Contemporary European History (2021), **30**, *198–213*
doi:10.1017/S0960777320000636

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

ARTICLE

Weak State, Powerful Culture: The Emergence of Spanish Cultural Diplomacy, 1914–1936

Luis G. Martínez del Campo

Complutense University of Madrid. Faculty of Geography and History. Department of Modern and Contemporary History. Building B. Prof. Aranguren, s/n, 28040 Madrid, Spain
luisgmar@ucm.es

This article explores the historical factors that allowed a weak state like Spain to have cultural influence in other European countries during the interwar period. Drawing on archival material from several countries, I argue that Spain could not promote systematically its culture in the early 1920s, but that it gained in soft power because of Western European countries' new interest first in Spanish neutrality and then in the Latin American market. When the Spanish state developed an active cultural diplomacy in the late 1920s, it was able to derive benefit from the work that other countries had already done to promote Spanish language and culture.

The conduct of foreign policy changed during the First World War. The propaganda battle to win neutral support showed that cultural promotion could be a source of international influence and standing. Until then, states had mainly relied on their military and increasingly also their economic resources to wield power in the international sphere. In the interwar period, however, the former belligerents progressively transformed their wartime propaganda offices into cultural diplomatic infrastructures. These new diplomatic strategies were designed to cultivate, manage and channel national 'soft power', a form of influence based on 'persuasion and attraction', rather than coercion and command. From then onwards, a country's power resources would include not only military force or economic strength but also education, language and cultural values.[1] In short, the First World War and its aftermath widened the range of tools states had at their disposal to gain international influence.

Nevertheless, cultural diplomacy complemented, but did not replace, hard power politics. For one, cultural diplomacy is a 'political projection' of a country's 'national power', whose sources are never exclusively cultural but may range from a 'self-image of cultural and civilisation confidence' to military strength, industrial development and national wealth.[2] In fact, as scholars have recognised, soft power alone cannot 'produce effective foreign policy'. Instead the highest diplomatic effectiveness is achieved when states can wield 'smart power', in other words, 'a combination of hard and soft power'.[3] This intimate relation between hard and soft power might explain why cultural diplomacy emerged first in the most powerful countries. Although it is true that cultural diplomacy enjoyed perhaps most attention in those countries that felt themselves weakened (like Weimar Germany), Europe's great

[1] Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), XIII. See also Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 1–18; and Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 29.

[2] John Lenczowski, 'Cultural Diplomacy, Political Influence and Integrated Strategy', in Michael J. Waller, ed., *Strategic Influence: Public Diplomacy, Counterpropaganda, and Political Warfare* (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2009), 74–99, esp. 92.

[3] Joseph S. Nye, 'Get Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power', *Foreign Affairs*, 88, 4 (July/Aug. 2009), 160–3.

powers ultimately all relied on a derivative of their hard power (namely their war propaganda services) to create their cultural diplomatic infrastructure after the Great War.[4]

This article explores, by contrast, how a country like Spain, weak in terms of hard power, could also promote its culture abroad and create a cultural diplomatic infrastructure in the early twentieth century. While the Spanish military force was unreliable and the Spanish economy slow to develop, Spain saw its culture as considerable source of soft power in the international field. Undoubtedly, the case of interwar Spain offers a unique opportunity to shed light on the complex relationship between power and cultural diplomacy. The article argues that the exceptional international context of the 1920s granted Spanish culture an unexpected position in other countries thanks to foreign governments' interest, first in Spanish neutrality, then in the Latin American market. Although Spain had no propaganda services like the former belligerents, in the late 1920s the Spanish state founded its own cultural diplomacy on the promotion of Spanish culture that foreign governments and institutions had already developed. In the 1930s, therefore, Spain moved from a passive role to being an active promoter of its culture abroad. Yet while Spain benefited from the prominence of its culture in other countries, the attractiveness of its culture could never fully counterbalance its lack of hard power.

My article is partly based on the growing literature on Spanish cultural diplomacy. The pioneers in this field were Spanish diplomats and foreign policy makers themselves. In 1925, for instance, José Antonio Sangróniz published an essay to redirect Miguel Primo de Rivera's cultural diplomatic strategies toward Latin America.[5] In the 1950s a key figure of the Spanish education services in Morocco, Fernando Valderrama Martínez, wrote the first historical account of Spain's cultural diplomatic action over a specific territory: the Spanish Protectorate of Morocco.[6]

Nevertheless, serious historical interest in Spain's cultural relations started only in the early 1990s, when the Spanish state created a modern infrastructure for its cultural diplomacy.[7] In the late 1980s Antonio Niño had already contributed to the understanding of French scholars' role in fostering French–Spanish cultural relations since the end of the nineteenth century.[8] Francisco Laporta and José Manuel Sánchez Ron had also explored the Board for the Development of Studies and Scientific Research (*Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas*; JAE), an institution that had been founded by the Spanish Ministry of Education in 1907 to promote Spain's academic exchange with the most advanced European and American countries. As Laporta and Sánchez Ron have shown, the JAE contributed to articulate a framework that would lay the foundation for Spanish cultural diplomacy, helping Spanish scholars to participate in international academic networks.[9]

The most important growth of literature on Spanish cultural diplomacy happened around 1992, a key year for Spain's international projection due to the international exhibition in Sevilla and the Olympic Games in Barcelona. That year Lorenzo Delgado published his research on Franco's cultural foreign policy, including the first detailed study on the origins of cultural diplomacy in Spain.[10] In 1992 the Spanish state also commemorated the quincentenary of Colombus's arrival in the

[4] Antonio Niño, 'Uso y abuso de las relaciones culturales en la política internacional', *Ayer*, 75, 3 (2009), 25–61, esp. 36–42.

[5] José Antonio Sangróniz, *La expansión cultural de España en el extranjero y principalmente en Hispanoamérica. Nuevas orientaciones para la política internacional de España* (Madrid/Ceuta: Hércules, 1925).

[6] Fernando Valderrama Martínez, *Historia de la acción cultural de España en Marruecos, 1912–1956* (Tetuán: Editora Marroquí, 1956).

[7] The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs created the *Casa de América* (1990) – a centre for strengthening Spain's links to Latin America –, the *Instituto Cervantes* (1991) – a state institution for the promotion of Spanish language and culture abroad – and the *Real Instituto El Cano* (2001) – a think-tank for international and strategic studies.

[8] Antonio Niño, *Cultura y diplomacia. Los hispanistas franceses y España, 1875–1931* (Madrid: CSIC / Casa Velázquez, 1988).

[9] Francisco J. Laporta, Virgilio Zapatero, Alfonso Ruiz and Javier Solana, 'Los orígenes culturales de la Junta para Ampliación de Estudios', *Arbor*, 499–500 (1987), 9–138. See also José Manuel Sánchez Ron, ed., *La Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas 80 años después, 1907–1987* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988).

