
Miscellaneous

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Noticiari de Barcelona (1977-1980): The Institutionalisation of Protest in the Cinema of Spain's Transition to Democracy

Abstract

The films produced during the political transition to democracy in Spain continue to capture the interest of film analysts and historians. However, beyond the realm of fiction films, there are still many areas that have received little attention, such as the attempts to develop newsreels for cinemas once the monopoly of the Francoist *No-Do* newsreels had ended. This study focuses on the *Noticiari de Barcelona* newsreel series produced between 1977 and 1980, specifically analysing its content and its discourse. The importance of this newsreel series lies in three main factors: because it constituted one of the first steps towards the development of a Catalan film industry after the end of the dictatorship (in the midst of a debate in Spain over the need to establish autonomous film industries for each of the country's different regions); because of the attempt it constituted to establish a local audiovisual news product in clear opposition to the *No-Do* newsreels; and because of its adoption of some of the themes, discursive strategies and objectives attributed to many of the independent political films of the period. All of these factors determined the content and discourse of the newsreels, and gave them an orientation that was more persuasive than strictly informative.

Keywords

Newsreels, audiovisual information, persuasion, Institut de Cinema Català, independent cinema.

1. Introduction

Film production during the transition to democracy in Spain is without doubt one of the most popular fields of analysis for Spanish researchers¹. However, there are still some areas that have seldom been addressed, areas which, although they may appear minor, are in fact of great significance if we consider films made outside the context of the institutional channels of production, distribution and exhibition, and if we identify connections that place them in relation to the profound changes that other audiovisual media were undergoing at that time. One such case is *Noticiari de Barcelona*, a newsreel series which, as Balló, Espelt and Lorente (1990) suggest, “ha de tenir importants conseqüències per al cinema de l'època, tant des del

¹ The literature on the topic is considerable. Among general studies alone there is the work of Hopewell (1989), Monterde (1993), Hernández Ruiz & Pérez Rubio (2004), and Palacio (2011).

punt de vista del llenguatge cinematogràfic com pel que significarà de primer intent després de la Guerra de fornir un material en sèrie en llengua catalana amb una considerable difusió pels cinemes” (p. 85)².

Noticiari de Barcelona was produced by Institut de Cinema Català (ICC) in collaboration with the Barcelona City Council and screened in commercial theatres around Catalonia³. The ICC is an organisation incorporated in 1975 by a group of professionals in the audiovisual sector with the objective of revitalising the Catalan film industry and culture. As Martín Rom (1978) notes, it also pursues the “creation of films dedicated to the fight for democracy, in terms of both their content and their production relations” (p. 72). However, *Noticiari de Barcelona* was created and developed at a time when newsreels had already disappeared in many countries due to the rise of television (the long life of the *No-Do* newsreel constituted a unique exception), which had effectively taken over audiovisual discourses in the field of news production. The newsreel had been obsolete since the 1960s, when TV news finally became a fully audiovisual experience, having moved on from mere news reading in front of a camera with a few pictures towards its current incarnation thanks to advances in the recording, development and transportation of film footage. These advances reduced the distance between the event and its conversion into audiovisual information –as radio had done with sound practically since its introduction– and took possession of what had previously been the exclusive property of the newsreel: the spectacular power of the audiovisual image. Newsreels thus lost their great advantage over television because their production conditions made them rather less immediate. Added to this was the fact that news documentaries and reports, whose less timely relationship with the events reported was similar to that of the newsreel, had already been firmly established in the television medium for some time.

In any case, there were four factors that influenced the creation and development of the 63 editions of *Noticiari de Barcelona* (and of the 16 newsreels that comprise its successor, *Notícia de Catalunya*): the debate, especially intense in the mid-1970s, over what was referred to as “*el cine de las nacionalidades*”, i.e. the need for autonomous film industries for each different region of Spain; the importance of an independent non-fiction film movement in Catalonia, and in Spain in general, with a political, activist, and counter-current approach (see Arnau Roselló, 2006; García-Merás, 2007; Berzosa, 2009; Prieto, 2015; Nieto Ferrando, 2017); the ongoing presence of the *No-Do* newsreels, which, although by the mid-1970s they were no longer compulsory viewing in theatres and had lost their monopoly over cinematic news production, continued to be produced until 1981 (Tranche & Sánchez Biosca, 2000); and, related to the previous three points, the absence of an audiovisual media outlet dedicated to producing local content in the Catalan language, apart from programming on the Spanish state television network (TVE) for Catalonia, which had a few admittedly outstanding news programs, like *Giravolt* (1973-1979) (Baget i Herms, 1999, pp. 48-113). Indeed, *Notícia de Catalunya* was discontinued just when the Catalan public television channel TV3 began broadcasting, at the end of 1983.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the content and discourse of *Noticiari de Barcelona* (figure 1) based on the following three hypotheses:

1. That the creation of *Noticiari de Barcelona* was related to the debate over “*el cine de las nacionalidades*” in the mid-1970s, raising the question of the need to develop film industries that catered to the particular needs of Spain's different regions. However, evidence will also

² “[...] would have important consequences for the cinema of the period, both from the perspective of cinematic language and for representing the first attempt since the Civil War to provide a film series in the Catalan language with considerable dissemination in theatres”.

