019

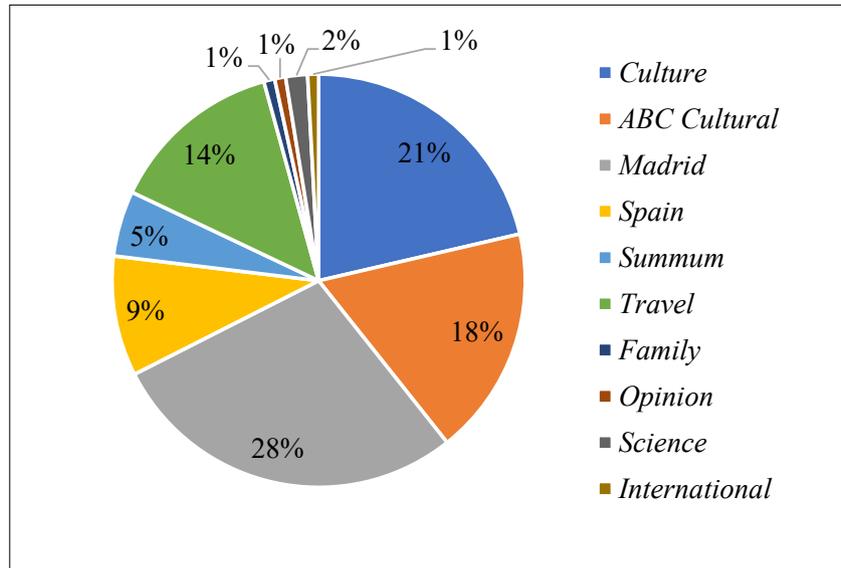
Sections where texts labelled “Architecture” appeared in 2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
<i>Culture</i>	2	1	3	8	5	6	25
<i>ABC Cultural</i>	3	1	3	6	7	1	21
<i>Madrid</i>	4	4	7	6	7	5	33
<i>Spain</i>	0	2	3	1	3	2	11
<i>Summum</i>	2	1	1	0	1	1	6
<i>Travel</i>	2	2	6	0	4	2	16
<i>Family</i>	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Opinion</i>	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<i>Science</i>	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
<i>International</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	14	11	23	22	27	20	117

Source: Prepared by the author

Both in the *Culture* section and in *ABC Cultural*, most of the topics are related to current events, although in the former we have also found quiz-like texts regarding buildings in order to “test the reader’s knowledge of architecture”, as the page literally states. However, the section entitled *Madrid* has the highest number of architecture articles published (33), many of which are reports about iconic historical buildings in the city. Fourth place goes to the *Travel* section with 16 texts, which mostly focus on landmark structures in different countries of the world. In fifth position is the *Spain* section with 11 texts, where we find articles about buildings or events taking place in different parts of the country. In sixth place is *Summum*, with six publications. However, this section is not intended to inform the reader or offer evaluations about architecture, but rather to advertise the price of celebrity mansions and the lifestyles of their owners. In the rest of the sections, the subject receives very limited coverage, with only one or two articles. At this point, it should also be pointed out that in the menu of architecture topics, the texts of the ABC blog entitled *La viga en el ojo* (The beam in one’s eye) do not appear, yet the blog is dedicated to architecture and was founded by critic Fredy Massad in 2013. However, the total number of texts labelled “Architecture” would hardly change, as a look at the blog shows that there was only one text published in the first half of 2019.

Based on the total data in Table 2, Graph 1 has been drawn up to visually show the percentage of architecture texts published in the different sections.

Graph 1. Placement of "Architecture" articles in *ABC.es* in 2019



Source: Prepared by the author

As can be seen in Graph 1, the *Culture* section (21%) and *ABC Cultural* (18%) account for 39%, and when added to that of *Madrid* (28%), the sum total is 67%, which means that the three sections account for more than two thirds of the total volume of texts published in the six-month period. In fourth place is *Travel* with 14%. Fifth and sixth place go to *Spain* and *Summum*, with 9% and 5%, respectively. The remaining sections represent a very small percentage, which is less than 2%.

3.2. Type of architecture work or event

Although architecture is already a very specific topic in the press, different subjects coexist within the texts labelled "Architecture" in *ABC.es*. For this study, eight categories have been created for this purpose, which define in greater detail the type of architecture work or event in the texts, and which are independent of the newspaper's labels. All of them are listed in Table 3 below.

