

The Spanish Economy, 1959-1976

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How does knowledge cross borders? French technology transfer and the SOFRE group in the Spain of the Planning, 1959–1976

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In this article, we study the behavior of French technical consulting firms in the Spain of the Planning (1959–1976), when the Spanish market increased its competitiveness as a result of the liberalization and modernization of its economy. For this purpose, the main players—both the French and their Spanish partners—have been identified, and the strategies, models, and sectors in which the French technical consultancies specialized in Spain have been analyzed. Our research reveals that French firms mainly operated via technical assistance contracts when providing services to the classical sectors of French investment in Spain between the first and the second industrial revolutions. These sectors include mining, railroads, iron and steel, chemicals, and electricity. The French role in these activities was based on their experience and knowledge of the market, in turn resulting from their historical presence in the neighboring country. The article is also useful to assist the available literature regarding business consultancy in the conceptualization of how management knowledge is transferred from one country to another.

JEL classification: F14, L84, N74, N84.

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