[10] Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, *Imperio de papel. Acción cultural y política exterior durante el primer franquismo* (Madrid: CSIC, 1992).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Americas. By then, Nuria Tabanera had completed a PhD thesis on the Second Spanish Republic's diplomacy in relation to Latin America.[11] In 1993 Tabanera and Pedro Pérez edited a book on the history of cultural relations between Spain and its former colonies, which helped consolidate research on this field.[12]

Over the last few years various historians have researched Spanish cultural relations with specific countries. For the case of German–Spanish cultural relations in the twentieth century, Jesús de la Hera and Marició Janué have published interesting pieces that draw on both German and Spanish primary sources.[13] In a similar way, José Antonio Montero has worked on US cultural propaganda in Spain in the early twentieth century.[14] Lorenzo Delgado, Pablo León and Francisco J. Rodríguez have studied US–Spanish relations during the Franco regime, with an additional focus on public diplomatic strategies.[15] Last but not least, Alison Sinclair has analysed the main institutions responsible for Spain's knowledge exchange with the United Kingdom and other European countries between 1900 and 1936.[16]

As these studies have shown, Spain did not 'fall behind' other European countries, as had long been assumed. Despite its neutrality in the First World War and despite prevalent economic problems, successive governments in the interwar years were able to develop a basic cultural diplomacy infrastructure.[17] The Spanish state's low investment in cultural diplomacy, however, can barely explain why Spanish culture was widespread abroad in the 1920s and cannot account for the relative success of some Spanish cultural diplomatic projects in the 1930s. Therefore, historical scholarship usually attributes Spain's foreign cultural development in the interwar period to those efforts made by Spanish intellectuals (such as Américo Castro), who aspired to modernise Spain, making it more European.[18] Although these intellectuals played an important role in Spain's foreign cultural policy, this article also highlights other states' geopolitical and commercial interests, which might better explain why Spanish culture spread widely in some European countries in the interwar period.

Thus, my article builds on and expands this existing historical scholarship. To this end, it draws on both printed and archival primary sources from different European countries, including some valuable archival material that scholars have only recently unearthed in France, Germany and Spain. However, the article's main body of primary sources comes from the United Kingdom, which is usually neglected by the historiography. My research demonstrates that both the UK National Archives and the special collections of some British universities offer interesting data to study bilateral institutions (for example, the Anglo-Spanish Society), to analyse the expansion of Spanish language in British education and to explore the role of intellectuals in the development of Spain's cultural diplomacy (for instance José Castillejo). In addition to these British files, my research is also based on archival material from Spanish scientific institutions (including the JAE) and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[11] Nuria Tabanera, *Las relaciones entre España e Hispanoamérica durante la Segunda República, 1931–1939: la acción diplomática republicana*, PhD Thesis, Universitat de València, 1991.

[12] Pedro Pérez and Nuria Tabanera, eds., *España / América Latina: Un siglo de políticas culturales* (Madrid: AIETI–Síntesis, 1993).

[13] Jesús de la Hera Martínez, *La política cultural de Alemania en España en el período de entreguerras* (Madrid: CSIC, 2002). See also Marició Janué i Miret, 'La cultura como instrumento de la influencia alemana en España: la sociedad germano-española de Berlín, 1930–1945', *Ayer*, 69, 1 (2008), 21–45.

[14] José Antonio Montero Jiménez, 'Imágenes, ideología y propaganda. La labor del Comité de Información Pública de los Estados Unidos en España (1917–1918)', *Hispania,* 68, 228 (2008), 211–34.

[15] Francisco J. Rodríguez Jiménez, Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla and Nicholas J. Cull, eds., *US Public Diplomacy and Democratization in Spain: Selling Democracy?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). See also Pablo León Aguinaga, *Sospechosos habituales. El cine norteamericano, Estados Unidos y la España franquista, 1939–1960* (Madrid: CSIC, 2010).

[16] Alison Sinclair, *Trafficking Knowledge in Early Twentieth-Century Spain: Centres of Exchange and Cultural Imaginaries* (Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2009).

[17] Nuria Tabanera, 'Institucionalización y fracaso del proyecto republicano', in Pérez and Tabanera, eds., *España / América Latina*, 49–90, esp. 51.

[18] Delgado, *Imperio,* 19. See also Lorenzo Delgado Gómez-Escalonilla, 'Las relaciones culturales de España en tiempo de crisis: de la II República a la Guerra Mundial', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Hª. Contemporánea*, 7 (1994), 259–94, esp. 264.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Last but not least, my article also looks at printed primary sources – such as, for example, newspapers and other periodical publications – to explore Spanish and foreign public opinion on the development of cultural relations. All these files shed new light on the origins of Spanish cultural diplomacy. While my research agrees with other historians that Spain kept up with broader European developments in creating a cultural diplomacy infrastructure, I suggest that Spanish cultural diplomacy benefited enormously from what other countries had been doing to influence Spain and Latin America since 1914, a fact that is usually given far too little attention.

As the article will show, the origins of this historical process, indeed, go back to the humiliating defeat in the Spanish–American War (1898), which ended the Spanish Empire and left Spain facing a national crisis of legitimacy. This defeat heralded a period of intellectual reception in which the Spanish elite aspired to modernise Spain by emulating what other countries had already achieved in education and science.[19] In 1914 memories of the 'disastrous war of 1898' and the 'military attrition in Morocco' convinced 'wide sectors of Spanish society' of the country's weakness, hence determining Spain's neutrality during the Great War.[20] Yet it was precisely this neutrality that first attracted the attention of European belligerents to Spain as they competed for the support of the continent's remaining neutrals.

In the 1920s the growing importance of the Latin American market led many European countries to introduce Spanish language teaching in their education systems and deepened interest in Spain as a springboard to Latin America. The Spanish state also began more systematically to harness this growing European interest to its own ambitions. It reinforced its diplomatic infrastructure, creating the Office for Spanish Cultural Relations (*Oficina de Relaciones Culturales Españolas*; ORCE) in 1921 and the Board of Cultural Relations (*Junta de Relaciones Culturales*; JRC) in 1926.

In the early 1930s, under the Second Spanish Republic, Spain's cultural diplomatic services were reorganised to make them more effective, but domestic political struggle and a lack of funds soon undermined the progress that had been made. Even though the first government of the Second Spanish Republic (1931–3) developed an ambitious plan to promote Spanish culture in Europe, the required investment was never made.[21] By the mid-1930s, moreover, the context had changed. The Latin American market had come to be strongly dominated by the United States, and Spanish language education already enjoyed some development in those European cities (Liverpool or Hamburg) intimately linked to the Latin American market. Although Spanish culture continued its expansion abroad in the 1930s, European countries' demand for it decreased, and Spanish cultural diplomacy focused on completing the projects (for example, the *Colegio de España* in Paris) that had been launched in the 1920s. In sum, Spain's cultural influence abroad in the interwar decades was largely determined by a specific international context, not by its official efforts.

The Spanish case, therefore, demonstrates that a weak state, unable to develop relevant cultural diplomacy strategies by itself, could nonetheless benefit from the attractiveness of its culture to gain influence abroad. As this article will show, Spanish culture expanded most at a time when the Spanish state had not developed an efficient cultural diplomacy infrastructure yet. Both its neutrality during the Great Wear and former belligerents' interest in the Latin America market enhanced Spain's status in the interwar period. However, the extension of Spanish culture in other countries did not mean that Spain could automatically 'wield' soft power, even though, theoretically, it was in a better position to so.

[19] José García Velasco and José M. Sánchez Ron, eds., *100 JAE. La Junta para Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas en su centenario* (Madrid: Residencia de Estudiantes, 2010).

[20] Javier Ponce, 'Propaganda and Politics: Germany and Spanish Opinion in World War I', in Troy Paddock, ed., *World War I and Propaganda* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 292–321, esp. 297.

