
Miscellaneous

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The role of space in Spanish television fiction. The *Antidisturbios* Case (Movistar+, 2020)

Abstract

The main objective of this research was to analyse the spatial representation constructed in the fiction TV series *Antidisturbios* (Riot Police) (Movistar+, 2020). It sought to look at how space is constructed in the narrative, consider the role it plays in it, and assess whether space reflects a specific sense of location related to Spanish identity. A methodology based on textual analysis was used, with emphasis on spatial representation. An analysis tool was applied to evaluate a variety of scenes from the series. The analysis found that narrative space was of crucial importance for the background of the story and that Madrid played a prominent role in the narrative. *Antidisturbios* portrays a city that represents the symbolic centre of the Spanish state, understood as a space of hegemonic power that brings together the political and economic elites. At the same time, it presents a contemporary, recognisable, and inclusive geography, which contrasts with the image of the capital in the public and political debate about identity. The city that the series constructs refers to and questions a specific historical period where several of the social problems in current Spanish society are looming.

Keywords

Television series, fiction television, spatial analysis, spatial representation, television, Madrid, Spain.

1. Introduction

The 21st century has seen an increased interest in questions related to the narrative space in contemporary media. The so-called ‘geographies of communication’ are shaped because “all forms of communication occur in space, and [...] all spaces are produced through representation, which occurs by means of communication” (Jansson & Falkheimer, 2006, p. 9). This subfield of media studies has produced a collection of essays and research from the perspective of cultural analysis based on the studies by Lefebvre (2006) on media areas.

This gave rise to the “spatial turn,” which consists of geographically locating humanistic phenomena and calls for thinking about cultural phenomena in terms of space (Bauch, 2017). The space variable is present in various disciplines, such as painting, literature, cinema and also in television fiction.

However, the term ‘spatial turn’ has been used with some caution and always in quotation marks, either because the people who uttered it were unsure whether it was appropriate or because they recognised it only as a temporary term (Wilken, 2007). It was Roberts (2016) who

proposed using the expression ‘locative turn’ to consider the process of transformation in the cultural economy of space by audio-visual productions.

This ‘locative turn’ has been promoted in Western countries and, gradually, also in Spanish television fiction, thanks to “the innovation processes carried out by organisations (channels, production companies, creators) during the period 2014-2017” (Cascajosa, 2018, p. 2), a timeframe that coincided with the end of the economic crisis and the emergence of streaming platforms in Spain.

For all these reasons, it is understandable that the space where the action of a television series takes place has gained significant prominence. In recent years there has been a stronger tendency to have the setting of creative works in particular geographical locations, for example, in a specific territory or a given city. This attention to the spatial aspect of culture affects human geography itself and requires a transfer of knowledge from other fields (Gámir, 2019), such as communication.

Landscape in television fiction has become intentional and narrativised (Mitchell, 1994). Furthermore, the actual diegetic locations, insofar as they refer to places that exist in the audience’s reality, bear an important relationship with the audience’s geographical imaginaries (Aertsen, *et al.*, 2015). The place where the fiction is set is a key factor not only because it is where the story unfolds, but also because it provides an area that serves as a context, enriches the narrative, and contributes a semantic element that provides the audience with clues; and in so doing, it adds a new layer of interpretation onto the story. If the presence of a given place becomes particularly outstanding in the plot, it may even become one of the protagonists.

As verbal discourse tends to prevail in television fiction, attention to space is essential to visual discourse and contributes to its development. This action links the representation and interpretation of the visual to the narrative. As in films, an affinity between film representation and urban space is established in television series, which “has formed a determining force, for over a century, behind the ways in which history and the human body have been visualized and mediated” (Barber, 2006, p. 7). This means that the representation of space ultimately sets the tone and development of the story.

Research that has explored the success of TV series ascribed to the subgenre of *Nordic noir*, where landscapes have a strong presence and importance in the narrative operates along these lines (Toft Hansen & Waade, 2017). In these studies, landscapes work in the text as an objective correlate to the characters and/or themes. This local or regional Danish model of production and financing has been transnationalised or ‘glocalised.’ In other words, it has become a cultural product that is both local and global at the same time, and which has resulted in an internationalised understanding of so-called ‘complex TV’ (Mittell, 2015). In fact, *Nordic noir* is understood (both within and outside Scandinavian countries) to represent a certain way of thinking and living characteristic of that part of the world. A kind of brand identity that includes real locations, landscapes, climate and the peculiar ways in which local colour is presented and negotiated (Toft Hanse & Waade, 2017).

