

Special issue
Visual motifs

José Luis Valhondo
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2383-5513>
jlvalcre@unex.es
Universidad de Extremadura

Submitted
December 15th, 2020
Approved
March 1st, 2021

© 2021
Communication & Society
ISSN 0214-0039
E ISSN 2386-7876
doi: 10.15581/003.34.2.417-432
www.communication-society.com

2021 – Vol. 34(2)
pp. 417-432

How to cite this article:
Valhondo, J. L. (2021). Parodic satire of NO-DO in *Polònia*: Iconoclasm and visual re-framing of the Spanish (far)right-wing discourse. *Communication & Society*, 34(2), 417-432.

Parodic satire of NO-DO in *Polònia*: Iconoclasm and visual re-framing of the Spanish (far)right-wing discourse

Abstract

As cultural content, *Polònia* constitutes an unusual case. We are dealing with one of the highest audience-share television programmes in Catalonia in recent years. Moreover, it is uncommon in the Spanish political-media system, where satire does not enjoy such a social acceptance by audiences. The purpose of this study consists of analysing how a parody of a Francoist regime newsreel (NO-DO) serves the purpose of ridiculing and satirising the extreme-rightist discourse of Vox political party. We employ a visual re-framing approach to the topic, examining keyframes of three *Polònia* pieces related to the formation of the leftist coalition government between the Socialist Party and Unidas Podemos, the dialogue roundtable about the Catalan political conflict and the feminist celebration of the International Women's Day. The results refer to the re-articulation of the representation of power icons in the Catalan political sphere. *Polònia* mocks an alleged victimisation of the rightist discourse concerning the Catalan conflict, feminism and immigration. Those topics resonate in the old Francoist discourse of NO-DO.

We relate those results to the building of national identities amid a political conflict, in the sense of how *Polònia* addressed a specific target with cultural and political cues. At the same time, the parodic satire of TV3 *Polònia* is considered in the context of (post)modern iconoclastic tradition.

Keywords

Parodic satire, iconoclasm, visual re-framing, far-right-wing, newsreel.

1. Introduction

European public service televisions contributed from their very beginning to convey a sense of national belonging to their citizens. This is the case of TV3, the first Catalan television channel founded in September 1983 and whose regular broadcasts kicked off in January 1984. TV3 broadcasts in Catalonia and Catalan-speaking territories (Andorra, Northern Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the Valencian Community). The peculiar feature of TV3 lies in that its political satire likely communicates this sense of identity better than any other. To highlight this idea, we must remember that a programme like *Polònia* never existed on Spanish public television. It is impossible to imagine it during the Franco regime. Even in the democracy period, political satire was part of the television grids, but in the private sector (*El Guiñol de Canal Plus* or *CQC* in Tele5 and La Sexta), and they did not have to do so much with Spanish

identity as *Polònia* with Catalonia. In fact, researchers as Ferré-Pavía and Gayà-Morlà (2010) point out that viewers envisage *Polònia* as a television space very related to the Catalan identity. This format follows the wake of cases as the British *Spitting Image* but, instead of puppets, actors impersonate the current political and social personalities. The TV show links sketches in a self-reflexive fashion, breaking the so-called “fourth wall.” *Polònia* producers and screenwriter have stressed both its public service mission and the ability to develop Catalan cultural identity (Darriba, 2018), as well as the representation of various social sensitivities present in Catalonia. According to their producers, this aim was guaranteed by the ideological diversity of the screenwriters’ staff. The programme sketches are spoken in Catalan and Spanish. It began to be made for television in 2006, after being devised for radio broadcasting by Toni Soler and his comedy group *Minoría Absoluta*. This investigation intends to examine the *Polònia* political satire regarding the Spanish (far)right-wing parties’ discourse. The relevance of this research lies not only in its aesthetic interest (Balló, 2007), but also in the current political situation in which Catalonia is placed. In recent years, the tension between the central government and the Catalan one has increased remarkably. It is a clash that particularly affects the whole Catalan society that we can talk to a certain extent about a fractured society. In this milieu, satire and humour can be seen as bridges to discuss political issues that usually arise passionate opinions.

The analysed *Polònia* content enacts three parodies of an old Spanish newsreel. For almost nearly four decades (1939-1975), the Francoist regime conveyed its images of power and the power of images making use of newsreels screened regularly in all the Spanish movie theatres. Such newsreels, known popularly as NO-DO, monopolised the informative channels manipulating the public sphere’s representation. NO-DO built an image of power that has pervaded in Spaniards’ collective memory and culture (Ascunce, 2015; Esteban *et al.*, 2019). That cultural context includes a series of beliefs about Francoism that mix national-catholic myths with the regime’s political achievements. In the following four decades after the end of the dictatorship, particularly since the creation of the Ley de Memoria Histórica (Ley 52/2007), the representation of that power was vanishing in the public sphere. The Francoist symbols have been gradually withdrawn from squares and streets, while the regime propaganda was questioned. However, throughout the last decade (2010-2020), in light of both the effects of the recent crises and the new wave of European extreme right parties, some far-right Spanish organisations have retrieved discourses that resonate in the social culture of Francoism (Gould, 2019). Such discourses underline allegedly several threats to contemporary Spain’s political and constitutional order: the Catalan and Basque independentism, the “radical” feminism, the communism or the dangers of massive immigration. The fear of national identity dissolution describes the primary vector of this discourse.