[21] 'Letter by Ramón Menéndez Pidal to Alejandro Lerroux', 22 Sept. 1931, The Archive of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs / JRC Correspodencia, Ref. 1241/4. As cited in Hera, *La política*, 229. This file is currently held at the General Administration Archive of Spain (AGA). Ref. 82/04093, 4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

An Attractive Neutrality and a Disputed Market

The rise of Spanish cultural influence is closely tied to the First World War and its aftermath. After the outbreak of the Great War belligerents launched propaganda campaigns to gain the support of those countries that remained neutral. Social conflicts, financial limitations and the difficulties managing the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco – among other factors – had led Spain to an 'impotent neutrality' during the First World War.[22] The vast majority of Latin American countries were also aware of their own weakness and declined to get involved in the conflict.[23] However, Spain and Latin America became one of the main targets of belligerents' wartime propaganda.

Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the United States carried out important actions to influence the Spanish-speaking countries. In 1913, even before the outbreak of the First World War, French academic institutions – especially the universities of Toulouse and Bordeaux – had set up the French Institute (*Institut Français*) in Madrid, with official support from Paris. During the conflict the *Institut* took an active part in the French propaganda campaign in Spain. In 1916, for example, members of the institution helped to organise a tour around Spain for a group of French scholars, who were to counteract German propaganda directed at the Spanish elite. By then France had a long tradition of research in Hispanic Studies and a significant group of intellectuals and scholars willing to strengthen Franco–Spanish relations. The Spanish press reported about the French academic mission, which succeeded in drawing many Spaniards' attention.[24] In return, a group of Spanish intellectuals and personalities were invited by the *Institut* to visit France at the end of 1916, where they met with French intellectuals and politicians. French newspapers reported about their tour, and Georges Clemenceau encouraged them to visit the battle front, which they did. These French efforts were clearly registered across Europe. Just as the Spanish delegates toured France, the Austrian newspaper *Fremden-Blatt* published an article that praised the Spanish King but also warned Spain about Allied propaganda.[25]

The relative success of both tours led the French government to take further steps. It attached an education office, the *Office de l'Enseignement français en Espagne*, to the French Embassy in Madrid, which was to promote the French language in Spain as a way to spread French war propaganda.[26] In 1917 the French government also created an institution, the Committee of French–Spanish Rapprochement (*Comité de Rapprochement Franco–Espagnol*), to develop long-term plans to improve cultural relations between Spain and France. The committee aimed to influence Spanish public opinion, but also aspired to promote Spanish language teaching in France as a way to foster French trade with Spanish-speaking countries. The French committee also encouraged Spanish intellectuals to create an analogous group to coordinate the cultural bilateral relations, as well as to advocate the extension of Spanish culture in France. However, it seems that the Spanish committee's activity was subordinated to the French.[27]

France's outreach efforts in Spain were always directed against German influence, which also grew significantly during the Great War. German war propaganda, too, went hand in hand with a promotion of Spanish culture in Germany. During the war, German–Spanish associations were founded in several cities, including Hamburg, Frankfurt and Munich, and then united in the Germany-Spain Society (*Verband Deutschland-Spanien*), which set up its headquarters in Hamburg in 1918. This consortium aimed to promote cultural understanding between Spain and Germany, creating the base for further commercial relations. German businessmen, scholars, aristocrats and bankers supported the

[22] Juan Carlos Pereira, 'España y la Primera Guerra Mundial: una neutralidad impotente', in Yolanda Gamarra and Carlos Fernández, eds., *Los Orígenes del Derecho Internacional Contemporáneo: Estudios Conmemorativos del Centenario de la Primera Guerra Mundial* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2015), 275–87.

[23] Thomas Fischer, 'América Latina y la Primera Guerra Mundial', *Iberoamericana*, 16, 63 (2016), 259–72.

[24] Niño, *Cultura y diplomacia*, 195–9 and 261–351.

[25] Manuel Azaña, 'Nuestra misión en Francia', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 19, 1 (1917), 26–42. See also 'Los españoles en París' and 'Elogios a España y al Rey', *ABC* (30 Oct. 1916), 9.

[26] Niño, *Cultura y diplomacia,* 309–42, esp. 327.

[27] Ibid., 309–42, esp. 329.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

society, which sent news reports to 400 Spanish newspapers, fostered German research on Spain and collected information about Spanish-speaking countries. Although there is controversy about the kind of support this society received from the German government, it undoubtedly served Germany's wartime foreign policy in relation to Spain.[28]

Apart from the war propaganda, the attractiveness of the Latin America market also determined the spread of Spanish culture abroad. In Germany, the promotion of the Spanish language was specially linked to German commercial interests in Latin America. In 1917 an Ibero-American Institute (*Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut*) was created at the University of Hamburg, where there was already a Romance Languages Seminar promoting Spanish-language learning. Hamburg was at this time the most important German port trading with Latin American countries, and there was great interest in Spanish and Portuguese in this city. Among its tasks, the new institution published some periodicals on Ibero-American cultures, organised academic exchanges with Spain and offered language courses in Spanish and Portuguese. Hamburg University's Ibero-American Institute also collaborated with other German institutions involved in the promotion of Germany's cultural relations with Latin American countries. In 1921 it merged with the German Institute for South America and Iberia (*Deutsch-Südamerikanisches und Iberisches Institut*), a previous Ibero-American centre set up in what is now North Rhine-Westphalia.[29]

The promotion of Spanish culture in Germany was partly mirrored by those Spaniards who supported the German cause in the Great War. In 1916, for instance, a committee for friends of Germany was established in Barcelona by Catalan intellectuals who wanted to highlight how much German culture had contributed to world progress and thereby improve Spaniards' opinion of Germany.[30] These actions increased German influence in Spain, against the Allies' interests.

German and pro-German efforts, in turn, sparked further Allied interest in Spain. Like France, the United Kingdom also feared that Germany was winning the propaganda battle during the first years of the Great War. British newspapers published articles demanding that the government take serious action to counter this trend. The criticism usually referred to the Spanish-speaking countries, where British commercial hegemony had declined with 'the emergence of other capital-exporting countries before the First World War – notably France, Germany and the United States'.[31] As a consequence, the British Foreign Office designed a plan pursuing two objectives: winning Spanish-speaking countries' support for the Allies and improving the United Kingdom's position in the Latin American market. The British government timed the implementation of its plan with the third centenary of Cervantes and Shakespeare's deaths in 1916. With governmental support, a group of British businessmen and scholars set up the Anglo-Spanish Society, a bilateral institution which promoted Spanish culture in the United Kingdom as a way to foster British relations with the Spanish-speaking world. Although the Spanish Ambassador to London was appointed as the Honorary President, the association was mainly controlled and funded by the British. Only in the 1950s did the Spanish Embassy in London take over the Anglo-Spanish Society, which became its cultural office, after Westminster had lost interest during the Second World War.[32]

After 1914 British institutions also took measures to raise the status of Spanish, which was now included as a modern foreign language in the curricula of many schools and universities in the United Kingdom. Businessmen, scholars and diplomats got involved in this task. In 1916, for example, the Cervantes Chair of Spanish Language and Literature was established at King's College London. It was mainly funded by British companies doing business in Spain (like the Rio Tinto Company) and

[28] Janué i Miret, 'La cultura', 21–45. See also Hera, *La política*, 94–6.
[29] Hera, *La política*, 98–114.
[30] Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *España en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Una movilización cultural* (Madrid: Akal, 2014), 153.
[31] Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *Britain and Latin America: A Changing Relationship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), IX.
[32] Luis G. Martínez del Campo, *Cultural Diplomacy: A Hundred Years of the British-Spanish Society* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015).