³ As Martí Rom (1978) notes, the first editions of the series were screened in ten theatres with large seating capacities. By edition 19 (1978), it was being shown in twenty first-run theatres and another twenty second-run cinemas in Barcelona, and in a total of seventy venues throughout Catalonia.

be found of the limits imposed in the practical application of what in theory was a much more radical idea.

2. That *Noticiari de Barcelona* represented an alternative to the *No-Do* newsreels, in terms of both its content and its discursive articulation, and that this entailed appropriating and institutionalising (i.e. introducing into the institutional channels of production, distribution and exhibition) certain practices adopted from the independent political non-fiction film movement.

3. That the fundamentally rhetorical articulation of the content of *Noticiari de Barcelona* reflects an orientation based more on persuasion (i.e. producing certain changes of attitude in the audience towards the issues addressed) than on information, despite the fact that it was presented as a local news product.

Figure 1⁴

1977	1. "Eleccions legislatives 15 juny de 1977. Procés electoral" (Josep Maria Forn)
	2. "L'Estatut" (Pere Balañà)
	3. "El poble ho ha decidit. III cinturó gratuït" (Julià Inglada)
	4. "El mar de Barcelona" (Carles Jover Ricart & J. A. Salgot)
	5. "La Rambla" (Josep Ulloa)
	6. "L'especulació del sòl. L'urbanisme" (Joan Bosch)
	7. "Diada nacional de Catalunya 1977. Onze de Setembre" (Albert Abril & Jordi Cadena)
	8. "Ensenyament. La problemàtica escolar" (Ramon Font i Segura)
	9. "La tercera edat" (Miquel Iglesias)
	10. "Retorn del president Tarradellas" (Ferran Llagostera Coll)
	11. "L'atur" (Antoni Martí Gich)
	12. "Feminisme. Els moviments feministes" (Georgina Cisquella)
	13. "Sanitat" (Carles Duran)
	14. "Català a l'Escola" (Jordi Feliu)
	15. "Llibertat d'expressió" (Antoni Ribas)
1978	16. "La premsa" (Manel Esteban)
	17. "La guàrdia urbana" (Eugeni Inglada)
	18. "Les presons. La COPEL" (Francesc Bellmunt)
	19. "El districte vé. El barri xinó" (Joan F. Solivelles)
	20. "El medi ambient" (Jordi Bayona)
	21. "La degradació a la ciutat" (Lluís Racionero)
	22. "La sang" (Llorenç Soler)
	23. "III Congrés Universitari Català" (Román Gubern)
	24. "L'entesa dels catalans" (Josep Maria Català)
	25. "Guarderies infantils" (Francesc Pérez Dolz)
	26. "La televisió ara i aquí" (Gustau Hernández)
	27. "Joan Miró" (Joan Baca & Toni Garriga)
	28. "Biblioteques" (Jordi Cadena & Rosa Vergés)
	29. "L'escola d'estiu" (Jordi Feliu)
	30. "L'humor" (Josep Maria Vallès)
	31. "Platges i piscines. Banyar-se a Barcelona" (Francesc Betriu)
	32. "L'art al carrer: monuments" (Sergi Schaaff)
	33. "Els museus" (Lluís Maria Güell)
	34. "Festes de la Mercè, 1978" (Francesc Bellmunt)
	35. "Dret de vaga. El conflicte de les gasolineres" (Francesc Bellmunt)
	36. "El cinema català" (Albert Abril)
	37. "El zoo" (Sergi Schaaff)

⁴ Prepared based on the Filmoteca de Catalunya film catalogue. Because in many of the newsreels the titles do not appear, we have included the titles recorded in the catalogue, which were in turn taken from the ICC.

	38. "Notes sobre El Besós" (Carles Duran)
	39. "La Barcelona subterrània" (Albert Abril)
	40. "Casc Antic" (Jordi Cadena)
	41. "Minusvàlids" (Georgina Cisqueuella)
	42. "Setmana de la sanitat" (Jordi Cadena)
	43. "L'ensenyament de la música"
	44. "Músics ara i aquí" (Ramon Font)
	45. "Set batlles de Barcelona" (Octavi Martí)
1979	46. "L'ajuntament de Barcelona" (Georgina Cisqueuella & Pere Joan Ventura)
	47. "L'agressió quotidiana" (Carles Duran)
	48. "La delinqüència" (Jaume Codina)
	49. "Els cecs" (Romà Guardiet & Sigfrid Casals)
	50. "Cinquentenari" (Pere Balañá)
	51. "Escola d'adults" (Mercé Remolí)
	52. "Els vegetarians" (Josep Maria Vallès)
	53. "El Barri de Fort Pienc" (Lluís López Doy)
	54. "Les concessionàries" (Xavier Caño)
	55. "L'Estatut, 1979" (Manuel Cussó-Ferrer & Antoni Verdaguer)
	56. "Barcelona (primera part)" (Enric Viciano Bellmunt)
	57. "Assaig de l'orquestra ciutat de Barcelona" (Carles Jover Ricart)
	58. "La reforma dels museus" (Octavi Martí)
	59. "La Platgeta, port de pescadors de Barcelona" (Francesc Bellmunt)
	60. "Informe sobre el FAGC" (Ventura Pons)
1980	61. "Barcelona és de tots" (Pere Balañá)
	62. "Escoles" (Carles Duran)
	63. "Museu Picasso" (Julià Inglada Àrias)