Although that framing resonates in the Francoist discourse, the extreme-right is far from recognising it publicly. It seems evident that the aim of *Polònia* with the NO-DO parodies points out the identification of Vox and a neo-Francoist discourse. We intend to analyse how *Polònia* addressed their public through political satire. We take advantage of the theory about modern iconoclasm (Gamboni, 1997), irony, parody and political satire (Hutcheon, 1995; 2000), and the approach of mock-documentaries (Roscoe and Hight, 2001). Theoretically and methodologically, we also use the concept of visual framing (Coleman, 2010).

The rhetorical strategies of *Polònia* re-frame the issues raised by the far-right-wing. Viewers can process their contents following central or peripheral routes (Petty and Cacioppo, 1987); to put in other words, they employ diverse elaboration strategies (Kahneman, 2013). The footage of statues toppling or the burning of a picture only requires peripheral processing, while parodies or mock-documentaries demand a more cognitive engagement.

1.1. *Iconoclasm and visual re-framing*

Traditionally, statues on pedestals in public squares have reminded citizens of the theatricalisation of power. Their toppling represented the destruction of power and the possible pass to a new political stage. In 2003, CNN broadcasted to the whole world the demolition of Saddam's statue in Baghdad. Producers of that footage took for granted that the global community could share the meaning of that symbolic act; worldwide viewers could participate in a formal framework about the public power depiction and its destruction. Audiences did not require substantial cognitive efforts to understand that act, in the sense of the peripheral way of processing information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Examples all along the 20th century illustrate governments that have been overthrown and have become part of the collective memory. The toppling of statues has been widely used in recent history to render the substitution of power publicly. That type of symbolic schemes has to do with the concept of visual framing, essential to this investigation's methodology. They offer visual cues to activate cognitive frames in viewers (Geise, 2017).

Visual framing is focused on how different actors define social problems through images, "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality, highlighting them above others by means of visual communication, and making them salient, meaningful, and memorable, so that certain attributions, interpretations, or evaluations of the issue or item described are visually promoted" (Coleman, 2010). Politicians, journalists and social movements usually frame images to generate meanings on political matters. They highlight the political side of the acts with the employment of such framing. It is possible to analyse how actors define issues, attribute causes, morally evaluate and make recommendations to resolve them (Entman, 1993).

In the field of Art and History, the term "iconoclasm" refers etymologically to the destruction of sacred religious images. Thus, it only defines an act related to holy things and their physical destruction. We apply "iconoclasm" to all types of icons in the line of Dario Gamboni when facing the history of iconoclasm since the French Revolution. Also, we insist on iconoclasm as associated with the production of new meanings for the signifiers. Rather than only considering the destruction of a statue, modern iconoclasm would paint it in pink, for instance. Hence, beyond the concept of framing, the iconoclastic act produces a visual re-framing, a re-articulation of the image meanings to re-evaluate the political problem associated with it. In this way, it is possible to contextualise *Polònia* in the iconoclasm tradition.

As Freeberg states, iconoclastic processes sometimes present remarkable similarities; for example, a picture of a child urinating on Saddam's beheaded statue replicates another in a 16th-century engraving (2017, 51).

The 21st century began with the television broadcast of the destruction of the Twin Towers, one of the most visible global capitalism symbols. Two decades later, the iconoclastic impulses remain alive, with the statues toppling under the umbrella of the *Black Lives Matter* social movement. Unlike Dean Kissick's¹ opinion, iconoclasm did not return because it has never gone. At least, this investigation considers that iconoclasm takes part of a broader general concept called "visual re-framing," showed in diverse discursive ways in Art, Politics, Propaganda and Public Relations (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; Messaris & Abraham, 2001). In any case, the incitement always remains the same: reformulate social problems through the manipulation of texts and images with the aim to display alternatives to the hegemonic framing from minority positions (Montagut & Araüna, 2017; Entman & Herbs, 2001; Mythen, 2010).

As Fuglerud *et al.* emphasise (2020), iconoclasm is closely bound up with the concept coined in the 20th century of *dammatio memoriae*, that it refers to the sanctions applied in the

¹ <https://www.spikeartmagazine.com/articles/downward-spiral-4>.

Antiquity intended to delete the memory of an individual after death. Both notions (*damnatio memoriae* and iconoclasm) may be considered ways to negotiate, contest, or destroy material sites or aesthetic forms, whether in life or after their protagonists' death.

1.2. *NO-DO parody and satire of national-populism*

We contemplate *Polònia* as (post)modern iconoclasm since they re-articulate image meanings. In that sense, we have to notice the relation of *Polònia* with the classic documentary by the purpose of the analysis on NO-DO parody.

NO-DO belonged to a group of news films or newsreels in vogue until the coming of television. French production company *Pathé* began experimenting with the regular compilation of news spliced together on one reel. Newsreels were exhibited regularly once or twice a week. They appeared at the end of the first decade of the 20th century with the rise of cinemas. The initial model of *Pathé*, the *Pathé-faits-divers*, was imitated all across the world. Newsreels included a musical score and voice-over to give meaning to the images at the end of the 1920s with the apparition of sound. However, the topics were similar to the silent era: current affairs, celebrities, inventions or fashion. In general, they supported the national status quo and reflected the social norms at the time. "Authoritarian regimes such as Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Francoist Spain and the Soviet Union all invested in the establishment of their own newsreels" (Chambers *et al.* 2018).

In the 1950s, television would end the reign of this format, although it still survived for nearly four decades in some countries' cinemas. At any rate, these media contents have undergone a second life through image digitalisation. Firstly, examples as NO-DO have been digitalised and opened to free access. Secondly, the possibility of reuse has contributed to the debates about post-truth and fake news. Finally, programmes like *Polònia* have retrieved newsreels to make their parodies since they belong to more than one generation's collective memory.