South America (like the London and River Plate Bank).[33] A former British Ambassador to Madrid, Sir Maurice de Bunsen, chaired the Executive Committee formed to establish the Professorship. In a letter to the editor of *The Times*, Bunsen highlighted the primarily commercial aims of this step. He argued that the Cervantes Chair would strengthen 'the gigantic business relationship' that existed 'between Great Britain and the Spanish-speaking lands'.[34]

With similar aims, the University of Leeds created a department of Spanish Studies in 1916. Weetman Dickinson Pearson, Lord Cowdray, donated an important endowment to fund the teaching of Spanish in Leeds. This 'Great Captain of Industry' had made important investments in Mexico, where he ran the Mexican Eagle Oil Company.[35] Although the new department was exclusively funded with British money, the University's Vice-Chancellor, Michael Ernest Sadler, asked José Castillejo, the executive secretary of the JAE, to organise it. In 1917 Castillejo visited Leeds, designed the department curricula and selected Pedro Penzol, a young Spanish artist linked to the JAE, to be in charge of lecturing. Leeds University authorities wanted to offer Spanish language lessons as well as courses on Spanish culture, meaning the history of Spain and Latin America, Spanish literature and Spanish art. For this reason, Castillejo selected Penzol, who was an artist rather than a linguist.[36]

Apart from organising the department of Spanish Studies at Leeds University, Castillejo also acted as secretary of the JAE, promoting Spanish culture in the United Kingdom during his stay. Thus, for example, Castillejo wrote a memorandum encouraging other British educational centres to offer Spanish as a modern foreign language, which Sadler sent to the academic authorities of north England universities. The memorandum made a clear appeal to British commercial interests and emphasised the more intense and superior strategies of other countries to gain control of the Latin American market during the Great War.[37]

Such appeals seem to have hit a nerve in the wartime United Kingdom. During his stay in England in 1917 Castillejo was sought out by journalists, ministers and members of the Foreign Office, who were 'very curious' about the role the Spanish government was going to play after the war.[38] Moreover, emulating the US example, and heeding Castillejo's advice, the British began to promote Spanish language teaching with the purpose of improving their trade with Latin America. Expanding language teaching was justified in political terms, as well. During the Great War, for example, members of the British War Propaganda Services launched a public campaign calling for German to be replaced with Spanish as the second foreign language in all British secondary schools. There is no evidence that this campaign was successful, but Spanish language teaching did begin to expand seriously in the United Kingdom in those years.[39]

By the end of the First World War, then, Spanish culture, especially its language, had expanded significantly in Germany and the United Kingdom and continued to gain in interest and prestige in France. Importantly, Spain itself had done very little to foster the spread of Spanish culture abroad. Rather, wartime constellations and the salient competition for important neutrals like Spain had forged a new interest in Spanish culture among Allies and Central Powers alike. The growing importance of the Latin American market, and the fear of falling behind major rivals, made knowledge of the Spanish language and cultural particularities an increasingly attractive asset. Looking at a number of

[33] Cervantes Chair of Spanish. List of Donations received and promised, circa 1916, King's College London Archives, Spanish/General, 1915–1918, KAP/BUR 164.

[34] 'An Anglo-Spanish Bond: Proposed Cervantes Chair at King's College', *The Times* (18 Mar. 1916), 23.

[35] 'Lord Cowdray', *The Times* (2 May 1927), 16. See also Ray C. Gerhardt, 'Inglaterra y el petróleo mexicano durante la Primera Guerra Mundial', *Historia Mexicana*, 25, 1 (1975), 118–42.

[36] Letter draft without signature, 25 June 1918, Central Records Office. University of Leeds, 'Prof. Castillejo' staff file', Film Reference 76 F77.

[37] José Castillejo, 'Encouragement of Spanish Studies', 15 June 1921, Central Records Office, University of Leeds, H. Spanish/Anglo-Spanish Society, Microfilm, 514 F9-F10.

[38] David Castillejo, *Los intelectuales reformadores de España. Epistolario de José Catillejo. Tomo III: Fatalidad y porvenir, 1913–1937* (Madrid: Castalia, 1999), 334–54.

[39] Luis G. Martínez del Campo, 'A Utilitarian Subject: The Introduction of Spanish Language in British Schools in the Early Twentieth Century', in Nicola McLelland and Richard Smith, eds., *The History of Language Learning and Teaching II: 19th–20th Century Europe* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2018), 179–95, esp. 184–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

different countries and their wartime commitment to Spanish culture thus helps us understand the expansion of Spanish culture at so unlikely a moment in history. And this was only the beginning.

A Beneficial Context: The Spread of Spanish Culture in Interwar Europe

After the Great War the influence and appreciation of Spanish culture rose sharply in various European countries. But it was once more state and private actors in these countries, rather than the Spanish state, who led this development.

This is most notable with regard to the Spanish language. Countries with large-scale trade with Latin America, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, continued to expand Spanish language teaching at their schools and universities. In Germany, for example, Spanish language teaching spread widely between 1919 and 1926. Various German universities hired lectors of Spanish and created Spanish sections at their Departments of Romance languages. In some German regions, Spanish was also introduced as a modern foreign language in secondary education. In 1925, for example, the Prussian government encouraged all its secondary schools to offer Spanish as an elective.[40] New institutions also showed Germans' growing official interest in the 'Ibero-American' world, a space which comprised the vast majority of Latin American countries, as well as Portugal and Spain. In 1923, for example, the University of Bonn created an Ibero-American Research Institute (*Ibero-Amerikanisches Forschungsinstitut*), which the German government nationalised in 1925. The most relevant centre of this kind was Berlin's *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut*, officially founded on 12 October 1929, the anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the Americas. The Spanish Ambassador to Berlin attended many of the new institution's events, but Spain's participation was only symbolic. The German government sponsored the Berlin institute, which focused on developing Germany's cultural relations with Ibero-American countries.[41]

Even as they were setting up their own direct communication channels to Latin America, German businessmen still saw Spain as a springboard to the region. Spain thus played a key role in facilitating German investments in Latin America in the 1920s, just when the prestige of 'Ibero-American cultures' was on the rise in Germany. In the early interwar period, for example, the German Transatlantic Company of Electricity (*Compañía Alemana Transatlántica de Electricidad*), a German company selling electricity and other services in Argentina, was partly sold to Spanish banks to avoid a 'foreclosure for war reparations'. Renamed the Spanish-American Company of Electricity (*Compañía Hispano-Americana de Electricidad*) when Spanish businessmen took control, the company still ran thanks to German capital, but now safely under the Spanish flag.[42]

In the United Kingdom, too, the promotion of Spanish culture continued after the Great War. In the first years of the interwar period Spanish language teaching continued its wartime growth. In 1913 only seventy-seven evening schools had offered Spanish lessons in England, by 1922 139 did. Spanish was also introduced as a modern foreign language in secondary education. In 1925 there were seventy-six English state-aided schools teaching Spanish to 3,266 students.[43] Many British universities created departments or lectureships of the language. In 1919, for example, a Readership in Spanish was established at Cambridge University.[44]

These cultural investments provided an important background when, in 1922, the British and Spanish governments signed the Anglo-Spanish Commercial Treaty, which, after an additional convention, provided the 'most-favoured-nation treatment' to British goods in Spain and Spanish overseas territories, and vice versa.[45] British interest went beyond Spain, as the Prince of Wales' visit to South