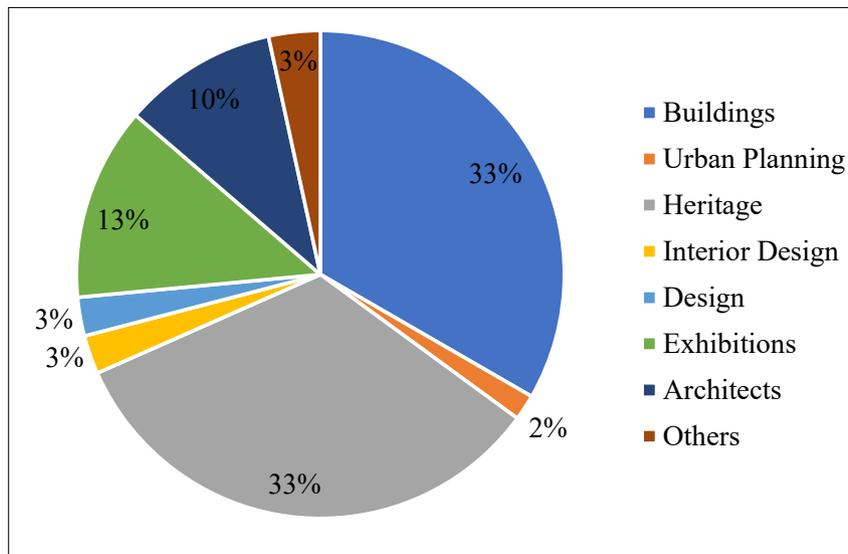
Table 3. Type of work or event covered in the ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019

Work or event covered in the ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
Buildings	5	2	9	7	10	6	39
Urban planning	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Heritage	4	4	7	6	9	9	39
Interior design	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Design	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Exhibitions	1	2	2	6	2	2	15
Architects	2	1	3	1	4	1	12
Other	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
Total	14	11	23	22	27	20	117

Source: Prepared by the author

As can be seen in Table 3, the most popular texts are those related to “Buildings” and “Heritage”, as both categories have 39 publications. In third position are texts related to “Exhibitions”, with 15 in total, and in fourth position are those focusing on the figure of the architect, with 12 in total. The number of publications in the remaining categories is small: there are four in “Other”, which include texts that do not aim to provide information or evaluate architecture, three in “Interior Design” and “Design”, and just two in “Urban Planning”.

Based on the total numbers in Table 3, Graph 2 has been drawn up to provide a visual display of the percentage of each of the categories into which the content of the texts labelled “Architecture” have been classified.

Graph 2. Ranking of *ABC.es* “Architecture” texts in 2019 by category and percentage

Source: Prepared by the author

As can be seen in Graph 2, the highest percentages belong to texts that deal with Buildings and Heritage, each accounting for 33%, so that the sum of the two together is nearly two thirds of the total. In third and fourth place are texts devoted to Exhibitions and Architects themselves, accounting for 13% and 10%, respectively. The percentages for the categories of “Interior Design”, “Design”, “Urban Planning” and “Other” are very small, which are all equal to or less than 3%.

3.3. Journalistic genres

Another key analysis in this research has been to determine the journalistic genre that determines the purpose of each text. For this study, we have followed the definitions provided by journalist Álex Grijelmo in his book *El estilo del periodista* (2014) (The Journalist’s Style). Table 4 shows the number of texts according to journalistic genre for each month, and the totals. In addition, the category “Other” has been created in this research in order to include quiz-like texts and those created by using image galleries as a foundation, or in other words, adding a few sentences under each image.