In Spain, NO-DO was a symbol of the power of representation of Francoist representation through the coining of expressions and forged of images that constituted

a kind of regime standard, with little propaganda brightness, but with the simplest expression of the regime's deepest meanings. A bursting and overflowing language, a kitsch rhetoric, an over-acted diction, no sense of humour, a tired repetition of common places... Precisely because the public never believed too much in the NO-DO (it is fame that never aroused passions), perhaps that dull language permeated the public more than political propaganda never did (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 242).

Based on this idea, it is possible to understand how NO-DO contributed to forging a social culture of Francoism (Ascunce, 2015). This phenomenon has to do with both the apparatus of the state to repress potentialities and its ideological power (Althusser, 1988). Apart from using the violence monopoly and repression, the regime built a cultural hegemony based on the normalisation of lifestyles linked with symbols that have pervaded in the memory of millions of Spaniards, even after the end of Francoism (Preston, 2012; Cazorla, 2009). That culture targeted people ideologically through the church's soft power, educational institutions, and the mass media. The latter includes NO-DO because it was the only one in its category (cinema news) and aimed at the consensus among the distinct forces that held Francoism in power.

Throughout the Civil War, Francoism released its propaganda via the predecessor of NO-DO: *El Noticiero Español*. Unlike the latter, NO-DO was not strictly speaking "propaganda" but "a biased amusement, quite scant in information and lazy for changes, although with sporadic propaganda discharges" (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2006, 241).

One of the essential elements associated with Francoism's cultural hegemony is related to the representation of time in NO-DO. *El Noticiero Español* attempted to create the oxymoron of a timeless time, steady and connected to a glorious past. In NO-DO, time does not flow and turn out to be a succession of repeated catholic rituals, commemorations of the

Francoist Crusade and “media events” (Dayan & Katz, 1997) set up by the regime public relations (opening of power plants, water reservoirs, industries and rural fairs; trips by Franco through Spain, handing of titles of properties, prizes for large families, awards for exemplary workers, etc.).

Such a notion of time reflects the immobility of the regime accurately. This feature will be very relevant in the satirical depiction of NO-DO because all the analysed pieces display the same structure. On the one hand, they addressed the viewers year over year with a lasting discourse that confirms that everything is under control. The static time constitutes a common trait with the new right-wing-party speech and advocates for the tradition and the conservatism of institutions, for the idea of an eternal homeland, the historical essence of the Spanish soul, etc. On the other hand, at the same time, the discourse directed against everything which allegedly threatens to disrupt the order: from the feminist to immigration, from the secular State to federalism.

1.2.1. The subversion of documentary in *Polònia*

NO-DO performed as a bottleneck regarding the production and dissemination of news in the way of a gate-keeper (Galtung & Ruge, 1965). In that sense, it held a hegemonic power over the definition of reality for Spaniards. The documentary genre itself constituted another symbol of power among audiences of the time. NO-DO drew upon the prestige of documentary as a genre. That prestige was based on the idea that “documentary is intimately tied up with the scientific project and technology advancement. Documentary is a product of Enlightenment in which the discourse of Science was married with a liberal-humanist view of the world and were propelled by a desire for social change and progress” (Roscoe & Hight, 2001, p. 9). Like the rest of the newsreels, NO-DO seems to convey the reality as it was, despite people being aware of living under an authoritarian regime.

Lyotard’s critiques of the Enlightenment project of modernity (1979) and the concept of “simulation” (Baudrillard, 1983) have helped to displace the documentary as an accurate portrayal of reality. “Whereas Enlightenment generated a faith in facts and in the ability of science to solve social and individual problems, postmodernism has questioned and undermined the authority of such narratives” (Roscoe & Height, 2001, p. 28). The possibilities of digital manipulation have also aided to debunk the documentary. In these examined TV3 pieces, *Polònia* has subverted the classic documentary’s codes and conventions to re-appropriate NO-DO and transform it into a mock-documentary. Roscoe and Hight (2001) developed a mock-documentary classification according to the filmmaker’s intentions, the text construction, and the audience’s role (Table 1).

The concept of political satire is so paramount in this research as that of mock-documentary. In fact, the theoretical approach to satire encompasses mock-documentary. Political satire finds its roots in literature or textual tradition (although its objectives have extended to images, for example, in cartoons), and it is related to the resignification of the satirised object. This genre makes use of parody to reconstitute the meaning of its target (Hutcheon, 1995).

We can distinguish two types of parodic satire on television: the first aims to parody the traditional news programmes. In contrast, the second takes the form of a dramatisation of the political sphere. The former is diegetic and tells stories as in broadcasting news. *El Intermedio* is an example in the Spanish media system (Valhondo & Berrocal, 2020); the latter is mimetic and shows sketches, in the way of a sitcom. Within this second category, the characters may be embodied by puppets or real people. *Polònia* is an example in which both strategies are mixed up; sometimes, it works with sketches and others with parodies of genres, as in selected TV pieces for this study.