The choice of a given space for TV fiction also strongly influences other types of shows such as procedural dramas, where the diegesis of each episode exhibits particular characteristics depending on the location, as in the case of the CSI franchise and its different branches in Las Vegas, Miami and New York (Raya & Cobo-Durán, 2017).

Following Cascajosa (2018), the ‘locative turn’ has also recently contributed to works that analyse television series with distinctive geopolitical implications. These fictions are based on real-life events and are often set in specific locations that are relevant because they are involved in political structures that include international relations, have strategic connotations, address identity issues through their narratives, or construct worlds drawn from situated social, geographical and political understandings (Saunders, 2017). Overall, the existing analyses have concluded that contemporary series provide thought-provoking

interpretations of current political situations by addressing geopolitical issues in their narratives and are an inspiration to political actors around the world (Moïsi, 2017). The case of Spain seems to be of interest within this trend, due to its geographical location as a European border and the broad appeal of its television fiction productions internationally, with themes that explore controversial geopolitically-based issues such as terrorism and drug and human trafficking (Cascajosa, 2018).

Another focus of research on space in television fiction is the use of location as a source of production value (Agger, 2017; Jensen & Waade, 2013). From the point of view of the sector's profitability, the filming locations of some highly successful series have become a collateral contribution that has found a lucrative path in tourism and business for the local industry. Research has shown that television fiction programmes both attract and boost economic resources in the location where they are set. For example, the hit production *Game of Thrones* transformed tourism in the city of Girona after it was used as a setting for some scenes in the series' sixth season. Since then, guided tours have been organised around the filming locations, merchandising creation and sales have increased, and the city has been promoted as a television location (Parramón & Medina, 2016). The Spanish series *Isabel* also brought the audio-visual and tourism industries together in the Castile and Leon region. Since the series was broadcast, the number of tourists visiting the places where the story took place has significantly risen, and local agents now offer tourist itineraries in the cities of Segovia, Avila and Valladolid centred around the historical figure featured in the series. The regional government of Castile and Leon even released the 'Isabella of Castile and Leon tour,' which was promoted by using actors and actresses from the series (López & del Caz, 2019).

Another strand of spatiality studies concerns the representation of large cities and the narrative and sociological value provided by these urban locations (Mela, 1994). Numerous cases have been studied, including New York in *Sex on the city* (Oria, 2011); New Orleans in *Treme* (García, 2011); Baltimore in *The Wire* (Labra, 2014; Cobo-Durán, 2014); Copenhagen in *The Killing* (Toft Hansen & Waade, 2017); Santiago de Chile in *El reemplazante* (Fuentealba, 2013); Rome in *Rome* (Méndez, 2017); and the complexity of the border territory between Sweden and Denmark in *Broen/Bron* (Hernández, 2014). Cities are central to the narratives in all these fiction series and their spaces are used to showcase the intended analysis of the characters, and by extension, of the societies where they live. They are chosen for their emblematic and symbolic value, their uniqueness, or their uniformity (if a production aims to ensure that the story can be extrapolated to any metropolis). There may also be other reasons, including financial ones. The filming infrastructure, logistical facilities, affordable labour costs, profitability and tax incentives are important factors to consider.

In short, it is understood that the creation of a language linked to place and the development of methodologies to analyse geographical space and its communicative uses substantially enriches communication studies (Nogué & de San Eugenio, 2009). This study focused on answering the following research questions: How is space constructed in the fiction TV series *Antidisturbios* (Movistar+, 2020)? What role does the city of Madrid play in this television story? Is the representation provided of the city related to Spanish society and cultural identity?

The sample of this exploratory study examines the fiction series *Antidisturbios* because it fits into the genre of police television drama. This is the ideal category for the study due to its ability to offer socially relevant themes, its extraordinary popularity in the global market and its high exportability. It is a genre with commercial appeal that is also concerned with exploring and discussing feelings, emotions, characters and societies. In addition, this sub-genre often offers a glimpse of the city's underworld, presenting a more realistic picture of Western societies.