This study takes an approach based on narratological film analysis. Although questions related to narrative have often been associated almost exclusively with audiovisual fiction, they are in fact present as well in all studies that consider the nature of non-fiction films and their relationship to reality and the spectator, even if they do not make use of the concepts and terminology of film narratology⁵. For example, in the well-known differentiation made by Nichols (1997; 2010) between poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and expressive documentaries, it is easy to identify different articulations of history that are recounted based on a particular use of the variables of narrative, focalisation, time, or space. Thus, underpinning this study is the view that narration is not exclusive either to fiction or non-fiction cinema. In narratological terms it is of no consequence whether the narrative is sustained by credibility or "veracity": a pact with the spectator whereby certain strategies reveal that the events of the story either refer to a possible world (a world which, at the same time, is configured by those events), as is the case in fiction films, or make reference to a real world, with its own autonomous existence, as in the case of non-fiction.

2. El cine de las nacionalidades and independent cinema

Noticiari de Barcelona was created in a context defined by two elements that clearly conditioned its particular features: the quest to establish a Catalan film industry and filmmaking tradition following the end of the Francoist dictatorship; and the rise of an independent film movement in Catalonia, with an activist, counter-current approach. These two aspects are interrelated.

First of all, *Noticiari de Barcelona* is clearly rooted in the debate of the period over the so-called "*cine de las nacionalidades*". This debate grew out of reflections in the 1960s of certain Latin American filmmakers –published in Spanish film journals at the time and to some extent

⁵ Studies that have analysed documentaries from a narratological perspective include Jost (1989), Guynn (1990), Colleyn (1993), Gaudreault & Marion (1994), Vallejo (2008).

encouraged by their filmmaking practices– on the need to create homegrown film industries with “their own languages, reflecting the sociocultural reality of each country, with an approach that would be anti-imperialist, nationalist, and politically activist. This idea was based on the argument that foreign content alien to the home culture could not effectively be replaced with politically committed local content without the support of a formal revolution, and the creation of models of representation that would break away from those imposed from abroad” (Rodríguez Sanz, 1967; Jacob, 1969; *Cinema 2002*, 1977). Octavio Getino, for example, when interviewed about his film *The Hour of the Furnaces* (*La hora de los hornos*, 1968) (Martínez Torres, 1969), stressed that “the issue of culture or cinema in Latin America is intimately tied to the process of liberation and the construction of nationalities” (p. 46).

In 1976, the fourth edition of the Galician film studies conference *Xornadas do Cine do Ourense* explored this *connection between nationalism, formal revolution and political cinema*. The conclusion was the “*Declaración de los Cines Nacionales*” (“Declaration of National Film Industries”), which defined “*cines nacionales*” as “film industries that view the cinematic phenomenon as a tool for the ideological struggle of the exploited classes of the different nationalities of the Spanish State” (Martí Rom, 1976, p. 70). These film industries, it was argued, had to present the unique features of each region. The discussions at the festival stressed the need to create infrastructures for their development and promotion. In his chronicle, published in *Cinema 2002*, on a film studies symposium held in Sant Feliu de Guíxols in June 1976 and dedicated to the same topic, Antolín (1977) also suggests that “the future national film industries, as ideological alternatives, should break with the inherent codes of mainstream consumer cinema, and propose an alternative category, both at the level of [...] content (ideological) and at the level of formal discourse (aesthetic)” (p. 58).

Almost from the outset, these aspirations reflected a much more pragmatic approach, which is what was ultimately adopted. As Pérez Perucha (1996) suggests, many directors who declared their commitment to a national film industry basically sought to make commercial films that would attract an audience and benefit from the support of the political initiatives in their home regions, even if they were initially marginalised. This is evident in the articles compiled for the 38th issue of the film journal *Cinema 2002* (the publication that was most supportive of *el cine de las nacionalidades*), which explore the evolution of cinema in Catalonia up to that time, considering aspects like film clubs, amateur filmmaking and independent production. Worthy of special mention is the description by Romaguera (1978) of the studies of cinema engaged in at the *Congrés de Cultura Catalana* conference and the reproduction of the “Manifesto for Catalan Filmmaking at the Service of the People of the Catalan Nations”, which set parameters for filmmaking initiatives by future regional institutions. The proposals basically came down to the creation of a specific department whose purpose would be to regulate filmmaking activity, promote film studies and, among other actions, coordinate relations between the film and television industries and organise news and documentary film production services.

The independent nature of *el cine de las nacionalidades* ended up being reduced almost exclusively to the efforts to build a regional film industry, and one of the first examples of this was *Noticiari de Barcelona*. Nationalist assertions in the series were diluted (at least in comparison with much more radical proposals like *Som una nació* [Antoni Martí Gich, 1976] or *Independentzia!* [Antoni Martí Gich, 1977]), going no further than the demands for greater self-governance, autonomous status for Catalonia, and the restoration of Catalan institutions and culture. The only exception to this is newsreel 55 (“*L'Estatut*, 1979”), in which the recently obtained autonomous status of the Catalan region is presented as a first step towards much more ambitious objectives.