Table 1: Degrees of mock-documentary.

| | Intentions of the filmmaker | Construction of the text | Role constructed for the audience |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| Degree 1. Parody | To parody, and implicitly reinforce, an aspect of popular culture | The “benevolent” or “innocent” appropriation of documentary aesthetics The Classic Objective Argument accepted as a signifier of rationality and objectivity | Appreciation of the parody of popular culture, and the reinforcement of popular myth Nostalgia for the traditional forms of documentary |
| Degree 2. Critique | To use the documentary form to engage in a parody or satire of an aspect of popular culture | The ambivalent appropriation of documentary aesthetics A tension between an explicit critique of documentary practices and practitioners and an implicit acceptance of the generic codes and conventions | Appreciation of parody/satire of popular culture Varying degrees of reflexivity aspects of the documentary genre |
| Degree 3. Deconstruction | To critique an aspect of popular culture To examine, subvert and deconstruct factual discourse and its relationship with documentary codes and conventions | The “hostile” appropriation of documentary aesthetics Documentary as representative of a mythical and problematic social-political stance towards the social-historical world | Reflexive appreciation of parody or satire of popular culture An openly reflexive stance towards factual discourse and its associated codes and conventions |

Source: Faking it (Roscoe & Craig, 2001).

1.3. *The populist discourse of the Spanish (ultra)right-wing*

To contextualise the subversion of *Polònia*, we needed to review the rhetorical strategies of Vox, the new Spanish far-right party. Vox was founded at the end of 2013. Its birth mirrors other European events of recent populist, nationalist and nativist movements in Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany (Gould, 2017).

On its website, Vox introduces itself as “the real voice of Spain”², with a picture that shows up the foremost party leaders. One of them (Espinosa de los Monteros) is holding a banner saying “golpistas a prisión” (referring to the members of the Catalan government who called a referendum), surrounded by party militants with flags.

They consider themselves a “movement of extreme need which appears to put the institutions to the service of Spaniards, in contrast with the current government that put Spaniards to the service of politicians.” The party discourse emphasises lending voice to those deprived of it. They also promote the national symbols’ value against what they recognise as political and cultural threats to the Spanish national identity. Its discourse highlights the “defence of Spain, family and life.”

It is now almost commonplace in social sciences to regard identities as cultural constructions, including the national identity (Rusciano, 2003; Billig, 1995). The notion of

² <https://www.voxespana.es/espana/que-es-vox>.

'people' is an empty signifier that always requires being filled (Laclau, 2005). Far away from this perspective, these far-right parties reckon the national identity as essential and eternal truth. What might define this is the sentence "the past is fate" (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2011), as an example of the notion of time in NO-DO and *El Noticiero Español*.

In general, the populist construction by European far-right elaborates a series of *topoi* of varied origin (Wodak, 1999). Those enemies resonate in the Francoist discourse as a variation of the European nationalist-populist *topoi*: far-right parties built themselves against poor immigration, feminists, separatists, communists and republicans. In the case of Vox, the "people" are aligned against "Spain's enemies." In essence, it is similar to the Francoist discourse in its reluctance to everything that represents modernity (liberalism, capitalism, secularisation), attempting to identify themselves with a timeless Spain of tradition and culture. If left-wing populism is aimed at an international public faced with a powerful elite, the right-wing one is nativist, xenophobic, malist and homophobic. Vox, for example, reject some of these traits publicly but not privately.

2. Methodology

The sample contained three *Polònia* television pieces that parodied NO-DO and satirised the (far)right discourse. For *Polònia* producers, this discourse did not only belong to Vox but also to Partido Popular (PP) and Ciudadanos. Each piece lasts less than five minutes, and they were inserted in the *Polònia* weekly TV show. The videos had the next titles:

- Rojos al poder ("Reds to power," broadcasted on 17/01/2020)
- La mesa del diálogo ("The dialogue roundtable," broadcasted on 27/02/2020)
- Celebración del Día Internacional de la Mujer ("International women's day," broadcasted on 05/03/2020)

The visual re-framing works as a continuous process of decision making about what aspects includes in the image configuration. The professionals select a frame and organise it, suggesting a central idea with the video and photo edition tools (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). Their selection starts from a series of concepts about the right aesthetic and political framing culturally available (Entman, 1993; van Gorp, 2007). We followed these steps:

1. For each piece, we chose several keyframes according to the concept of "decisive moment," uttered by Cartier-Bresson (1999). That moment boils down to the basic meaning of a fragment. For instance, in the piece entitled "Rojos al poder" ("Reds to power"), the first fragment shows the signing of the coalition agreement between the left-wing parties. We selected the frame of the embrace between Sánchez (Socialist Party) and Iglesias (Unidas Podemos) to depict the total segment, taking into account that political actors emphasise the pact not only signing but especially hugging each other in front of the cameras.
2. Each keyframe was analysed using visual framing (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral assessment and treatment recommendation), including another factor: the discourse's possible receiver. As Toby Miller points out (2009), one of the media's objectives is building subjectivities. We have attempted to bear in mind this narratological idea in the framing definition.
3. We examined the re-framing practised by *Polònia*, indicating the audio and video post-production operations made to resignify the images.
4. Those images were re-contextualised using the available framings of the sociocultural context (van Gorp, 2007). Those framings have to do with NO-DO, sociocultural Francoism and the new national-populist (far)right discourse.
5. We draw conclusions about the final framing of these operations regarding the relationship between TV3 and its public.