On a different note, Spanish fiction produced by national public television channels has been essentially centralist. However, in recent times, with the arrival of the streaming

platforms a need was identified to innovate by using locations outside Madrid and incorporating geographical diversity and spaces characterised by their uniqueness, attractiveness or aesthetic value. This trend has resulted in a proliferation of police series that have taken this approach: *Néboa*, *Hierro*, *La caza*, *Monteperdido*, *Tramontana*, *El Príncipe*, *Mar de plástico* and *Perdóname, señor*, among others. *Antidisturbios* has moved away from this differentiating trend by once again presenting a production filmed in Madrid.

2. Methodology

The aim of this study is to analyse the spatial representation in the multi-award-winning Spanish TV fiction series *Antidisturbios*. This includes looking at the spatial construction in the story, pondering its role within the narrative, and assessing whether space as used in the series presents a particular sense of location, as the narrative refers to the Spanish situation and cultural identity by identifying the city where the action takes place as its capital.

This study builds on theoretical contributions related to spatial representation in audio-visual creations, on the understanding that it enriches production values and semantics in the narrative (Toft Hansen & Waade, 2017). It also supports the view that the concept of space links the mental and the cultural, the social and the historical (Lefebvre, 2013). Spaces provide the audience with interpretative cues that can be used in an affective or informative way. In fact, locations can be such important elements that they become characters in the story (Casetti & di Chio, 1991).

In order to meet the stated objectives, a methodology based on textual analysis was proposed, with emphasis on the spatial representation of audio-visual fiction. Two critical viewings of the six episodes of the series (302 minutes) were conducted in order to assess the enunciative mechanisms used in portraying the urban landscape. These viewings were complemented by watching the official videos about the making of the series, and a presentation entitled: “El Madrid de las series: Antidisturbios” (Madrid as shown in TV series), held at the 8th Festival Internacional de Series: Serializados (International Series Festival: Serialised).

An analysis instrument was designed and applied to the study sample. This was a reading manual, that is, a guiding device used to facilitate and organise the exploration of the text. This research was used because, “on the one hand, it shifts focus towards specific elements in the text and the ways in which the text is constructed and, on the other hand, it extends its focus towards a global interpretation of its meaning, assessing the themes and the forms of enunciation of its own discourse” (Casetti & di Chio, 1999, p. 251).

The instrument of analysis considered the following variables:

- (a) Identification of spaces: 1. Madrid (outside spaces). 2. Police facilities. 3. Private spaces.
- (b) Time assessment and quantification of the use of spaces.
- (c) Narrative functions of space. Relationship between characters and spaces.
- (d) Mapping spaces. How and from where the city is shown and represented.
- (e) Description of the spatial context of the production: depicted locations and correspondence with real geographical spaces. Extra-discursive repercussions. Assess the scenario and its connotations.
- (f) Relationship between spatial representation in fiction and the Spanish social historical context. Identification of facts, events and references in the story, and contrast with reality.

This analytical instrument sought to identify a dual relationship, marked the concepts of plausibility and fidelity. These are concerned with the level of analogy between the characteristics of the diegetic physical space, and those of the real physical space referred to, albeit in different ways. Plausibility is a matter of expectations and brings credibility to the story through mental imagery, direct experience and media materials. Fidelity depends on the verifiable resemblance between the diegetic space and the real space and deals with the

correspondence of spatial characteristics with reality. The process is thus endowed with an epistemological character, participating in the creation and dissemination of appropriate geographical imaginaries (Aertsen *et al.*, 2015).

An analysis of the space as represented was carried out in connection with the structure and processes involved in the production. The rationale for this was that the way in which events are represented in spatial coordinates strongly influences our (sensitive and intellectual) relationship with the world and with its forms of knowledge (Rancière, 2014). Space plays an important part in the fiction series because, in addition to providing an environmental background, it has a relevant symbolic and sociological value. Therefore, the object examined includes what appears in the frame and its meta-narrative function. This shaping of space is essential in the semantic construction of the production and shows whether it portrays a specific, recognisable cultural identity.