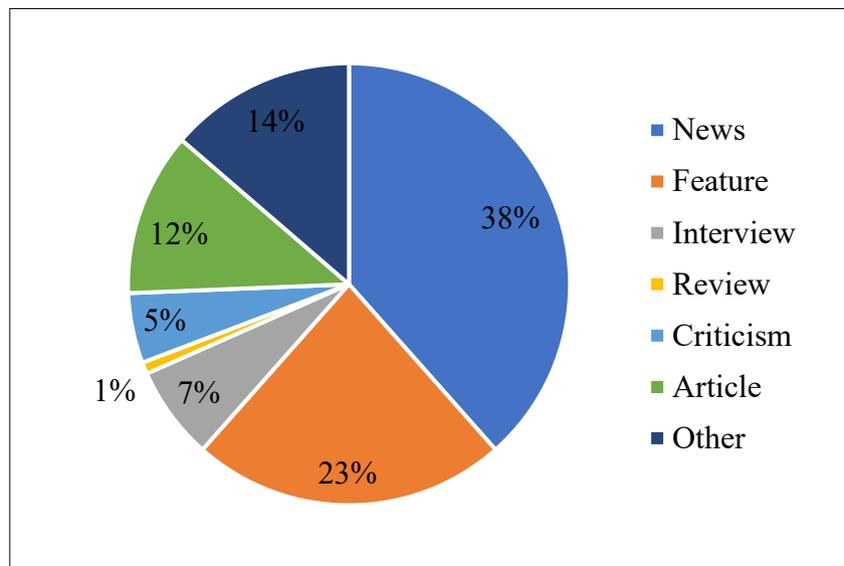
Table 4. Genres of ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019

Genres of ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	Total
News	4	7	10	7	9	8	45
Features	4	3	5	7	4	4	27
Interviews	2	0	2	2	0	2	8
Reviews	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Criticism	1	0	1	2	1	1	6
Articles	0	0	2	1	8	3	14
Other	3	0	3	3	5	2	16
Total	14	11	23	22	27	20	117

Source: Prepared by the author

As shown in Table 4, most of the architecture texts are News items, with a total of 45. Another genre that also abounds is the Feature, with 27 texts. In third and fourth position are texts labelled Other and Articles, with 16 and 14, respectively. In fifth and sixth place are the Interview and Criticism, with 8 and 6 publications, respectively. Finally, the Review only appeared once in the entire six-month period.

Based on the total numbers in Table 4, Graph 3 has been drawn up to visually show the percentage represented by each of the genres.

Graph 3. Genres of “Architecture” texts in *ABC.es* in 2019

Source: Prepared by the author

As can be seen in Graph 3, the two genres with the highest percentages are News (38%) and Features (23%), which together account for 61%, making up nearly two thirds of the total. The third and fourth positions are occupied by texts classified as Other and Articles, with 14% and 12%, respectively. In fifth and sixth place are Interviews and Criticism, which account for 7% and 5% of the texts, respectively. Finally, the Review accounts for only 1%.

At this point, it must be stated that the preeminent genre in mainstream journalism is news, defined as “the essence of journalism, or the raw material. News in its pure state has its origin in an event that is surprising, shocking, paradoxical, or transcendental, and above all, recent” (Grijelmo, 2014: 29). In contrast, a genre typical of specialised journalism is Criticism, where the professional “analyses in detail an artistic or cultural work. Criticism is clearly an opinionated text, which includes information that outlines and explains the work and gives the critic’s assessment of it as well” (Grijelmo, 2014: 112). The presence of this last type of text, which analyses an architecture work and invites reflection, is of vital importance in cultural journalism. As the architect and Professor Josep Maria Montaner (2013) explains,

Criticism involves an aesthetic judgement. This judgement consists of an individual assessment of the architecture work that critics make based on the complexity of the body of knowledge at their disposal, the methodology they use, their capability for synthesis and analysis, as well as their sensitivity, intuition and taste. (7)

Furthermore, Montaner (2013) specifies that in the case of architecture, the judgement is established on the basis of whether the work “has achieved its purpose: distributional and social functionality, beauty and expression of symbols and

meanings, appropriate use of materials and techniques, as well as the relationship with the urban context, the location, and the environment” (11). Golberger (2007) also insists that the architecture critic must judge the work based on its social and political context, specifying the following:

A critic can and should establish a set of social and political principles that define his judgment, and act as a foundation for his criticism. The challenge is to hold onto these principles and at the same time to remain open to a broader range of aesthetic responses to these principles than any one architect might have, and then to be able to judge these different aesthetic responses on their own terms. I believe architecture exists in a social and political context, and almost always needs to be judged within that context (para. 15).