These last points require further explanation in order to fit the conventional framing theory with its visual version. This is not an easy task, given that images usually cannot convey

the meaning of causal statements and, precisely, this is one of the most relevant elements of framing. More than anything, a political frame helps us to understand a problem defining its causes and evaluating them. Then, how can we address this issue? Firstly, we cannot avoid analysing the visual framing without the voice-over, which contextualises or anchors the images' meaning. Quoting Renita Coleman (2010, p. 235), "It is artificial for research to view one channel of communication in isolation as this can result in an incomplete understanding of any media event." Secondly, a visual media discourse may create associations among images. Viewers could read those links as causal connections. Above all, if the voice-over confirms that causal meaning. What is before in the chain turns to be the cause of the next image. At least there can be a link by contiguity. Over time, a repeated visual discourse may transform icons into symbols through a visual indexical strategy. For example, in the first analysed piece, an image of the hug between Sánchez and Iglesias is followed by pictures of Stalin, burnt churches, pirates, disorder and mayhem. The irony of *Polònia*'s visual discourse plays with that, from the viewpoint of a far-right voter, a left-wing party is a symbol of chaos, disorder and oppression. Finally, the meaning of the images can be conveyed through formal aspects like position and size in the picture and, mostly, by facial expressions and non-verbal language (Vivas & Valhondo, 2021). On these grounds, we have attempted to compare the traditional framing scheme with the visual one (Table 2).

Table 2: Visual framing adaptation.

| Framing | Visual framing |
|--------------------------|---|
| Problem definition | Position of the subjects Size of subjects Non-verbal language |
| Causal interpretation | Starting position in the chain of images |
| Moral evaluation | Positive/Negative Valence Non-verbal language |
| Treatment recommendation | End position in the chain of images Positive/Negative Valence Non-verbal language |

Source: Own elaboration.

3. The reappropriation of *Polònia*

3.1. *Common visual motifs in all pieces*

We have detected a type of structure that show common elements in the analysed episodes:

1. Introduction of the 1940s NO-DO.
2. NO-DO voice-over with the typical intonation of old newsreels.
3. Black-and-white image.
4. Excessive and bombastic vocabulary.
5. A common frame in which the origin of misrule and general chaos problems lies in the left-wing.
6. The receivers of the parody message are children called by diminutives associated with a high social status (Borja, Pelayo, Luisito, Jorgito). *Polònia* identifies NO-DO as storytelling for childish citizens.

The following headings analyse the meanings built by each fragment.

3.2. "*Reds to power*" (*Rojos al poder*)

The first frame selected shows the hug between Sánchez and Iglesias (Fig. 1.1). This image refers to a very familiar way of depicting alliances between political forces. We have preferred this icon to that of the signing of the pact. Both are representative, but a hug is always more emotional. The framing is precise: the left-wing parties have attained to form a government.

Figure 1: “Reds to power”.



The *Polònia* re-framing transforms the original colour image into a black-and-white one inserting a close-up view in which one can see what is written in the documents: “GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT. Point 1: DESTROY SPAIN” (“ACUERDO DE GOBIERNO. Punto 1: DESTRUIR ESPAÑA”). The audio resignifies the pact as a failure. NO-DO parody emphasises its illegitimacy through an oxymoron: “After a coup d’etat at the ballots, socialists and communists have formed a government” (“Después de dar un *golpe de Estado en las urnas*, socialistas y comunistas han formado Gobierno”).

The second image seems to correspond to an old ethnographic documentary. It shows the dance of an African tribe (Fig. 1.2). The choice of *Polònia* still reveals a series of meanings. The NO-DO audio defines immigration as a problem, associating it with the foreigner image that someone could have in the 1940s, when there was almost no immigration in Spain. The cause of the problem is the leftist pact. This perception of the foreigner has to do with a colonial icon related to poverty and black-and-white documentaries. The immigrant could be a millionaire football player who does not pay his taxes, but it is a black boy who dances in front of the camera.

The third one is an unknown documentary image that shows Soviets soldiers performing typical Russian dances (Fig. 1.3). *Polònia* resignifies the government agreement as a Soviet-ideology conspiracy which will pass laws to “burn churches, educate women in feminazism and steal the money from the rich.” The latter is related to the fourth icon that shows old film footage with a pirate forcing someone to walk the plank (Fig. 1.4). The re-framing identifies entrepreneurs as the only wealth generator. Also, it links the social-communist government with piracy that tries to make entrepreneurs disappear. Meanwhile, people are complaining because businessmen like Amancio Ortega “feed them.”

The fifth keyframe represents a subjective view of a pregnant woman seated on a park bench opening the surprise gift included in a sweet bun that says: “FREE ABORTION” (Fig. 1.5). This image is the only one explicitly produced by *Polònia* for the sketch. The NO-DO re-framing points out the government as a political agent who encourages women to abort.

The sixth image is taken from an old documentary. It shows three children under a bed (Figs. 1.6 and 1.9). The re-framing audio mentions them as “Borja, Luisito and Pelayo,” “good Spaniards,” anthroponyms with legendary and historical resonances of the founding myth of Spain (Pelayo, above all). These names are widespread among the conservative upper-class. They embodied the ordinary people, and NO-DO labelled them as childish victims of the coming of “reds to power.”

The seventh keyframe shows a transgender person reading a book on stage (Fig. 1.7). The framing highlights the matter of education and the LGTB collective’s rights. The NO-DO re-framing indicates the government’s intention to set in motion an “indoctrination campaign across Spanish schools.” This perspective refers to how the (far)right-wing understand the LGTB movement, labelled disdainfully as “tri-li-ris.”

After defining the problem, its causes and the target, the parody legitimises the political actors in charge of solving it; they “will ensure that Spain turns out to be great again and nobody will collectivise your sweets” (Fig. 1.8). Those actors are the three right-wing parties, “PP, Vox and the remains of Ciudadanos” (Fig. 1.8).