[40] Hera, *La política*, 115–22.
[41] Hera, *La política*, 105–15.
[42] Janué i Miret, 'La cultura', 21–45, esp. 24.
[43] Martínez del Campo, 'Utilitarian', 188–90.
[44] J. W. Barker, 'Spanish Studies at Cambridge Since the War', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 10, 40 (1933), 197–202.
[45] 'Anglo-Spanish Commercial Treaty, 1922 and convention 1927', circa 1927. The United Kingdom National Archives / Foreign Office Records, FO 93/99/64.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

America (1924) confirmed. In 1922, for example, a Centre for Ibero-American Studies was established at the University of Manchester and diplomats from Spain, Chile, Argentina and Ecuador took part in its events.[46]

British higher education also saw an important development of research in the field of Spanish Studies. In 1923 Edgar Allison Peers, Gilmour Professor of Spanish at the University of Liverpool, founded the first British journal devoted to the research on Spain: the *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. In the beginning the journal was addressed not to scholars, but to 'the educated man or woman . . . who is conversant with the Spanish language and seeks information on all that concerns Spanish life and culture'.[47] The journal's contents were almost limited to Spain until the late 1940s when it changed its name to the *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* in order to make explicit the inclusion of both Latin American and Portuguese topics.[48]

Before the end of the nineteenth century, in France, there were already two journals devoted to research on Spain and Latin America: the *Revue hispanique*, founded in 1894, and the *Bulletin hispanique*, founded in 1899. Although Spanish culture was widespread in France by the 1920s, the French government continued to strengthen links to Spain through the bilateral institutions created during the Great War. In 1921 the *Comité de Rapprochement Franco-Espagnol* received a generous subsidy of 20,000 francs, the largest sum the French government granted to any bilateral association that year. By then, the *Comité* had already invited its Spanish sister organisation to organise a 'Spanish week' in Paris, which took place in 1919, coinciding with an exhibition of Spanish paintings the French committee organised at the Petit-Palais.[49]

In the 1920s French–Spanish cultural relations also gave birth to a pair of important projects for student exchange between both countries. While Alfonso XIII attended to French requests granting some soil to set up a cultural institution in Madrid, the *Casa de Velázquez*, the French government, in return, offered its Spanish counterpart some room to build a residence hall at the *Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris*. Although the *Casa de Velázquez* was inaugurated in 1928, the Spanish centre did not have its official opening until 1935.[50]

During the immediate post-war period, therefore, France, Germany and the United Kingdom continued to promote Spanish culture (in particular, Spanish language education) at home but also tried to spread their own culture in Spain. In the 1920s, as Spanish official records show, these foreign actions in relation to Spain awoke successive Spanish governments to the potential of its culture in the international field.

The Emergence of Spanish Cultural Diplomacy

It was on these foreign initiatives that Spanish cultural diplomacy was founded. While various European states carried on promoting Spanish culture, the Spanish government now took its first steps towards a basic cultural diplomacy infrastructure. In 1921 Antonio Maura's cabinet created the Office for Spanish Cultural Relations (ORCE) as a 'provisional trial' of a 'special administrative organism' to promote Spanish culture abroad.[51] Until then the Spanish state had been ensuring the reception of other countries' intellectual and technological advancements, particularly through the JAE, but had done little to increase Spain's cultural prestige abroad. Not surprisingly, then, the idea to create ORCE came not from Spanish diplomats but the historian Américo Castro.[52]

[46] 'Manchester', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 1, 1 (1923), 34–5.
[47] Edgar Allison Peers, 'Twenty-Five Years', *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 25, 100 (1948), 199–206.
[48] Edgar Allison Peers, 'The Next Quarter-Century', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 26, 101 (1949), 1–2.
[49] Niño, *Cultura y diplomacia*, 349 and 365–70.
[50] Antonia María Mora Luna, 'The Origins of the Cité Universitaire and the Colegio de España in Paris: Elites, Diplomacy and Educational Modernity', *Sisyphus. Journal of Education*, 4, 1 (2016), 198–224, esp. 212.
[51] 'Real Orden por la que se crea una Oficina de Relaciones Culturales Españolas', 17 Nov. 1921. The Archive of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, R-552/10. This file is currently held at the General Administration Archive of Spain (AGA). Ref. 82/02482, 10.
[52] Delgado, *Imperio*, 18–29.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The founding of ORCE, however, did not mark the beginning of a concerted, let alone effective, cultural diplomacy. ORCE paid special attention to the spread of Spanish language education abroad, making, for instance, the first list of foreign education centres offering Spanish lessons. This list suggests that the Spanish state had done little for the promotion of Spanish language abroad. As we shall see below, even when Spain's cultural diplomacy was operative, other countries continued leading and funding the introduction of Spanish language at their education centres.

When Primo de Rivera came to power in 1923, ORCE focused on strengthening Spain's links to Latin America but could do little to promote Spanish culture elsewhere. In fact, although ORCE was associated with the Spanish Ministry of State it struggled to take any significant action. Having no budget of its own, it focused mostly on collecting data about the promotion of Spanish culture abroad and on designing (purely theoretical) plans for Spain's future cultural diplomacy.[53] While a first rudimentary infrastructure for a state-sponsored Spanish cultural diplomacy thus emerged, its limited funding made sure that much of the initiative to spread Spanish culture abroad would remain with foreign governments and private institutions.

Until well into the 1920s the Spanish state did not invest in promoting Spanish culture abroad. This changed in 1926, when Spain triggered the legal procedure to withdraw from the League of Nations after failing to secure a permanent seat on the Council. Until 1926 Spain had been re-elected as a non-permanent member of that executive body because it was considered a 'great moral power'.[54] When Germany joined the League of Nations and was granted a seat on the Council, overriding Spain's demands, Spanish leaders were confronted with their country's relative lack of influence and its actual position as a second-rate power. This crisis prompted Spanish dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera to devote new attention to Spanish cultural outreach in order to strengthen Spain's international position and have it recognised as, at least, a cultural great power.[55]

In 1926, therefore, the Spanish government set up the Board of Cultural Relations (JRC) as an advisory committee in the Ministry of State. In the royal decree creating the JRC, the Minister José Yanguas Messía recognised that 'the complexity of modern international life' had changed 'the way foreign relations' were conducted. Many countries had recently started to pay attention to the cultural aspects of their relations with other peoples. Even those governments with financial problems were 'organising their cultural relations'.[56] His remarks probably came to justify the half million of *pesetas* the JRC was granted. Many welcomed the creation of this new institution to replace the effete ORCE but some newspapers published mocking comments suggesting it was a waste of money.[57] In fact, the budget was only a quarter of what the ORCE had estimated that the Spanish cultural diplomacy would need to implement its plan.[58]

This lack of funding would partly undermine the JRC's ability to accomplish its three aims. The first objective was to keep in touch with Spanish expatriate communities – to establish a 'spiritual link' with them – in order to avoid their full assimilation in their countries of residence and the dilution of their Spanish heritage and cultural consciousness. The second aim was 'to maintain and increase' the prestige of Spanish culture in other nations. The last purpose was to foster cultural exchange with other countries.[59] The strategies employed to these ends were laid out in March 1927. The JRC would promote 'Spanish teaching' – which would involve cultural values and history,

[53] Delgado, *Imperio*, 18–29.

[54] Salvador Madariaga, *Memorias, 1921–1936. Amanecer sin mediodía* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1981), 119.

[55] Yolanda Gamarra Chopo, 'La ilusión española de la Sociedad de Naciones' in Gamarra and Fernández, eds., *Los orígenes del derecho,* 289–312.

[56] *Gaceta de Madrid*, 11 (11 Jan. 1927), 242. See also: *Gaceta de Madrid*, 362 (28 Dec. 1926), 1739–40.