Noticiari de Barcelona was the pragmatic expression of the more radical aspirations of reporting and denouncing found in independent cinema, which was defined by its independence from the commercial channels of production, distribution and exhibition, and

by its positioning as an alternative option to those channels in political, cultural and expressive terms. Despite being partly associated with institutionalised filmmaking, given that it was produced by the ICC in collaboration with the Barcelona City Council and screened as a short in first-run and second-run movie theatres (although without an exhibition permit, at least in its first editions), *Noticiari de Barcelona* shared independent cinema's faith in the capacity of the film medium to expose certain social, economic, environmental, political and cultural issues –some of which had been given minimal media attention in earlier years– with the objective of bringing them to public attention in the interests of raising awareness and even inciting public action. Equally important is the way the newsreel develops its discourse, which in many cases seeks to challenge the supposedly transparent or unproblematic relationship between the representation and its referent.

It also shares with independent non-fiction cinema its fierce opposition to the *No-Do* newsreels and their derivatives, the *Imágenes* magazine and documentaries. This is evident in both its content and its discourse, both of which are far from the polite, calm, trivial and harmonious treatment of “reality” constructed by the Francoist newsreels. Another influential factor was the production, by *No-Do* and the Provincial Council of Barcelona, of the series *Diputació de Barcelona* (1974 and 1977), which summarised various events occurring in the region over the years, and *Barcelona: Era de Franco, 1939-1975* (1977), which reviewed different aspects of the relationship between the city and the dictator. These productions are marked by a tone of propaganda and nostalgia, in contradiction to the numerous efforts made by *No-Do* in those days to adapt to the new situation following Franco's death, as noted by Matud (2009).

The independent films referred to above were produced mainly from 1967 to 1979 all over Spain. In Catalonia, they addressed issues that would subsequently be revisited and adapted by *Noticiari Barcelona*, such as poverty and social inequality (*Distància 200 MTS* [Jordi Bayona, 1967], *52 dominicos* [Llorenç Soler, 1967], *No se admite personal* [Antonio Lucchetti, 1968], *Distància de 0 a infinit* [Jordi Bayona, 1969], *Largo viaje hacia la ira* [Llorenç Soler, 1969], *Un lloc per dormir* [Jordi Bayona, 1971], or *Viaje a la explotación* [Rosa Babi, Mercè Conesa, Joan Simó & Bartomeu Vilà Sala, Cooperativa de Cinema Alternatiu, 1974]), cultural claims that turn into nationalist campaigns (*D'un temps d'un país. Raimon* [Llorenç Soler, 1968], *Som una nació*, or *Independentzia!*), Francoist repression and propaganda, its legacy and the fight for freedom (*Espanya 68 [El hoy es malo, pero el mañana es mío]* [Helena Lumbreras & Llorenç Soler, 1968], *Noticiario RNA* [Llorenç Soler, 1970], *Montserrat, assemblea d'intel·lectuals* [Muntanya] [Comissió de Cinema de Barcelona, 1971], *El sopar* [Pere Portabella, 1974], *Un libro es un arma* [Cooperativa de Cinema Alternatiu, 1975], or *Alborada* [Lluís Garay & Joan Mallarach, 1976]), or the situation of the working class (*El campo para el hombre* [Helena Lumbreras, Mariano Lisa, Colectivo de Cine de Clase, 1975], *O todos o ninguno* [Helena Lumbreras, Mariano Lisa, Colectivo de Cine de Clase, 1976], *A la vuelta del grito* [Helena Lumbreras, Mariano Lisa, Colectivo de Cine de Clase, 1977], or *Numax presenta...* [Joaquim Jordà, 1979]). All these films prompted considerable discussion in the film press of the period on the relationship between cinema and politics, as well as the nature, type, function and effectiveness of independent production and exhibition.

It is also worth noting that the creation of a newsreel was one of the aspirations of many independent filmmakers. In fact, the Cooperativa de Cinema Alternatiu attempted to establish one in the years 1975 to 1976, of which only three monographic editions were produced, dedicated to the campaigns for national rights (*Noticiari 1: Marxa de la llibertat*), the status of women and their fight for equality (*Noticiari 2: La dona*), and community activism to reclaim certain urban spaces (*Noticiari 3: El Born*). Moreover, some of the directors responsible for *Noticiari de Barcelona* newsreels were also known as independent filmmakers (Jordi Bayona, Llorenç Soler, Antoni Martí, and Pere Joan Ventura), although there were also important amateur filmmakers like Joan Baca and Toni Garriga and the former members of the group

Gente Joven del Cine Amateur (Pere Balañà, Sergi Schaaff, and Jordi Feliu), now working in the industry, and acclaimed directors like Joan Bosch, Miquel Iglesias Bonns, Antoni Ribas, Josep Maria Forn, and Francesc Betriu. Forn and Betriu had previously become known for trying to break the boundaries of what could be seen and said within institutionalised cinema with their fiction films. Equally important was the presence of Georgina Cisquella, Mercè Remolí Xavier Caño and Jaume Codina, who were behind the television program *Giravolt*.

3. The content and its articulation

The first aspect of *Noticiari de Barcelona* that stands out is the monographic nature of each newsreel (each with a duration of approximately ten minutes), which gives them more the nature of a documentary or current affairs report than a newsreel made up of short, independent stories. The topics featured in more than one edition are: urban development (10); education (7); disadvantaged groups (7); autonomous status for the region (6); art and artists (5); the media (4); health care (3); pollution (3); cultural management (3); transport infrastructure (2); and workers (2). This does not mean that these topics are absent from other editions; indeed, some of them overlap markedly with each other, such as Catalonia's autonomous status and the development of a greater capacity for self-governance, often presented as part of the solution to problems presented, or pollution and disadvantaged groups, which appear in the editions dealing with urban development.

