

## Martial arts and combat sports in the Spanish No-Do newsreels

Carlos GUTIÉRREZ-GARCÍA\*, Ander JIMÉNEZ-LANDAZURI, María Teresa GÓMEZ-ALONSO, & Eugenio IZQUIERDO

*Universidad de León (Spain)*

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### 1. Introduction

In Spain during the Franco era (1939–1975), No-Do (News and Documentaries) were short newsreels that were compulsorily shown before the main features in cinemas. During their nearly 40 years of existence (1943–1981), the No-Do served both as an apparatus for Francoist propaganda and as a link with the rest of the world. The films aimed at informing, educating/indoctrinating, and entertaining. Rodriguez (1999, p. 1) has emphasized No-Do's importance by defining it as "the portrait of an epoch." With that in mind, the aim of this study was to analyze the news on martial arts and combat sports (MA&CS) shown in the No-Do.

### 2. Methodology

The Historical Archive No-Do, available at the Spanish Film Library website (<http://www.rtve.es/filmoteca/no-do>), was the main source of information for this study. This archive is composed of 4,011 newsreels (more than 700 hours of images) that reflect the social, cultural, and political life during the Franco regime and the subsequent transition to democracy. We used the Historical Archive No-Do website search engine for data collection by entering multiple terms related to MA&CS. Results were then individually analyzed to determine their relevance to the study. Finally, a card for each of the selected news was filled in, including the following fields: (1) Date; (2) Number of No-Do; (3) Duration; (4) Description; (5) Type; (6) Referred MA or CS; (7) Geographical scope; and (8) Link to the newsreel. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) on aspects of bibliometrics concerning productivity and subjects were used for data analysis.

### 3. Results

The total number of reports on MA&CS retrieved was 266. MA&CS news rate per year was irregular, ranging between zero and nineteen, with higher rates between 1943-1951, 1961-1965, and 1969-1973. Regarding type, regular news (50-120 s) (71.8%) dominated over short news (30-50 s) (14.3%) and reportages (> 120 s) (12.8%). The geographical scope of the news was balanced between the national (38%) and the international level (43.2%), with 18.1% of the news covering both levels. At least twenty separate MA&CS styles were mentioned. Except in two cases, each newsreel referred to just one MA or CS. The MA&CS mainly broadcast were international boxing (generally professional) (42.2%), professional wrestling (19.4%), judo (12.3), fencing (7.1%), karate (4.5%), jiu-jitsu (2.6%). The other MA&CS (Greco-Roman wrestling, international freestyle wrestling, kendo, muay Thai, taekwondo, capoeira, historical fencing, Canary Island wrestling, Mongolian wrestling, sambo, savate, other, and generic self-defense) ranged between one and five items (0.4-1.9%).

\* Email: [cgutg@unileon.es](mailto:cgutg@unileon.es)

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The results show that professional boxing, professional wrestling, and judo had the most frequent presence in the No-Do. A second group of MA&CS had a smaller presence. This group included karate, fencing and jiu-jitsu. Other MA&CS only appeared anecdotally in the newsreels. The prominent place for professional boxing and wrestling was due to their popularity during much of the studied period (Gutiérrez-García, 2004; Sánchez-García, 2009). Regarding the so-called Asian martial arts, judo achieved greatest presence in the No-Do, in line with its early and rapid development in Spain since the 1950s (Gutiérrez-García, 2004). Some popular Asian martial arts nowadays, such as karate or taekwondo, had a later development in Spain (Martínez-Guirao, 2011) and therefore their presence in the No-Do was smaller. The anecdotal presence of other MA&CS (capoeira, muay Thai, sambo, or savate), can be explained by the entertaining purposes of the No-Do (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2001), and could be considered as mere curiosities.

The irregular number of MA&CS presentations makes it difficult to obtain clear conclusions. This variability may be due to several reasons such as the priority of news for the No-Do, changes in producers, the availability of resources, Spanish successes in international competitions, etc. In addition, the predominance of regular news is in tune with the No-Do as a whole, in which such news made up the bulk of the newsreels (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2001). Thus, while the Spanish prince (and future king) Juan Carlos I (1938–) practiced judo and then karate during some time from the 1950s, this was not of much interest to No-Do until 1969. Finally, the No-Do made exchanges with major international newsreel companies (Tranche & Sánchez-Biosca, 2001), so it is not surprising that the high percentage of news focused on international matches and tournaments.

In short, the No-Do broadcast a relevant volume of information on MA&CS, and it can be considered a good source of information to enrich the study of the history and evolution of MA&CS in Spain during the Franco regime.

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