3. Results

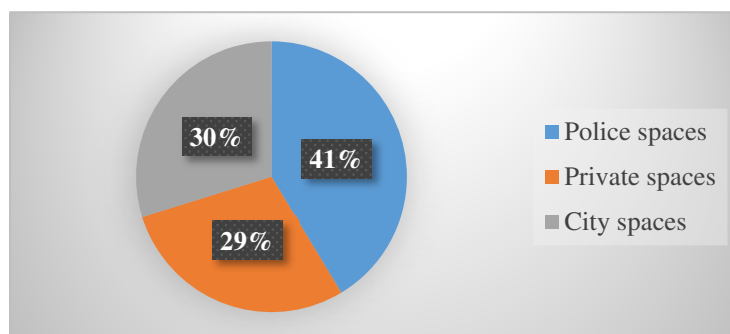
Antidisturbios is a police drama that seeks to paint a realistic picture of present-day Madrid, the city where it is set. The starting point of the story is an investigation carried out by Laia, a stubborn agent in the Internal Affairs police department and her colleagues. Their investigation is concerned with a killing in the course of an eviction and the actions of a group of police officers involved in the process. The platoon, made up of six officers, belongs to the Police Intervention Unit (UIP). This is a mobile public security body whose mission is to maintain and re-establish public order in the event of public disturbances. This police force originated from the former General Reserve Units, popularly known as anti-riot units. Thanks to this internal investigation, Laia discovers that the riot police are the scapegoat for a wider and deeper corruption scheme involving high-ranking police, judicial and political officials.

The filming of the series took place between September and December 2019 (approximately 90 days of shooting). A heterogeneous team worked together in the recreation of space. This effort involved the script by Rodrigo Sorogoyen and Isabel Peña, the creative contribution of the photography team (Alejandro de Pablo and Diego Cabezas), and the ideas of art director Miguel Ángel Rebollo. The location scout, Mikel Saldise, searched for and proposed the settings and played a crucial role in constructing space, as did Felipe Hita, a former UIP police officer who acted as an advisor to the production and helped situate the characters.

The geography of the series is made up of three spaces. These include (1) indoor police areas, typically found in the genre, which included police stations, police headquarters, police vehicles, courts and courtrooms, companies house and police archive rooms; (2) recognisable, real city locations, such as streets, squares, buildings, roads, areas, shopping centres, etc.; and (3) the places that belong to the private spheres of the characters: flats, vehicles, bars, cafés, restaurants or nightclubs, which are generally indoors and are not always specifically defined places.

Antidisturbios is a complex production, with a large number of action scenes, actors, actresses and sets, which required a total of 126 locations.

Figure 1: Distribution of narrative spaces, based on the types of spaces represented in the series (in percentages).



Source: Own elaboration.

3.1. *Police spaces*

Police spaces account for the greatest percentage of narrative space (Table 1). This is hardly surprising because the story is part of the police genre, narrates the work of a group of police officers, and follows two investigations that involve police officers in the roles of both investigators and investigated.

These police spaces are used as a place of work, but also as an area of coexistence, thus showing the relationships between the protagonists. In these areas (offices, workrooms, archive rooms, multi-purpose rooms, police vans, surveillance vehicles, safe houses), they investigate, write reports, collect evidence, interact and act out their work roles. They are also other shared places where they get changed, have lunch, change into police officers and civilians, joke, discuss, plan and exchange confidences (dining rooms, changing rooms, work rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, hallways). Finally, there are areas (offices, interrogation rooms) they are evaluated and held accountable for their work, decisions and actions.

It is worth highlighting the faithful representation of the UIP police group's space, replicated in detail by showing the cobblestones, flags, scarves and stickers that they collected and used as decoration as well as trophies displayed in offices and vehicles as reminders of the turbulent events in which they had participated.

The police premises are in three main locations: the UIP headquarters, externally located in the Moratalaz police complex; the Internal Affairs police station, at Calle Complutense (number 109), in Alcalá de Henares; and the Police Headquarters, at Calle La Granja (number 4), in Alcobendas. The safe house is located in the Salamanca borough of Madrid, where the corruption plot is secretly investigated. This space is a key location for the story because it is the place where the case is solved as a result of the investigation and where the investigation report is stolen. This process is enacted by a break-in, the report being stolen, and the protagonist being assaulted, gagged and tied to a radiator.