[57] One of these comments said: 'with half million of *pesetas*, it is easy to have good relations' (*Con medio millón de pesetas, ya se puede tener buenas relaciones*). 'Chispazos', *La Correspondencia Militar* (29 Dec. 1926), 1.

[58] Delgado, *Imperio,* 27.

[59] *Gaceta de Madrid*, 11 (11 Jan. 1927), 242. The original version says: '*En su triple función de mantener el enlace espiritual de la Metrópolis con los núcleos de nacionales localizados en país extranjero; de conservar y acrecer el prestigio de la cultura patria en otras naciones y de establecer de una manera sistemática y ordenada el intercambio cultural con otros pueblos*'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

as well as the Spanish language – in those countries with considerable Spanish expatriate communities. The JRC would facilitate cultural and scientific exchange with other countries, particularly with those nations closer to the Spanish 'civilisation' – meaning Latin America. The JRC was also to establish professorships and centres abroad to promote Spanish culture, with special emphasis on the 'spread of the Spanish language'.[60]

Various Spanish associations and institutions were already carrying out some of these tasks, including the JAE and its attached centres, such as the Residence Hall (*Residencia de Estudiantes*) and the Centre of Historical Studies (*Centro de Estudios Históricos*). In 1927 the Education Ministry official Lorenzo Luzuriaga wrote an article welcoming the creation of the JRC but also highlighting the important work that the JAE and other institutions had done.[61]

Accordingly, the Spanish government allowed the JRC to rely for 'some cultural services' on help from 'private entities' with 'consolidated experience' and 'remarkable solvency'.[62] One of them was the Ibero-American Union (*Unión Ibero-Americana*), an organisation that had been created by a group of Spanish and Latin American personalities – aristocrats, businessmen, journalists, civil servants and diplomats – in the late nineteenth century. Although this institution was partly supported by the Spanish government, it had an important level of autonomy. In its early days the Union promoted cultural as well as commercial ties among Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal. During Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1923–30), the *Unión Ibero-Americana* was reorganised to serve Spain's official foreign policy. The newly founded JRC supported its activity, but the Union's achievements in Latin America remained few.[63]

Still, Spain clearly recognised that its cultural links to Latin America were a key international asset. It was on that basis that the League of Nations had offered Spain a seat on its Council, the only neutral country to be on that executive body.[64] In 1926, undoubtedly, one of the main objectives in creating a state-led Spanish cultural diplomacy was to maintain Spain's links to its former colonies in America, by appealing to shared history and cultural values. This common identity had started to be referred to '*Hispanidad*' and had been progressively reinforced by the 'Party of the Race' (*Fiesta de la Raza*), a holiday Spain and some Latin American countries celebrated every 12 October to commemorate Colombus's first landing in the Americas.[65] Until the last years of Primo de Rivera dictatorship, however, the Spanish state had supported only projects that were already ongoing, such as, for instance, the Cultural Institution of Buenos Aires (*Institución Cultural de Buenos Aires*), founded by Spanish expatriates in 1912, and the Cultural Institution of Montevideo (*Institución Cultural de*

[60] *Gaceta de Madrid*, 62 (3 Mar. 1927), 1350.

[61] Lorenzo Luzuriaga, 'Política cultural', *La Gaceta Literaria*, (15 Jan. 1927), 5. The article says: 'over the last twenty years, the maximum promoters of our culture have been the centres of the *Junta para Amplicación de Estudios* and they will continue to be for a long time to come. But they will not be alone. With the cultural management, other institutions and instruments will have to collaborate. . . . I would like to mention, among them, the *Sociedad de Cursos y Conferencias*, the *Unión Ibero-Americana*, the *Junta de Relaciones Culturales*.' (*'Durante los últimos veinte años los máximos propulsores de nuestra cultura han sido los centros dependientes de la Junta para Amplicación de Estudios y los seguirán siendo en mucho tiempo aún. Pero no lo serán solos. En la gestión cultural han de colaborar, en lo sucesivo, otras instituciones e instrumentos …. Quiero citar, entre ellos, la Sociedad de Cursos y Conferencias, la Unión Ibero-Americana, la Junta de Relaciones Culturales y esta misma Gaceta Literaria, recién nacida'*).

[62] *Gaceta de Madrid*, 62 (3 Mar. 1927), 1350.

[63] Isidro Sepúlveda Muñoz, 'Medio siglo de asociacionismo americanista español, 1885–1936', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Hª. Contemporánea*, 4 (1991), 271–90. See also 'Opiniones acerca de la labor realizada por la Unión Ibero-Americana', *Revista de las Españas*, 2, 13–4 (Sept.–Oct. 1927), 635–6; and Antonio Niño, 'Hispanoamericanismo, regeneración y defensa del prestigio nacional' in Pérez and Tabanera, eds., *España / América Latina*, 15–49, esp. 46.

[64] Gloria Solé, 'La incorporación de España a la Sociedad de Naciones', *Hispania*, 36, 132 (1976), 131–74, esp. 137.

[65] In 1918 it became an official celebration in Spain. *Gaceta de Madrid*, 167 (16 June 1918), 688.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Montevideo), created by Spanish expatriates in 1919.[66] Even the Party of the Race goes back to celebrations that Spanish expatriates had organised in the early twentieth century.[67]

This situation changed in the late 1920s when Primo de Rivera made an effort to improve Spain's projection in Latin America. In 1929, for example, the Spanish government organised an Ibero-American Exhibition in Sevilla, where Portugal, the United States and major Latin American countries were represented. These cultural actions to attract former colonies aimed to create a political unity under a Supra-state designed by the diplomat José María Doussinague.[68] Although Doussinague's plan was never realised, it showed that Primo de Rivera orientated its cultural diplomacy towards Latin America, where he wanted to reach political objectives through culture.

Primo de Rivera's interest in Latin America determined JRC's policy in relation to Spanish language promotion elsewhere. In particular, its limited budget and focus on Latin America forced the JRC to rely heavily on what other states were doing to promote the Spanish language in their own countries. In Germany, for example, the JRC focused on funding the Seminar of Romance languages at the University of Berlin, where professor Ernst Gamillscheg introduced his students to research on Spanish culture. Therefore, German authorities, businessmen and institutions continued being the main promoters of Spanish language learning in Germany, rather than the JRC.[69] In the United Kingdom, as in Germany, Spanish language teaching continued to expand in the late 1920s, but the JRC played an insignificant role in this development. In 1927, for example, the King Alfonso XIII Professorship of Spanish Literature was established officially at Oxford University. But when Salvador Madariaga was appointed to the post he realised that neither 'Alfonso XIII nor the Spanish government had donated a penny for the Chair', which was funded by members of the Anglo-Spanish Society.[70]

Furthermore, in the first years the JRC did not control the selection of lectors sent to foreign universities. The *Centro de Estudios Históricos*, which belonged to the JAE, was in charge of selecting the candidates. This example shows that the specific competencies of each institution were not well defined after the creation of the JRC, which benefited from what other Spanish entities and foreign organisations were doing to promote Spanish culture abroad.