3.3.1. *The importance of criticism and critics*

Criticism was present in only 5% of the texts labelled “Architecture” in *ABC.es* in the first half of 2019. This is a scant percentage, even more so for a national newspaper. As far back as 2010, Alexandra Lange warned of the danger of architecture criticism in the media, assuring that if the situation was not remedied, criticism could be relegated exclusively to the academic world and might miss the opportunity to have a practical meaning, and to be useful, both for the development of present society as well as for those who are dedicated to carrying out the profession:

If we are not careful, if critics don't assert their authority and attract an audience, if magazines and newspapers don't keep design and architecture in their culture sections, if new institutions aren't created online, architecture critique could disappear back into the academy. The uncertainty of the media landscape is part of the problem. For critics to do their job, they need a certain degree of security. Financial security, in the sense of someone to pay for their travel (if the architect pays, it creates an ethical quandary) and someone to pay for their words (to make it worth their while). But they also need institutional security to a point. Authority comes from expertise, it comes from developing a point of view over time, it comes from the audience expectations that a critic will be there to tell them what is what, but it also comes from others' support. (para. 4).

The economic and institutional security that Lange describes is vital in order for a critic to be able to exercise her or his role independently, and thus avoid being manipulated by external pressures or having to obey hidden interests. The architect and historian Joseph Rykwert (2014) wrote the following in the Italian magazine *Domus*:

The critic must be a fighter. To do so, critics must of course have a base from which to operate –not only the obvious one of a newspaper, periodical, radio or television programme or even a blog that will make their views public, but they must, more intimately, have a clearly articulated notion of what they think society must expect of its builders, meaning not only architects, but also building speculators, developers, local and central government–, in fact, all those who frame the programmes by which the architect must operate (para. 7).

The requirement of the critic to have knowledge related to the importance of the economic, political, and social context to which he or she must always refer in order to make informed judgements, is once again highlighted in the quotation. In the same text, Rykwert (2014) argues that the critic can become even more immersed in this context by interacting directly with the citizens and inhabitants of the environment or a specific building: “Further, the critic is justified in enquiring about how the building is perceived both by users and the general public, since all such reactions do form part of any critical arsenal” (para. 6). A clear example of this latter profile of the architecture critic to which Rykwert refers was the

American Jane Jacobs. The influence of this editor of the *Architectural Forum* magazine went beyond the boundaries of her role, shedding light on her more activist side, an example of which is Jacobs' involvement with a large number of West Village residents in stopping construction of the Lower Manhattan Expressway. According to the way she perceived her work, Jacobs demonstrated that an architecture critic who succeeds in conveying citizen needs to the media makes a significant contribution to helping citizens take care of the city they inhabit.

In her book entitled *Writing about Architecture* (2012), Alexandra Lange also cites Jacobs as an example of a critic who takes an “activist” approach in her articles. Moreover, in the same book, Lange sets out three other approaches that define critics as well. Using New York critics Ada Louise Huxtable and Lewis Mumford as examples, the first of the three approaches Lange cites is the “formal” approach, which emphasises the following:

On the visual: the building or object's form. Both Huxtable and Mumford come to their judgments through intense looking. They write about what they see from the street: the building's organization, materials, connections. They literally walk you through the building, describing and picking at it as they go, suggesting improvements. (10)

The second approach Lange mentions, quoting American critic Herbert Muschamp, is the one known as “experiential”:

Created and defined by Muschamp, the late *New York Times* critic. Muschamp is also descriptive in his writing, but he expresses the way a building makes him (and by extension, the reader) feel. His reviews can start anywhere in a building and often mix in other media –movies, art, books, poetry– in order to make the emotional connection between architecture and reader (10).

The third and final approach of the three (as the fourth mentioned by Lange is that of “activist”, mentioned above) is the one labelled “historical”, which she defines as follows:

Primarily identifiable in the work of the critic Paul Goldberger. He is interested in the architect's career and in fitting buildings within that (limited) framework. A Goldberger review may be as much about personality and presence on the world stage as it is about a building, but it also offers a sense of context missing from other critics' work. One is left with a sense of completeness, of having a thorough survey (10-11).

This succinct way of classifying and describing the different approaches that a critic can take when writing an article is extremely revealing when trying to understand the different ways of approaching architecture through criticism. On the other hand, it is essential that the media cross-check what they are disseminating at the same time and always be aware of the two questions pointed out by architect and professor Eduardo Prieto (2019) as follows: “Firstly, Who is the critic? Secondly, Who do critics write for? The answers to these two questions not only define contemporary art or architecture, but they also define society itself” (63). By the same token, newspapers also have to ask themselves who the journalists are and for whom they write, even more so nowadays, as a large number of them are freelancers or external collaborators who do not work in the newsrooms.