In any case, there are two overlapping topics that stand out above all others: community associations, and Francoism or Franco's legacy, although this topic evolves over time towards the political and economic powers in general –property developers, for example (38 and 45). Both these topics also function in many editions as characters that fulfil the role of assistant or antagonist to the main character –as occurs in fiction– or even the roles of protagonist and antagonist, respectively. Thus, for example, in newsreel 51, dedicated to adult education, the protagonists are the students, and their objective to overcome their lack of formal education, while the antagonist preventing them from achieving their goal is illiteracy and, in a supporting role to the antagonist, the Spanish State, which fails to recognise a problem inherited from Francoism that still persists. This newsreel concludes with the little “victories” of the protagonists that bring them closer to their objective, and with the need to strengthen community associations, an invaluable ally in this field as well.

The *Noticiari de Barcelona* series turned community associations and the political and economic powers into narrative elements. On the one hand, this contributed to giving visibility and support to social movements, which were very important in the transition to democracy (Quirosa, 2011), and which went beyond the working class tradition to include associations of residents, women, the disabled, and of course workers, fighting for urban renewal, quality education, gender equality, non-discrimination due to sexual orientation, or better living conditions, in addition to the political dimension of their actions and campaigns. On the other hand, it resulted in complaints and even cases of censorship. As the director Josep Maria Forn, President of the ICC, commented to Martí Rom (1978), some newsreels in the series gave rise to protests from the institutions and corporations they referred to. This happened with the major property developers mentioned in newsreel 6, the pharmaceutical labs in newsreel 13, and the provisional government of Catalonia in newsreel 15, titled “La Llibertat d'expressió” (“Freedom of Expression”), in which Lluís Llach accused it of inaction in the Els Joglars case, in addition to the objections of the army: “This fact, together with the sensitivity of the military authorities, led the City Council to order the withdrawal of the *Noticiari* from theatres after one week ‘to avoid more serious problems’.” Added to this, as Forn points out, was the political pressure on the film theatres screening *Noticiari de Barcelona* for not having applied for an exhibition permit (Martí Rom, 1978, p. 75).

The content of the newsreels is organised by categories, by association, by events or narratively, and, above all, by arguments or rhetorical articulation. Bordwell and Thompson

(2006) and Plantinga (2013) have analysed these approaches to structuring content, and both stress that they should not be viewed as stratified compartments: it is possible to find non-fiction films in which, although one approach may predominate, certain sequences are governed by others. The first approach, organisation by category, is synchronous and breaks down the topic analysed into separate sections. Thus, newsreel 30, dedicated to humour, explores different types of Catalan humour. The same is true of newsreel 46 about the Barcelona city council, which, after outlining its situation, focusing on the weight of the Francoist legacy, on its corrupt practices and on the need for greater self-governance, describes the council's organisation and its different areas of action on the municipal level. Newsreel 56, which explores different aspects of the city of Barcelona (coming close to being a tourist promotion documentary), could also be classified under this category.

The second approach, organisation by association, is based on similarities of any kind, even aesthetic similarities, or on actions and situations that occur in the same space, or on the consideration of an event from different perspectives, always creating an effect of randomness and openness. Organisation by association is uncommon at the level of an entire newsreel. It is effectively limited to newsreel 15, dedicated to freedom of expression, which describes the support for Albert Boadella and the Els Joglars theatre group after Boadella's arrest over the performance of his banned play *La torna*, and newsreel 17, which uses brief scenes linked by extra-diegetic music to show the routine work of Barcelona's municipal police, although it has more of the attributes of a "poetic documentary", as defined by Nichols (2010). There are also some sequences of an observational nature that could be classified under the organisation by association approach: everyday activity on the Barcelona street La Rambla in a sequence of newsreel 5; scenes from Barcelona's La Mercé festival in newsreel 34; or the opening sequence of newsreel 51 ("Escola d'adults"). Also in this newsreel, there is a predominance of testimonies by characters who direct the voice-over narration, which reduces its role to one of contextualisation.

The third approach, linking together a series of events chronologically in a historical format, although there may be changes in the order of the narrative, is limited to specific newsreels (e.g. 14, 36, 45 and 55) and sequences dealing in different ways with the past. Thus, for example, the young offenders featured in newsreel 26 narrate certain important events in their lives that shed light on their pathway to crime, and how the educational or prison institutions they went through influenced that pathway, although the newsreel as a whole is organised rhetorically. Organisation by causally and logically linked events is closer to classical fiction, which operates in the same way. It is also closely related to strategies which, while argument-based, present a situation characterised as normal, a breakdown of that situation, the struggle to restore normalcy, and its ultimate restoration, although they place the emphasis on certain steps or alter their order in the narrative. Newsreel 1, for example, focuses on democratic normalcy (restoration of normalcy) after the long years of Francoism (breakdown of normalcy due to the actions of the antagonist), which began with the coup d'état against the Second Republic (original normalcy). In newsreel 10, normalcy is self-governance, the breakdown is, once again, Francoism, and the solution is the return to self-governance.