3.3. “*The dialogue roundtable*” (*La mesa del diálogo*)

The first image belongs to an old black-and-white film in which a traditional 1950s family are having breakfast (Fig. 2.1). The audio points out that they are the family of the “wrongdoer” Pedro Sánchez, who is meeting today “with Catalans for the famous roundtable of treason.” Sánchez’s wife serves him a coffee and asks: “Good morning, Pedro, what are your plans for today?”; to which Sánchez answers: “Destroy Spain, sweetheart, like every day.” Children laugh and say goodbye: “See you, daddy, destroy Spain well!” That image of the power in the private sphere shows the “real intentions” of Sánchez naively, presenting the political conflict as a Manichean moral game where Sánchez is the personification of evil.

Following the logic of the childish parody, the second keyframe shows how Pedro Sánchez shakes hands with Quim Torra (the Catalan President) at the stairs of Moncloa (the official residence of the Spanish President) (Fig. 2.2). The voice-over resignifies the meaning of that real-life meeting footage edited in black-and-white with the next audio: “In Moncloa, Sánchez meets his cronies in crime: Quim Torra, José Stalin (Fig. 2.3), the inventor of the pizza with pineapple (Fig. 2.4) and, on behalf of Podemos, a transsexual devil (Fig. 2.5).” The naive portrayal of evil comprises those actors who conspire with Sánchez and may be identified as the demons of both Francoism and the current (far)right-wing, summed up by the expression “the Catalan-Bolshevik madness.” In that depiction (Fig. 2.6), a “satanic sect” is attempting to sacrifice a woman from Murcia, “as could not be otherwise” (Murcia is the only Spanish region where Vox is the government party in coalition).

As a result of negotiations, “days later, the table has begun to bear fruit. All the nation’s money has gone to Catalonia.” The rich people from La Moraleja (a Madrid upper-class neighbourhood) “have to take water from the fountain” (Fig. 2.7). “Catalonia takes all the rail investments. On the Madrid-Antequera train line, the wagons have been replaced by ox cars (Fig. 2.8). In contrast, they have top technology in Catalonia (Fig. 2.9).”

What the (far)right party Vox fear most is the Catalan cultural invasion of Spain and the loss of the allegedly eternal Spanish essences; for example, “by Decree-Law, all the forests trees have been cut down to make *caga-tiós* [Christmas tree] for Catalans” (Fig. 2.13).

Figure 2: “The dialogue roundtable”.



The dialogue roundtable will permit the ideological indoctrination in Catalan. The witty hyperbole voice-over of the NO-DO parody states that “all Spanish children are compelled to speak Catalan as if they were the grandchildren of Pompeu Fabra (Fig. 2.11).” Again, the receivers of those policies are innocent victims, “the Spanish children.” They are taught with Catalan books like “El zoo d’en Pitus” (popular Catalan children’s) (Fig. 2.12), “and they are forced to dance sardanas” (Fig. 2.13). That logic of discourse leads to absurd aftermaths: “even monkeys from the Madrid Zoo have learnt the regional dialect so as not to be sacrificed” (Fig. 2.14). *Polònia* adopts Francoism’s idiolect and labels Catalan as a “regional dialect” rather than a language. Spanish kids are the victims of such policies. For example, “Pelayo has had to make a guitar with a shoebox” (Fig. 2.15).

As in the rest of the analysed pieces, the solution is carried out thanks to “PP, Vox and the last voter of Ciudadanos, who will fight to make the roundtable of betrayal come to nothing.”

3.4. *Women's International Day (8M)*

The rhetorical strategy of this piece insists on depicting feminism as an evil threat to the institution of the family. The voice-over points out that a “black cloud darkens the Spanish sky,” while current grayscale footage shows urban buildings silhouetted against purple skies (Fig. 3.1).

Figure 3: International Women's Day



Feminism is identified with “feminazism,” that is, with an intolerant and intransigent version. The evil threat occurs now during the celebration of international women’s day, 8 March (8M). Still, the NO-DO parody indicates that 8M “owes its name to the eight million of deaths by feminazism.” In contrast, an old documentary footage shows a very disciplined parade of teenagers (Fig. 3.2).

The third image displays Sánchez and Iglesias shaking hands to stage the coalition government (Fig. 3.3). From the fourth to the eighth, images portray the issue of political feminism, contextualising it in the private space of a home. The fourth shows a couple in a dining room with a chimney in the background. The NO-DO re-framing warns about how “feminism is more and more radical since the communists seized power.” *Polònia* satirises the inability of a part of society to accept equal rights between men and women. The issue is reenacted with the following dubbed dialogue (Figure 3.5):

Husband: Oh, darling, today is the international women's day! I let you celebrate it sewing a bit more.

Wife: Oh, thanks, darling, I could sew your penis to your testicles!

Children appear again as the receivers of NO-DO messages, defining them as the victims of women: "Jaimito must lick himself due to the selfish neglect of his sister, women across Spain are getting crazier against men." The *Polònia* strategy mocks the traditional ideas that macho culture uses to frame the political struggle of feminism. The ninth image displays several suffragists posing for a picture. The NO-DO re-framing comments: "The story goes that all begun a hundred years ago when a crazy English woman got mad after suffering a strong period." Key frames eleven and twelve depicts a suffragist parade and some women handling a plane. *Polònia* re-articulation ridicules the feminist movements and their achievements. It also blames the "communist government which rewards feminazism lowering VAT on tampons, as long as men end up ruined just for a razor blade." Picture thirteen portrays a homeless person begging on the street to buy a razor blade. Image fourteen insists on the issue of abortion. Several women head to get into train wagons. The NO-DO re-framing indicates that the government "provide them with massive abortions," while they are screaming altogether: "We do not care about our children!" Image fifteen, also drawn from an old film, shows a man saying something to a woman in an office. The re-framing audio alludes to the mutual consent issue in sex intercours, pointing out that the government has converted the "coitus into a bureaucracy mess."