3.4. Professionals who write the texts

In order to know precisely who the critics are, as well as the journalists who are responsible for the architecture content in *ABC.es*, Table 5 provides a list of the names of those professionals who have written the largest number of texts on the

subject in the period analysed, specifying the number of texts published by each of them, both on a monthly basis and over the entire six-month period.

Table 5. Authors of ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019

Authors of ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019	January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
Newsroom	3	2	4	2	4	2	17
Adrián Delgado	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Belén Rodrigo	3	3	4	4	4	3	21
Fredy Massad	2	0	4	4	7	1	18
Javier Díaz-Guardiola	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Marta R.Domingo	1	0	1	2	0	0	4
Paloma Santamaría	0	1	2	0	1	1	5
<i>Agencia EFE</i>	0	0	0	2	0	2	4

Source: Prepared by the author

Table 5 clearly shows that the professionals with the highest number of publications by far are Belén Rodrigo (21 texts), Fredy Massad (18 texts), and in third place, the 17 texts that appear without an author’s signature, indicating only the name of the newspaper’s own newsroom or their respective publications. The latter situation is common in the case of short news articles based on press releases or statements from official sources. The other people who appear in the table have written texts a maximum of five times. However, this figure is much higher than that of other professionals who are not included, and who are quoted below. In fact, even though there were 45 contributors in total, 37 of these published just one or two texts in the entire six-month period. Only two texts were contributed by the following professionals: César Justel, Juan Pedro Quiñonero, M.C., S.L. and Sara Medialdea. The following had only one publication: Jorge Bustillo, Laura Peraita, Juan Francisco Rueda, María I. Ortiz, M. N., D. Morán, J. F. Alonso, Jesús Fuentes, Isabel Lázaro, J. L. Fernández, Lefteris Karagiannopoulos, Carlos Lameda, Bruno Pardo Porto, Rosalía Sánchez, Ignacio. S. Calleja, Adoney Bermúdez, Paola Rodríguez, Begoña Castiella, David Alandete, Mar Sánchez-Cascado, Valle Sánchez, Sergi Doria, H. Díaz, Fernando Blasco, Pedro Gargantilla, Ángel Gómez Fuentes, Lourdes Gómez, Silvia Nieto, Natividad Pulido, as well as Reuters and Europa Press agencies.

After reviewing the professional profiles of those who wrote the most texts on architecture (Belén Rodrigo and Fredy Massad), it was confirmed that they have very different backgrounds, yet both of them are specialists in the discipline

about which they write. Firstly, Belén Rodrigo (Segovia, 1977) has a degree in Journalism from Complutense University of Madrid, as well as a History degree from *UNED*. She currently works as a journalist for *ABC.es*, publishing reports on historical buildings in the capital city, which she documents with her own photographs. Secondly, Fredy Massad (Banfield, Buenos Aires, 1966) is an architect from the University of Buenos Aires (Argentina) and a lecturer in Theory and Criticism of Architecture at the Architecture School of *UIC* in Barcelona. In addition to writing for the newspaper, he is also the architecture critic for the *ABC Cultural* supplement and author of the architecture blog *La viga en el ojo* on *ABC.es*. Thus, both have specialised professional training in the type of content about which they write.

3.5. Web design and visual/audio-visual resources

One factor that undoubtedly influences the reading of publications is the web design. The appearance of the text menu labelled “Architecture” in *ABC.es* is detailed in the following image (Fig. 2):

Figure 2. Menu of topics labelled “Architecture” in *ABC.es*

The screenshot shows the ABC.es website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links to various news categories like 'Es Noticia', 'Coronavirus España', etc. Below this is a search bar and a 'Deportes COPE' logo. The main header features the 'ABC Temas' logo and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. A horizontal menu lists various topics: ESPAÑA, INTERNACIONAL, ECONOMÍA, SOCIEDAD, MADRID, FAMILIA, OPINIÓN, DEPORTES, GENTE, CULTURA, CIENCIA, HISTORIA, VIAJAR, TECNOLOGÍA, SALUD, MÁS. The main content area is titled 'Arquitectura' and includes a breadcrumb trail: ABC > CULTURA > ARTE > ARQUITECTURA. Below the title, there are filters for content type and a 'Publicidad' section. Two articles are displayed: 'Solo Houses, todas las casas del mundo en Teruel' by Javier Díaz-Guardiola and 'Un palacete art decó transformado en casino' by Belén Rodrigo. A sidebar on the right contains an RSS feed and a 'LO MÁS LEIDO EN Arquitectura' section with three featured articles.