In sum, Primo de Rivera created a cultural diplomatic infrastructure after Spain prepared to leave the League of Nations in 1926. Yet, given the JCR's limited budget and the dictator's preference for Latin America, the spread of Spanish culture in Europe still depended on foreign interest.[71] Nevertheless, the Latin American strategy helped Primo de Rivera achieve his immediate target. In 1928 the League of Nations asked the Spanish government to reconsider its withdrawal and the Chairman of the Executive Council, the Colombian representative Francisco José Urrutia, wrote a letter to this end. Urrutia highlighted that Spain still enjoyed an 'eminent position' in the international field because of its cultural assets ('the talent of its artists and writers' and 'the prestige of its history') and its cultural influence over Latin America.[72] Spain subsequently remained a member of the League of Nations. Although the Spanish government and the JRC had achieved very little, Urrutia's letter showed that Spain's international position was still determined by the prestige of Spanish culture.

[66] Delgado, *Imperio,* 24.

[67] Miguel Rodríguez, 'Propaganda del Sentimiento', in Denis Rolland et al., *L'Espagne, La France et L'Amérique Latine: Politiques culturelles, propagandes et relations internationales*, *XXe siècle* (Paris: L'Hamattan, 2001), 403–87, esp. 410–22.

[68] Nuria Tabanera, *Ilusiones y desencuentros: la acción diplomática republicana en Hispanoamérica, 1931–1939* (Madrid: CEDAL, 1996), 403–7.

[69] Hera, *La política,* 119–22, and 190.

[70] Madariaga, *Memorias*, 158. Original version says: '*Pronto me enteré además de que ni Alfonso XIII ni el Gobierno español habían dado un céntimo para la cátedra*'. See also Martínez, *Cultural Diplomacy,* 28–30.

[71] Delgado, *Imperio*, 42.

[72] Fernando Soldevilla, *El año político: 1928* (Madrid: Julio Cosano, 1929), 86–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The Reorganisation: A Powerful Culture in a Changing Context

Spanish cultural diplomacy was reorganised under the Second Spanish Republic (1931–6). When the Republicans came into power in Spain in 1931 they decided that it was time to make Spanish cultural diplomacy more effective, so they could at least aspire to 'wield' soft power. After a dictatorship, the new political leaders sought to include 'Spain in the group of democratic and liberal nations' through cultural arguments.[73] The first Republican government (1931–3) aspired to keep Spain's cultural influence in Latin America and Morocco, but also aimed to promote the prestige of Spain in the main European countries. While they were aware of Spain's lack of hard power, they believed that Spanish culture had importance in the world. According to an undated internal report of the Republic's Ministry of State, Spain's 'armada and military forces' – as well as its 'economic power' – were 'unfortunately' inappropriate means to increase its geopolitical weight. However, ministry officials believed that Spain had 'a glorious cultural, internationalist and civilising tradition' that might help the country to 'keep its position' in the international field.[74] This idea was highlighted by a 1931 Royal Decree which reorganised Spanish cultural diplomacy:

> The great treasure of our literature and arts, the current development of our scientific activity and, above all, the powerful tool of our language are other values that should be enhanced and used for Spain's foreign policy.[75]

As we have seen, the Spanish state had created various institutions – such as the JAE and JRC – to cultivate Spain's scientific and cultural relations with other countries. Seeking to make use of the infrastructure that was already in place, republican officials chose to maintain these institutions but tried to remedy the organisational problems which, they believed, limited their effectiveness. In 1932 the Spanish government delimited each institution's 'specific aims', urging them to 'complement each other' rather than to overlap in their actions. The JRC was put in charge of promoting 'Spanish culture in foreign countries', while the JAE was limited to awarding 'scholarships to Spaniards who want to study abroad'.[76]

These developments meant a broader reorganisation of Spanish cultural diplomacy, including changes in the institutions involved in Spain's cultural relations with other countries. In 1934, for example, the JAE dissolved its 'Special Committee in Charge of the Cultural Relations with America', which had been created in 1928. The minutes stated that these relations were carried out 'mainly by the Ministry of State' – through the JCR –, and consequently the committee had become 'unnecessary'. Nevertheless, the JAE continued to manage contacts with 'cultural associations in Spanish America'.[77]

Even as they were given separate areas of responsibility, the JAE and the JRC collaborated closely. The institutions worked together to create the *Colegio de España*, a residence hall for university students and artists at the *Cité internationale universitaire de Paris*, which was opened in 1935. The new hall was designed to host students from Spain, Portugal and those Latin American countries without a

[73] María Ángeles Egido León, 'El pensamiento político internacional republicano (1931–1936). Reflexiones a posteriori', *Revista de Estudios Internacionales,* 7, 4 (1986), 1107–33, esp. 1112.

[74] 'Nota de la Sección Cultural', no date, The Archive of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madrid, R–2460/69. As cited in Delgado, *Imperio*, 38. This file is currently held at the General Administration Archive of Spain (AGA). Ref. 82/07053, 69.

[75] *Gaceta de Madrid*, 161 (10 June 1931), 1278–9. Original version: '*El gran tesoro de nuestra literatura y nuestras artes, el desarrollo actual de nuestra actividad científica y, sobre todo, el poderoso instrumento de nuestro idioma son otros tantos valores que deben ser realzados y utilizados para la política internacional de España*'.

[76] Report on Cultural Relations. 1932. The Archive of the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs / Section of Cultural relations. R. 2100, 6. This file is currently held at the General Administration Archive of Spain (AGA). Ref. 82/06203, 6.

[77] *Minutes JAE*. Vol. VII (1932–1934), 240. Meeting, 18 May 1934. Archive of the JAE. Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid. See also: 'Comisión Especial Encargada de las Relaciones Culturales con América', Archive of the JAE (Online resources). Residencia de Estudiantes. Madrid, Spain, available at http://archivojae.edaddeplata.org/jae_app/ (last visited 20 Feb. 2019).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

similar residence at the *Cité*. Spanish authorities also wanted the hall to become an important centre for the promotion of Spanish culture in Paris, including public lectures and art exhibitions. In 1935, for example, the famous writer, Miguel de Unamuno, delivered a talk during the opening ceremony, and Blas Cabrera, a prominent Spanish scientist, gave another lecture a few days after. That same year, the *Colegio* also hosted a Spanish art exhibition.[78] Once the *Colegio* opened in Paris, the JRC planned a similar residence hall, the *Colegio de España* on 14 Manchester Square at Marylebone, in London. The aims were to provide accommodation for Spanish students and scholars – particularly, architects and economists –, to strengthen Spanish-British knowledge transfer and promote Spanish culture in London. The residence hall was bound to open in 1937, but the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 undercut the project.[79]

In the early 1930s, however, Spain did improve its cultural diplomatic services abroad. In fact, cultural attachés were appointed to work at Spanish embassies in the United States, France and Argentina. The JRC created a few centres to promote Spanish culture abroad, including, in addition to the *Colegio de España* in Paris, a Spanish secondary school in Lisbon and primary schools in Andorra and Portugal. The JRC also supported the introduction of the Spanish language in the curricula of schools located in France and Algeria.[80]

And yet, just when the Spanish state was finally making progress in the promotion of Spanish culture abroad, the JRC's budget was cut. In 1933 the newly elected conservative government intervened in the JRC's activities, reducing its budget from 900,000 *pesetas* in 1934 to 844,000 in 1935.[81] These cutbacks sparked a public controversy in the Spanish press. On 6 June 1935 the newspaper *El Sol* published a front-page editorial emphasising how important cultural diplomacy was for Spain's foreign policy:

> Spain does not stand out for its war efficiency, or its industrial power; but it is considered and respected for its original and incomparable art. . . . Today, the rest of the world value Spain because of its . . . cultural production: language, literature, art and, in second place, science and thinking.[82]

According to this article, Spain had started to 'disseminate . . . its own values' all over the world after the Great War. Even as the article acknowledged that most of the initial achievements of Spain's cultural diplomacy were due to other governments' actions or private projects – a situation that was particularly apparent in Latin America, where Spanish expatriates and South American governments had carried out 'unilateral efforts' to strengthen links to the former 'mother country' –, it also recognised that the JRC had made important progress in promoting Spanish culture abroad during the previous years.[83] Such public reactions illustrate the degree to which cultural diplomacy had become recognised as a necessary policy tool by the mid-1930s.