Rhetorical articulation is the predominant approach in the series, given that the objective of exposing a problem is to elicit changes in the audience's emotional, cognitive and behavioural attitudes towards it. Achieving this involves the use of arguments founded on the authority of the transmitter, which may be a voice-over narrator or an expert, seeking to gain the receiver's confidence, arguments that deconstruct the topic with an appeal to reason, often on the basis of examples and omitting any opposing argument (especially any reasonable ones), and finally, arguments that appeal to the receiver's emotions. Many newsreels are structured in the same way: presentation of a problematic topic, with its corresponding contextualisation and implications; exposition of the arguments and of examples of specific,

generalisable cases; initiatives developed to resolve the problem; and conclusions, which may sum up the arguments and will always point to possible solutions.

Examples of this approach can be found in the rhetorical articulation of content in newsreel 26, dedicated to television, and 48, dealing with juvenile delinquency. Newsreel 26 is divided into seven sequences –content blocks or segments– with the objective of convincing the viewer of the need for a regional public television network:

1. General outline. Importance of television and associated debate. Authority of the voice-over narrator.

2. Specific details. Situation of television in Catalonia under Franco and during the Transition. Authority of the voice-over narrator and of an expert.

3. Problems with the Spanish national public broadcaster (TVE) in Catalonia. Economic dependence, lack of programming in Catalan, few news programs and need to expand content. Solutions to the problems begin to be suggested and rational arguments are combined with emotional ones that appeal to questions of identity. Authority of the voice-over narrator and of an expert.

4. Need for a regional public television network controlled by Catalan institutions. Solution proposed by the voice-over narrator.

5. Debate over public or private television, and the problems with the hybrid financing of TVE. Authority of the voice-over narrator.

6. Reiteration of the need for a Catalan public television network and the features it should have. Authority of an expert who puts forward both emotional and rational arguments.

7. Conclusions. Recapitulation of the problems and their possible solutions, reiterating the need to create a Catalan public television network controlled by regional institutions. Authority of a voice-over narrator.

Newsreel 48, dedicated to juvenile delinquency, has the objective of raising awareness about the need for initiatives to help marginalised youth before they turn to crime, and is similarly made up of seven sequences:

1. General outline. Dramatisation of the theft of a car stereo.

2. Specific details. Montage sequence using news headlines that show the media impact of juvenile delinquency. Organisation by association.

3. Causes of juvenile delinquency. Authority of an expert who puts forward rational arguments.

4. Testimony of a delinquent. Example that supports the rational argument of the expert's testimony. Supported by events. Also appeals to the spectator's emotions, commiseration.

5. The ineffectiveness of repression as the response by the public authorities. Authority of the voice-over narrator. Rational arguments supported by examples.

6. Testimony of another delinquent. Example that supports the rational argument of the expert's testimony in sequence 4 and the voice-over. Supported by events. Also appeals to the spectator's emotions, commiseration.

7. Conclusion. Proposal of solutions: initiatives by educators and associations to treat the problem at the root. Authority of the voice-over and of the expert.

It is important to emphasise the difference between the structure of each edition, where the series as a whole is characterised predominantly by rhetorical organisation (this would be the case for around three quarters of the newsreels) and individual sequences or segments. As can be observed in newsreel 48, sequence 2 uses association (the arrangement of the images of the headlines is apparently random), while 4 and 6 present a narration of events. When the newsreels use structures other than rhetoric that affect their overall structure, it is usually due to their lighter content, where protest and the objective to influence the spectator are not priorities.

4. A reformulated and problematic expository model

Many newsreels in the series could be classified under the formal non-fiction model (Plantinga, 2013), specifically the expository category (Nichols, 1997; 2010). It is for this reason that there are abundant examples of dependence of the image on the voice-over, although there are also sequences of an observational nature, as noted above, or testimonies that sometimes go further than mere illustration of a point made by the narrator. In any case, the newsreel's expository nature is determined not so much by the importance of the voice-over as by the effect of the announcer's absolute control over the information provided, although other strategies are also sometimes used. Added to this is its use of exposition-argumentation of a topic that avoids the effect of randomness observable in observational non-fiction, or the direction of the narrative through character testimonies or actions that characterises the participatory mode.

However, despite its expository nature, many newsreels present a very rich "voice-over space" that goes further than the speech of an off-screen narrator and musical accompaniment, the model used in the *No-Do* newsreels. This is a unique feature that links *Noticiari de Barcelona* to the independent political non-fiction of the period. The virtual voice-over space is realised in the soundtrack and attaches to other spaces that allow it to compose the diegesis⁶, the space represented (on-screen) and the space not shown (off-screen), albeit constantly suggested and susceptible to being represented through the editing. This space is inhabited by monologues, dialogues, sounds, music, or noises. Its relationship to the on-screen and off-screen space may be, at the very least, one of redundancy, complement, or contradiction.