When you click on a text, the content appears in a way that is structured according to the layout shown in the following image (Fig.3):

Figure 3. Example of an architecture text from the digital version of *ABC Cultural*, published on 9th May 2019

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ABC ABC CULTURAL

España ▾ Internacional Economía ▾ Sociedad Madrid ▾ Familia ▾ Opinión ▾ Deportes ▾ Gente ▾ **Cultura** ▾ Ciencia Historia Viajar ▾ Play ▾ Bienestar ▾ Más

ABC CULTURA Libros Música Teatro Arte Toros **ABC Cultural**

Publicidad

ARQUITECTURA

La arquitectura se llena de aire

- A Prada Poole, ahora en el CAAC de Sevilla, le debemos mucho de una arquitectura que nació utópica y se ha impuesto como realidad



Publicidad

«Instant City» (Ibiza, 1971), una de las obras de Prada Poole

0 Fredy Massad

Actualizado 09/05/2019 01:08h [GUARDAR](#)

Prada Poole: la arquitectura perecedera de las pompas de jabón presenta una exhaustiva descripción de la **capacidad creadora de este arquitecto** a través de 1.400 objetos (planos, fotos, videos, maquetas, publicaciones...). Coproducida por el CAAC y el MUSAC y comisariada por el arquitecto **Antonio Cobo**, la muestra se centra en el segmento cronológico que va de 1968 a 1973, marcado por las consecuencias y profundos replanteamientos a los que inducen las revueltas sociales y la crisis del petróleo, y que coincide con el desarrollo de las principales obras de arquitectura neumática desarrolladas por este autor.

Fuertemente inmerso en las sinergias radicales y transformadoras de ese periodo, el futuro y la clara comprensión de la importancia de la computación no como mera herramienta de diseño, sino como un elemento arquitectónico más se convirtieron en los temas clave del trabajo de este arquitecto nacido en 1938. **Prada Poole** fue miembro

When writing about disciplines in which the visual factor is highly important, as in the case of art and architecture, “We cannot forget about images. The usual thing is for us to make discourses about things that ‘can be seen’, and it is very common that some visual reproductions of specific things are essential in order to make the argument that is going to be developed understandable” (Ramírez, 2014: 31). For this reason, this type of text is usually illustrated by several images or image galleries that allow us to see, for example, the design of the facade of a building, the most prominent parts of its interior, etc. In addition, unlike paper publications, the digital medium has the enormous advantage of having unlimited space, which makes it possible to include as many images as desired.

In order to know the exact number of images that have illustrated the architecture texts, Table 6 displays not only the total number of images published each month, but also the number of images that have appeared in each text (in parentheses).

Table 6. Images in *ABC.es* “Architecture” texts in 2019

Images in <i>ABC.es</i> “Architecture” texts in 2019						
January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
38 (1+4+2+5+6+1+1+3+2+9+4)	28 (2+6+3+2+5+1+6+1+2)	65 (4+5+7+4+1+2+3+3+5+6+3+2+1+3+1+6+3+1+5)	53 (2+1+2+1+5+4+1+2+2+3+5+1+5+2+3+4+5+5)	63 (3+2+3+5+2+4+6+2+7+1+1+3+6+1+2+1+5+3+1+4+1)	51 (1+1+5+4+1+11+5+1+1+4+1+2+3+1+1+5+4)	298

Source: Prepared by the author

As can be seen in Table 6, all texts illustrated with images have at least one image (the few texts that do not have any images in content have an image gallery or video). There is even a considerable number of publications that have more than four images, yet such numbers are typical of highly visual content. In total, 298 images were published in the first half of the year in the architecture articles. However, one must add to this number those included in the image galleries, which have been counted separately in Table 7, along with the number of images in each gallery in parentheses.

Table 7. Image galleries in ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019

Image galleries in ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019						
January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
3 (7+10+ 10)	2 (5+10)	4 (10+10+ 10+6)	4 (10+10+ 12+10)	4 (22+5+ 6+4)	2 (13+14)	19 galleries (184 images)

Source: Prepared by the author

Thus, in addition to the 298 images, there are 184 images in the 19 galleries that also accompany the texts. In fact, some of them have been illustrated with images as well as an image gallery. In other words, a total of 482 images have been published to illustrate the 117 architecture texts for the first half of 2019.