As in the two other pieces, the solution comes from PP, Vox and Ciudadanos: "Do not suffer, Spaniards!; thanks to brave Pablo, Santiago and Lucas, the feminist terror will end, and they will stop humiliating us."

4. Conclusions

The analysed parody raises an imaginary situation in which a 2020 NO-DO covers news with a ridiculously far-right bias. It develops a visual framing in which the lefty government is built candidly as a wicked enemy. Such propaganda takes as a model the old Francoist NO-DO, over-acting its political issues and aesthetic forms.

To produce a quality parody is needed by definition to understand the model on which it is based. In these episodes, producers and audiences seem to accomplish that task. Our analysis points out how *Polònia* manages with a great deal of skill the aesthetics codes and the thematic contents of the Francoist Documentaries, as well as the discourse of the far-right party Vox. The audience share mirrors the competence and engagement of viewers.

From a thematic point of view, *Polònia* insists on the main vectors of the far-right discourse. They apply irony and hyperbole to the key idea of that discourse, namely, to magnify the threat of the disintegration of the national identity due to the updated demons of the old Francoism. *Polònia* ridicules what they consider the victimisation of right-wing parties. With that victimisation Vox, PP and Ciudadanos address men over women, Spaniards over poor immigrants, heterosexuals over gays, Madrid over Barcelona, rightists over leftists. In sum, they refer to an eternal and timeless national identity that must be retrieved through its symbols and institutions (Table 3). *Polònia* satirises with the structure of a power discourse based on the loss of traditional institutions privileges over new political actors who claim their rights.

Table 3: Comparison of the three visual framings.

| | “Reds to power” | “The dialogue roundtable” | 8M |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Definition | Spain to vanish | Spain to disintegrate | Traditional Spanish moral rules to disappear |
| Causal interpretation | The leftist pact | Both the Leftist Spanish coalition and the Catalan government | “Radical” feminism |
| Moral evaluation | Negative | Negative | Negative |
| Treatment | Right-wing parties to power | Right-wing parties to power | Right-wing parties to power |

Source: Own elaboration.

From an aesthetic perspective, the analysis indicates that *Polònia* attempts to deconstruct the twentieth-century documentary’s message. The three categories proposed by Roscoe and Hight (2001) overlaps to a certain extent, but it is the deconstruction the one which best fits with the effort of *Polònia*. There is a hostile reappropriation of the documentary aesthetics to highlight its manipulative purpose and associate that meaning to the extreme-right discourse. The analysis pinpoints how producers intend to subvert the factual discourse of NO-DO and its Manichean way of understanding politics. Also, *Polònia* suggests a reflection on both the very idea of the documentary and its ideological use.

This deconstruction of meaning allows ridiculing the 20th-century documentary through 21st-century humorous and postmodern sketches. They make satire of the nationalist, catholic and authoritarian *Grand Narrative* of NO-DO in contrast to the sceptical irony of the Catalan identity discourse in the 21st century. In other words, *Polònia* built its public more diversely and dynamically than an ideology. They employ changing frames from a cognitive perspective rather than rigid mindsets, resonating in the Catalan culture through a warm and friendly sense of humour.

Polònia uses the parody of NO-DO to illustrate the relationship between Vox-PP-Ciudadanos and their voters. The discourse of these parties works as childish storytelling, in such a way as NO-DO worked regarding its audience. The programme gains legitimacy through irony, addressing a wide-ranging public. Its rhetoric attempts to contrast the Francoist manipulation of childish citizens and their involvement with an adult public. The political satire is charged affectively, and that permits the connection with the public. They construct the people offering cultural items of identification and inviting them to embody an identity against the neo-Francoist discourse and make them feel able to share a satire that wraps and masters the Vox ideological cliché relating to the Catalan conflict.

Finally, we can state that *Polònia* belongs to the iconoclastic tradition in postmodernity. The difference between pulling down a statue and making parody and satire of a political discourse lies in the viewer’s processing level. Apart from that, both cultural expressions follow the visual re-framing logic, altering the previous images’ meaning. The study of iconoclasm has revealed exciting conclusions. The iconoclastic trait of Protestantism is well-known in the traditional sense of banning religious icons. Less-known is another practice that consisted of parents giving their children catholic images as toys to play with (Moshenska, 2019). This practice confirms the ideas about iconoclasm as a visual re-framing operation that embraces many discursive varieties. To a certain extent, *Polònia* makes similar operations to Protestantism, offering its publics mediated images of politicians. To play with all those images, the context and game rules are needed to know, but, in essence, *Polònia* may be considered an iconoclastic game with social identities.

We are conscious of the methodological limitations concerning the use of visual framing. However, it seems inevitable to consider how media images condition the “pictures in our heads,” quoting Walter Lippmann. For this reason, future research should be addressed to study in a more experimental way how the visual framing works in the reception of media contents.