Obviously, this voice-over space is dominated by the words of the main narrators or of characters fulfilling the role of narrators. These characters may have had a presence previously in the diegesis, as in newsreel 28, where the contributions of the participants in a debate between experts about the situation of Catalan libraries are sometimes illustrated with images, and thus transformed into voice-overs. In other newsreels, the connection between the voice-over character who acts as narrator and the character in the diegesis is much more relaxed. This is the case of newsreels 13 and 47, both directed by Carles Duràn. Newsreel 47, titled "L'agresió quotidiana. Enquesta a la perifèria de Barcelona", exploring the status of women from low socioeconomic backgrounds, is constructed out of testimonies by female characters in anonymous voice-overs who narrate events that have affected their lives, illustrated with images of these women going about their daily activities. In no case do the characters on-screen appear as a direct source of the narrations. In newsreel 13, the voice-over testimonies of anonymous patients corroborate deficiencies in health care, although they are accompanied by descriptive shots of a waiting room in a medical centre, while the people shown cannot be linked to any testimony. This technique can be found in independent political films like *No se admite personal* (No Staff Permitted, Antonio Lucchetti, 1968), *Largo viaje hacia la ira* (Long Journey to Rage, Llorenç Soler, 1969), or *Alborada* (Daybreak, Lluís Garay & Joan Mallarach, 1976). Just as occurs in these films, the newsreel produces a synecdochal effect, as the situation exposed is so common that the voice-overs of individual anonymous testimonies and the characters who illustrate them on-screen could easily be substituted for others. The use of synecdoches is common in these films, because it has the effect of transcending the individual case described, generalising based on the particular.

⁶ I am aware that the application to non-fiction of the term "diegesis", understood as the world in which the story unfolds, may be disputed. However, I believe that its role in the documentary is not substantially different from the role it has in fiction, although in the former it is constructed out of materials in the profilmic world that have an existence of their own, in some cases involving events linked together in a story and in other cases involving topics broken down into categories, by content blocks articulated on the basis of more or less free associations, or treated as rhetorical arguments.

The voice-over space is also the site of quotations. These may be paraphrased, reproduced indirectly –and sometimes accompanied by inflections in the tone of the voice that delivers them, giving them an ironic twist– or directly by the narrators. This technique is used in newsreel 2, with the reproduction of Adolfo Suárez's argument for the recovery of self-governance in Catalonia, of Azaña's words justifying it in 1932, or of the provisions for the dissolution of the regional government during the Spanish Civil War; in newsreel 14, with the law enacted after the Civil War that required the removal from schools of books not written in Spanish; and in newsreels 14 and 29, with the recital by a child of the kind of educational propaganda that was commonplace under the dictatorship. Sometimes the quotations are parodies, especially if they are related to aspects of Francoism or its legacy. Such quotations, moreover, in some cases spill out of the voice-over space to express themselves in images. Newsreel 13, for example, makes use of shots from a *No-Do* newsreel to show the bombast of grand openings, in this case of hospitals, and to contrast it with what according to the narrator was their limited operability.

Another particular feature of some editions of *Noticiari de Barcelona* is the quest for the Brechtian alienation effect (Brecht, 1970), undermining the illusion of a transparent bond between audiovisual image and reality. This, once again, is in keeping with much political non-fiction cinema of the day, which prioritised the unmasking of and reflection on the canonical models of representation, and even their subversion. In the newsreel series, however, the introduction of such reflexivity does not limit the persuasive function of rhetorical organisation, which in many cases is founded on the reliability of the narrators, testimonies and experts; nor does it break away from the predominant expository model.

On occasions this effect is achieved through little revelations of the constructed nature of non-fiction. For example, one scene in newsreel 3 –one of the most canonical in its use of expository voice-over– resorts to the manipulation of frequency, repeating an action that occurs only once to achieve a comic effect; in another, we see a passer-by wearing a shirt bearing the inscription “228”, while the voice-over narrator remarks that this number is the density of residents per hectare in Barcelona, highlighting the fact that, in this case and as occurs in fiction, the profilmic world is not independent of the existence of the camera. In newsreel 13, the relationship between representation and reality is problematised through the manipulation of the duration of an action by means of time-lapse photography, making a metaphor out of the deficiencies in health care, and specifically the limited amount of time that physicians are able to give their patients.

There are also cases when the filming devices are shown, either briefly (57) –a strategy we also find in independent films like *Distància de o a infinit*, and *Un lloc per dormir*– or much more prominently, as occurs in newsreels 31, 55 and 58. Newsreel 57 is effectively a short fiction film, given that it follows the ups and downs of a character played by an actor on a hypothetical summer holiday Barcelona, directed by the narration of a radio or TV reporter, with the objective of showing the environmental degradation of the city's beaches. This edition also stands out for its use of irony, as the wanderings of the protagonist along dirty, polluted beaches contrast with the words of the narrator. In newsreel 58, a dramatised television debate frames an exposé of the problems being faced by Barcelona's museums. It is worth noting that this dramatisation is not an attempt to compensate for a lack of film footage –this strategy, common to expository documentaries, appears only in newsreel 48 with the representation of a car theft– but an effort to emphasise the production process of an audiovisual news discourse. In newsreel 55, however, reflexivity ends up producing some unexpected effects. This edition presents a historical overview of self-governance in Catalonia on the occasion of the Spanish government's approval of autonomous status for the region. The dramatisation of the process of producing a news report, with a character played by an actor as well known in those days as Ovidi Montllor, frames the topic with a particular focus on the editing, on the choices the director needs to make with the footage available, and on

its different results, representing the possibility of “constructing” one *history* or any other. If we compare this newsreel with others that address the issue of autonomous status and the history of Catalonia, it seems highly unlikely that this was the desired effect, as there is evidence that this reflexive approach may undermine the persuasive intention. It should also be noted that this is the only newsreel in the series that posits the newly achieved self-governance as a step in a larger and more ambitious process, a process that it attempts to anchor in the past.