3.2. *Outdoor spaces*

The second group of areas are the places associated with the city, both indoors and outdoors. They have a strong presence at the beginning and at the end of the story (episodes 1, 2, 5 and 6), which is when the action of *Antidisturbios* takes centre stage. The outdoor space has a major temporal presence in this production (Table 2) and is predominantly located in the city of Madrid and its surroundings. The role of these locations is to place the characters in context, create plausibility and lend verisimilitude to the narrative.

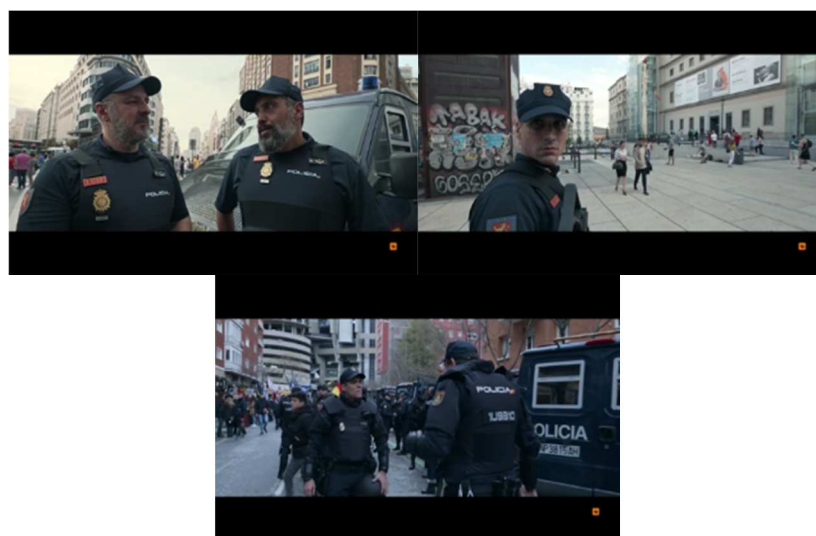
Figure 2: Number of minutes dedicated to the different types of spaces by episode.



Source: Own elaboration.

Iconic, usually crowded Madrid locations are also featured in ways that are consistent with the job and speciality area of the characters. Thus, while the police officers keep watch in the Plaza de Callao, the intersection between Calle Gran Vía and Calle Jacometrezo is shown, with the emblematic Carrión building in the background. When they talk about the consequences of their actions inside the parked van, the Plaza Juan Goytisolo, the Conservatorio de Música and the popular Museo Nacional Reina Sofía are shown in close-up. Calle Rafael Salgado, parallel to the Santiago Bernabéu football stadium, is also shown with the excuse that police officers are maintaining security during a football match. This is where fans usually gather, and police presence is common when Real Madrid plays locally (Image 1).

Image 1: Callao. Plaza del Museo Reina Sofía. Surroundings of Santiago Bernabéu stadium.



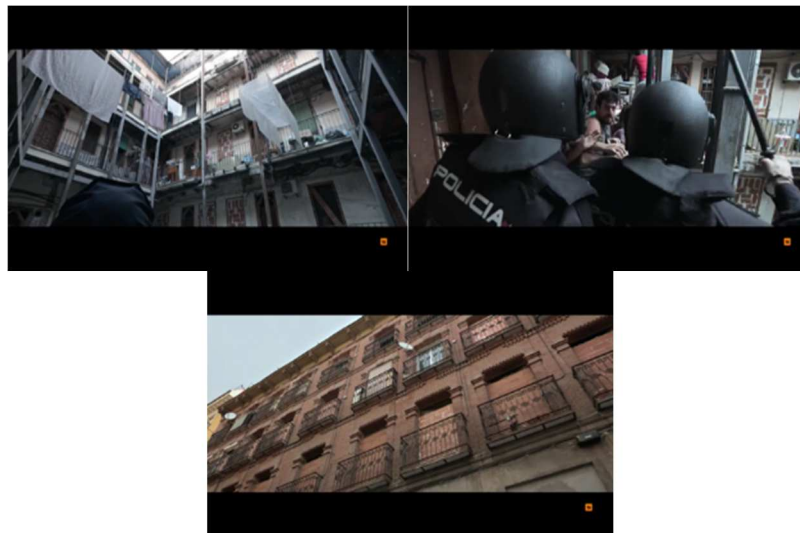
Source: Movistar+ screenshots.