References

- Althusser, L. (1988). Ideología y aparatos ideológicos del Estado. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://www.doi.org/10.3917/amx.045.0128>
- Ascunce, J. Á. (2015). *Sociología cultural del franquismo (1936-1975). La cultura del nacional-catolicismo*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.
- Balló, J. (2007). La ficción de la máscara: el caso de Polònia en Cataluña. *Quaderns del CAC*, 27, 59-62.
- Baudrillard, J. (1983). *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext(e) Inc.
- Billig, Michael (1995). *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.
- Cartier-Bresson, H. (1999) *The Mind's Eye*. New York: Aperture.
- Cazorla, A. (2009). *Fear and progress. Ordinary lives in Franco's Spain, 1939-1975*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chambers, C., Jönsson, M. & Winkel, R. V. (Eds.) (2018). *Researching Newsreels. Local, National and Transnational Case Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coleman, R. (2010). Framing the Pictures in our heads. Exploring the framing and agenda-setting effects of visual images. En D'Angelo, P. y Kuypers, J.A. (eds.) *Doing news framing analysis. Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
- D'Angelo, P. & Kuypers, J. A. (Eds.) (2010). *Doing News Framing Analysis. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Darriba, M. (2018). Debats entorn de la funció social de la telesàtira política. La perspectiva de l'equip de producció de Polònia (TV3). *Comunicació: Revista de Recerca i d'Anàlisi*, 35(1), 47-66.
- Dayan, D. & Katz, E. (1995). *La historia en directo. La retransmisión televisiva de los acontecimientos*. Barcelona. Gustavo Gili.
- Entman, R. (1993). *Democracy without citizens. Media and the decay of American politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Entman, R. & Herbs, S. (2001). Re-framing Public Opinion as We Have Known It. In W. L. Bennett & R. Entman (Eds.), *Mediated Politics. Communication in the future of democracy* (pp. 203-226). Cambridge University Press.
- Esteban, A., Etura, D. & Tomasoni, M. (Coords.) (2019). *La alargada sombra del franquismo. Naturaleza, mecanismos de pervivencia y huellas de la dictadura*. Granada: Comares.
- Ferré-Pavía, C. y Gayà-Morlà, C. (2010). *Infotainment y percepción ciudadana de la política: El caso de Polònia. Razón y Palabra*, 72, mayo-julio.
- Fuglerud, O., Larsen, K. & Prusac-Lindhagen, M. (2020). *Negotiating Memory from the Romans to the Twenty-First Century: Damnatio Memoriae*. New York: Routledge.
- Freedberg, D. (2017). *Iconoclasia. Historia y Psicología de la violencia contra las imágenes*. Vitoria-Gasteiz: Sans Soleil.
- Galtung, J. & Ruge, M. H. (1965). The structure of foreign news: the presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises in four Norwegian newspapers. *Journal of International Peace Research* 2, 1. <https://www.doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104>
- Geise, S. (2017): Visual framing. *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*. P. Rössler (Editor-in-Chief), C. A. Hoffner & L. van Zoonen (Ass. Eds.). Chichester: Wiley & Sons. <https://www.doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbiemeo120>
- Gamboni, D. (1997). *La destrucción del arte. Iconoclasia y vandalismo desde la Revolución Francesa*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Gamson, W. A. & Modigliani, A. (1997). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1-37.
- Gould, R. (2019). Vox España and Alternative für Deutschland: Propagating the Crisis of National Identity. *Genealogy*, 3, 64.
- Hutcheon, L. (1995). *Irony's edge. The theory and politics of irony*. London: Routledge.

- Hutcheon, L. (2000). *A theory of parody*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Kahneman, D. (2013). *Pensar rápido, pensar despacio*. Barcelona: Penguin Random House.
- Laclau, E. (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1979). *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir*. Paris: Minuit.
- Messararis, P. & Abraham, L. (2001) The role of images in framing news stories. In S. D. Reese *et al.* (Eds.), *Framing public life* (pp. 215-226). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Miller, T. (1994). Althusser, Foucault, and the subject of civility. *Studies in 20th century literature*, 18(1), Article 10.
- Mythen, G. (2010). Re-framing risk? Citizen journalism and the transformation of news. *Journal of Risk Research*, 13(1), 45-58.
- Moshenska, J. (2019). *Iconoclasm as child's play*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Mongatug, M. & Araüna, N. (2017). Operación Palace y la construcción de discursos alternativos en Twitter: nuevas emergencias políticas. *Dígitos*, 3, 95-117.
- Petty, R. E. & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Preston, P. (2012). *The Spanish Holocaust. Inquisition and extermination in 20th Spain*. London: Harper Press.
- Roscoe, J. & Hight, C. (2001). *Faking it. Mock-documentary and the subversion of factuality*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Rusciano, F. L. (2003) The construction of National Identity. *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(3), 361-366.
- Tranche, R. R. & Sánchez-Biosca, V. (2006). *NO-DO. El tiempo y la memoria*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Tranche, R. R. y Sánchez-Biosca, V. (2011). *El pasado es el destino. Propaganda y cine en el bando nacional en la Guerra Civil*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- Valhondo, J. L. & Berrocal, S. (2020). Desregulación y soberanía del público en la televisión española: el infoentretenimiento como alternativa al modelo de noticias clásico. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, 26(2), 851-863.
- Van Gorp, B. (2010). Strategies to take subjectivity out of framing analysis. In P. D'Angelo & J. A. Kuypers (Eds.), *Doing News Framing Analysis. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (pp. 84-109). London: Routledge.
- Vivas, A. & Valhondo, J. L. (2021). *Ensayo sobre la Cultura Visual Contemporánea*. Editorial Aula Magna. McGraw-Hill Interamericana de España S. L.
- Wodak, R. (1999). El enfoque histórico del discurso. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Métodos de análisis crítico del discurso* (pp. 101-141). Barcelona: Gedisa.