At the same time, the digital medium offers the possibility of making use of audio-visual resources. Though it is true that videos are not very common, the newspaper has also used them in this content as a complement to the information offered in certain articles. Table 8 shows the videos published monthly during the period studied. There is always one video per text, although some texts include images or an image gallery in addition to a video.

Table 8. Videos in ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019

Videos in ABC.es “Architecture” texts in 2019						
January	February	March	April	May	June	Total
1	0	1	1	4	2	9

Source: Prepared by the author

As shown in Table 8, a total of 9 videos were published. There were none in February, one each in the months of January, March, and April, two in June, and four in May. It can therefore be affirmed that we have found an architecture topic with a video nearly every month.

4. Conclusions

This research provides increased knowledge regarding the coverage of content labelled “Architecture” in ABC.es. Several conclusions have been drawn from the sample studied. The first is that the number of texts labelled “Architecture” published in 2019 is similar when comparing both six-month periods: 117 in the first and 111 in the second. On the other hand, the number of monthly texts dedicated to this discipline has been quite variable, ranging from 11 published in

February to 27 in May. Moreover, it should be mentioned that even though the newspaper's website is well-designed, the texts can only be accessed by entering the name of the topic in the search engine, and not through the section menu. In other words, there is no direct access to architecture content in *ABC.es*, unlike *El País.com*, which includes a tab dedicated exclusively to this discipline in the menu of its culture section. However, *El País.com* is the only Spanish newspaper to offer this feature.

In this study, it bears mentioning that in order to analyse in depth the current state of architecture in this newspaper, it was important to focus not only on the texts published in the culture section and supplement, but on the *Madrid* section as well, because architectural content is very influential in the latter section, which in fact published the largest number of texts (33 in total) representing 28%, compared to 21% in the culture section and 18% in the *ABC Cultural* supplement.

Within the architecture texts, different categories have been created specifically for this study in order to further define the content. Among them, the most popular were “Buildings” and “Heritage”, both with 39 texts, representing the same percentage (33% each). Based on these figures, it can be deduced that *ABC.es* gives the same importance to contemporary as well as historic buildings. This variety is relevant at a cultural level, as it encourages the interest of readers with different profiles. On the other hand, texts regarding disciplines that can be considered related to architecture, such as interior design and design, each account for 3%, which are considerably low percentages for this type of content.

The study of genres also offers some highly revealing data on the coverage of architecture. For example, it was found that 38% of the texts are news, or in other words, their mission is purely to inform. By contrast, criticism requires that the professionals who write such texts must provide value judgements and reflection on the theory of the subject, yet these only comprise 5% of the total. This is a very small percentage, which should be higher, as architecture has a strong impact on people's lives, and therefore it is truly important not only to inform, but also to reflect on this discipline in the media. However, a positive aspect must also be pointed out, which is the high number of features published over the six-month period (27 to be precise), representing 23% of the total. These types of texts are very enriching because they approach a topic by joining together diverse points of view. However, it is unfortunate that these features only covered heritage buildings (at least in the six-month period analysed), the vast majority of which are small palaces in Madrid, and that not more coverage was given to contemporary buildings or projects. It has also been confirmed that the number of texts based exclusively on image galleries and quiz-like tests is quite high: 16 in total, accounting for 14% (classified as “Other” in Graph 3). This is even more striking if one considers that a large number of these texts are published in the Culture section or in the *ABC Cultural* supplement. Undoubtedly, this is a clear example of the obsession that exists in the digital media for *clickbait*.

With regard to the professional profiles of those who have written the most articles about architecture in *ABC.es*, it has been confirmed that both Belén Rodrigo (21 texts) and Fredy Massad (18 texts) are experts in this subject. In spite of this, the frequency with which some of the other professionals write should be increased, even if the number of them has to be reduced, so that readers have more references in the field. The 117 texts analysed were published by 45 different authors, but 37 of them only wrote once or twice during the six-month period.

Finally, it has been confirmed that the sum of images and image galleries illustrating the articles of this discipline reached a total of 482 images among the 117 texts. This figure could be even higher if all the texts contained more than one image. On the other hand, video is a resource that is used much less often. Even though at least one video was published nearly every month, the total figure for the first half of the year was only nine, and this number should be higher in order to take advantage of the different opportunities offered by the digital medium.

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