Irony is another form of distancing. As is well known, irony introduces an evaluative dimension, and therefore an explicit ethical, moral or political position of the announcer or narrator in relation to the subject announced or narrated. Irony takes shape above all in the voice-over narration or in the use of contradiction, and it is just as common in political independent cinema (e.g. *Noticiario RNA*, or *El campo para el hombre*). In *Noticiari de Barcelona*, it is established in the inflections in the speech of the extra-diegetic narrator. But these inflections are reserved for parodying texts and clichés of Franco’s dictatorship, or apparent endorsements that contain condemnations, like the appraisal of the education system under the regime in newsreel 29. The irony is aimed almost exclusively at Francoism or its legacy, given that as a general rule the tone of the voice-over narrator when addressing other matters –and the tone of the testimonies– always seeks to gain the spectator’s trust in the information provided, while irony creates uncertainty about it. When irony employs contradiction, its targets are multiplied. This is expressed in the relationship between sequences or between the voice-over space and the on-screen/off-screen space. An example of the first can be found in newsreel 20, dealing with pollution, where tourist sites in Barcelona are contrasted with the environmental disaster affecting the city. In newsreel 34, about the celebrations of the La Mercé festival, both types of contradictions can be found: on the one hand, shots of the official celebrations are contrasted with the informal, almost bacchanal celebrations of the common people; on the other, the voice-overs of official speeches contrast with the images of characters dancing and jumping in front of the camera.

5. Conclusions

Created in the context of the debates over the need for autonomous regional film industries, *Noticiari de Barcelona* represented a first step towards the development of a Catalan film industry after the end of Francoism in the genre of non-fiction news production, a genre that had previously been monopolised by the State. But it also shows evidence of the institutionalisation, at least in part (given that it was financed by Barcelona’s city council and screened in commercial theatres, albeit without an exhibition permit), of a set of practices drawn from the independent political cinema of the day, quite apart from the fact that some of the directors of these newsreels were prominent figures in that genre.

Although less radical, it shared with independent cinema, on the one hand, its fierce opposition to Franco’s *No-Do* newsreels, both in terms of the themes addressed and in its discourse, especially evident in the use of the voice-over space, which is much richer and more diverse than that of the Francoist newsreels and reflecting a more complex relationship with the image; and on the other hand, a certain reflexivity through the use of irony or the exposure of the production conditions of the newsreel, without actually breaking away from the expository model of representation that predominates in most newsreels, and therefore, apart from the exceptions mentioned above, without questioning the very foundations of the discourse, as certain independent productions sometimes did. It also reveals its own faith in the potential of cinema to encourage its viewers to take action in response to particular problems, once their awareness had been raised about the issues. This conditioned the articulation of the content of the newsreels, which can be considered rhetorical and therefore more persuasive than informative: in most cases, they set out arguments that can be supported by the authority of their transmitter (a voice-over narrator or an expert), by

reasoning based on representative examples, or by appealing to the emotions of the receiver. Each newsreel in the series presents a problem, contextualised and considering its implications, identifying the parties responsible for it, and positing possible solutions with a special emphasis on organised community action. In this sense, *Noticiari de Barcelona* played an essential role in promoting the social movements of the time, which were so important to Spain's transition to democracy.

This article has considered the main topics featured in the series –urban development, education, disadvantaged groups, autonomous status for the Catalan region, the media, health care, pollution, transport infrastructure, cultural management, and the workers– and how they are articulated in each newsreel. It is important to highlight that the view presented of these topics is one-sided. When the parties responsible for the problems addressed are identified –companies or institutions– their representatives are rarely invited to offer a different version of events. This strategy, typical of rhetorical non-fiction, makes its objective even clearer: to elicit support for the solutions offered, rather than to set out contrasting information about the problems. Comparisons with television programs like *Giravolt* may no doubt be revealing in this respect, given that their news reports, without concealing a specific stance taken on the topics presented (almost always the same stance as that of the newsreel), offer different and even opposing points of view through interviews.

A more detailed comparison of *Noticiari de Barcelona* with other informative and persuasive audiovisual products (as outlined briefly here), both for television and for cinema, whether through institutional channels or as an alternative to those channels, would also make it possible to address a series of points that I would argue are essential for gaining an understanding of the Spanish transition to democracy in the audiovisual media: the establishment of freedom of expression and of information, the management of these rights and the problems they raise, the loss by the State of the monopoly on cinematic news products and the consequences thereof (but also the continuity of that monopoly on new terms in the television medium, at least until the creation of the regional public networks). This comparison would also shed some light on the crisis, and the occasional recycling, of counter-current and activist cinema that had been an active force since the late 1960s.

But the particular features of *Noticiari de Barcelona*, the rhetorical organisation and persuasive intention of many of the newsreels, also point to a second possible line of research: the analysis of their reception. This would require the identification, on the one hand, of its “implicit spectators”, based on the assumptions about the potential receivers of the texts, which would therefore have an influence on their creation; and on the other, of the “actual spectators”, in this case with the objective of determining the extent to which the newsreel series was effective.

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