Despite this public recognition, the budget cuts threatened to ruin the efforts of the Azaña cabinet (1931–3) to cultivate Spain's cultural assets abroad. It was particularly damaging for the Spanish-American Cultural Plan, which the JRC had designed in 1933 to promote academic exchange between Spain and the former American colonies. Its ambitious goals, including Spanish cultural institutions (twenty libraries, three museums and a school) in different Latin American countries, and creating a section of Latin American Studies at the *Centro de Estudios Históricos* in Madrid, could not be

[78] Mora, 'The Origins', 198–224.
[79] Isabel Pérez-Villanueva, *La Residencia de Estudiantes. Grupos universitario y de señoritas. Madrid, 1910–1936* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1990), 74.
[80] Delgado, 'Las relaciones culturales', 260–2.
[81] Delgado, *Imperio*, 45–7.
[82] 'La cultura española en el Extranjero', *El Sol* (6 June 1935), 1.
[83] 'La cultura española en el Extranjero', 1. According to Hera, Américo Castro was the author of this article. See: Hera, *La política*, 254–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

implemented completely.[84] The newly elected conservative government reformulated Spain's foreign policy in relation to Latin America on the basis of '*Hispanidad*', a term which the conservative writer Ramiro de Maeztu redefined in his book *In Defense of Spanishness* (*Defensa de la Hispanidad*, 1934). This concept established Spain's spiritual mission in Spanish-America as a kind of cultural imperialism based on Catholicism and reactionary bias. Still, until Franco came to power no serious project around '*Hispanidad*' was undertaken.[85]

During the republican period, therefore, Spanish cultural diplomacy made important progress but also suffered relevant setbacks. While the first republican government reorganised Spain's cultural diplomacy and significantly increased the JRC's funding, the conservative Lerroux cabinet (1933–5) reduced state investments in cultural relations, not least because many members of JAE and JRC were intimately linked to Azaña's ideological spectrum. This setback came just when Spain started to gain some prestige in the international field, as its mediation in international conflicts (for example, the arbitration of a Peruvian–Colombian dispute over the city of Leticia in 1933) seemed to suggest.[86]

However, even as much of the problems of cultural diplomacy were due to domestic developments, it was also becoming clear that changing circumstances did not favour Spain's efforts to cultivate its cultural assets abroad. Although the Spanish state had turned to setting up its own cultural diplomacy infrastructure after 1926, and had intensified its efforts since 1931, Spain's international position continued to be weak. As Joseph Nye highlights, every kind of power 'depends on the context in which the relationship exits' and it might 'evaporate when the context changes'.[87] That was exactly what happened. For the decade following the Great War, Spain had enjoyed a beneficial context for the promotion of its culture in other countries. In the mid-1930s, however, the context for such efforts was changing. Although there was 'a revival of German trade with Latin America' from 1933 to 1939, the Latin American market had come to be strongly dominated by the United States, which would become fully hegemonic in the area by the Second World War.[88] Furthermore, many European countries had already created their own cultural communication channels and bilateral institutions with Latin American countries, such as, for instance, Berlin's *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* (1929) and the Ibero-American Institute of Great Britain (1932).[89] Although Spanish language education continued its expansion in other European countries (for example, the United Kingdom) until 1936, the demand of Spanish culture seemed to decrease in the late 1930s with the outbreaks of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War.

Conclusions

The case of Spain between 1914 and 1936 demonstrates that cultural diplomacy and soft power, two concepts that are often conflated, can also run on opposite tracks. A country with almost no official initiatives to this end could well accrue soft power.

The alleged weakness of the Spanish state, engulfed in serious financial and military problems, did not allow Spain to develop its own cultural diplomacy infrastructure until well into the 1920s. By then, however, Spain's neutrality in the Great War and the attractiveness of the Latin America market had enhanced the status of Spanish culture in the eyes of the (former) belligerents. The beneficial context of the interwar years saw to it that Spanish language and culture were promoted by other governments and private actors, who thus helped improve Spain's international position. Until 1926, in fact, Spain was repeatedly re-elected as a non-permanent member in the League of Nations' Council, not least on the basis of the perceived value of Spain's cultural links to Latin America, and the international

[84] Tabanera, 'Institucionalización', 49–90.
[85] Celestino del Arenal, *La política exterior de España hacia Iberoamérica* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1994), 27–8.
[86] Tabanera, 'Institucionalización', 49–90, esp. 54 and 85–6.
[87] Nye, *Soft Power*, 2.
[88] Leslie Bethell, 'Britain and Latin America in historical perspective', in Bulmer-Thomas, *Britain and Latin America*, 1–24, esp. 15–8.
[89] 'Relations with South America', *The Times* (11 Jan. 1934), 11.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636 Published online by Cambridge University Press

prestige Spain gained as a neutral country during the Great War.[90] As Salvador de Madariaga – the Spanish Ambassador to Paris – stressed in an internal report for the Ministry of State in 1932, it was 'the Spanish culture' that made Spain 'a great power' in the international field.[91]

Spanish governments clearly recognised this state of affairs. In 1926, when Spain failed to become a permanent member of the League of Nations' Council, the Primo de Rivera regime responded to this crisis by strengthening Spain's cultural links to Latin America as an alternative way to accrue power. At this point, the work former belligerent countries had done promoting Spanish culture laid the foundation for this emergence of Spanish cultural diplomacy in Europe and beyond. This was particularly the case in the 1930s, when the first government of the Second Spanish Republic reorganised and professionalised its cultural diplomacy. Foreign interest in Spanish culture was easing the gradual emergence of a solid cultural diplomatic infrastructure. And yet the 1920s expansion of Spanish culture in the United Kingdom, France and Germany had been an unintentional side effect of other states' pursuit of their own advantage rather than the outcome of a strong and concerted cultural diplomacy. This made it particularly vulnerable to shifts in external circumstances. By the mid-1930s, indeed, the international context had changed. When the Spanish state was fully decided to promote its culture in other countries, a changing context progressively reduced foreign demand of Spanish culture.

The Spanish case reminds us that there is an important distinction between cultural diplomacy and soft power. Spanish culture could enjoy considerable clout, even systematic cultivation in other countries, without a powerful Spanish state to support it. Especially in the interwar period, characterised by a search for new markets and lingering hostility between former belligerents, an otherwise minor player like Spain could gain international stature and influence by way of its attractive culture. But the Spanish case also shows that the spread of one country's culture abroad does not necessarily translate into its ability to wield soft power. The prominence of the Spanish culture – especially the Spanish language – greatly increased in European and American countries during the interwar period just as Spain's official international influence seemed to decline.

[90] Solé, 'La incorporación', 131–69, esp. 137.

[91] Madariaga, *Memorias*, 608. Original version states: '*La cultura española da a España en el Mundo un rango de potencia de primer orden, si no de gran potencia*'.

Cite this article: Martínez del Campo LG (2021). Weak State, Powerful Culture: The Emergence of Spanish Cultural Diplomacy, 1914–1936. *Contemporary European History* **30**, 198–213. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777320000636