Other spaces are also shown which are less crowded and popular but are important for the connotations they provide and for their centrality to the narrative. One example is the *corrala* where the riot squad evicts a group of activists. This is a building where there are wooden-framed stacked flats with a long corridor/balcony overlooking an inner courtyard. It is one of the most significant locations in the series for several reasons: it is featured in the first episode, the longest sequence of all takes place there (21 minutes of continuous action), and it sets the narrative tone.

A claustrophobic and violent police action occurs in this building, resulting in the death of a Senegalese immigrant who falls to his death. The space operates as a framework for the narrative trigger of the story. In the short term, it implicates the protagonists and, in the long run, ends up uncovering a complex web of political corruption.

The operation takes place inside a *corrala* located at number 7 of the fictitious Calle del Olivo. The choice of the property is not accidental, as these are traditional buildings in the heart of Madrid. The production company opted for a century-old *corrala*, practically empty, in which structures were supported with metal reinforcement beams (Image 2). The real location corresponds to number 7, but in Calle del Ventorrillo, in the El Rastro borough of the Embajadores district. It so happens that a number of women, known as ‘the grandmothers of Ventorrillo,’ who fought together against the property company that wanted to evict them from their home, had lived in the same place since the Civil War (Álvarez, 2007). Some died, and others eventually left after being harassed by the company that owned it. As two of them are still living in their 26 square metre flats, the production companies Caballo Films and The Lab were able to use the space for four weeks to film the scene (one week for rehearsals, another one for setting the scene and two for the actual shooting).

Image 2: Inside of the *corrala* at number 7 of Calle El Ventorrillo. UIP intervention in the *corrala*. Façade of the *corrala*.



Source: Movistar+ screenshots.

There were two other sequences filmed in outside locations which had a marked narrative and aesthetic value. The first, a daytime sequence lasting around six minutes, was shot in the emblematic Plaza Nelson Mandela in the central Lavapiés borough. This sequence took two and a half days to film and required the participation of 200 Senegalese citizens as extras. The team chose this location because it was once the scene of mass protests by the friends of Mmame Mbaye, a 35-year-old Senegalese *mantero* (ambulant seller) who died in the street during a police chase, allegedly from heart failure (*El País*, 2018). *Mantero* is a colloquial name

given to people who sell imitation goods on the street, usually placed on a blanket (*manta*). In the real-life demonstration (as in the one depicted in the fiction series), stones, chairs and blows were rained down; however, the difference is that the real protest was during the night and it was not against the police, but against the Senegalese ambassador to Spain (Image 3).

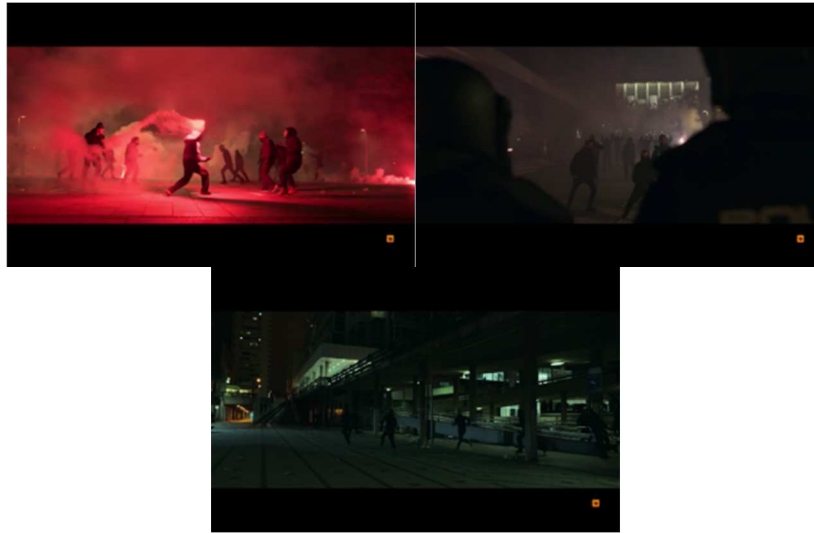
Image 3: Stills from the sequence of protests in Plaza Nelson Mandela, Madrid.



Source: Movistar+ screenshots.

The second scene was filmed at night and lasts ten minutes. It takes place in the surroundings of the Paseo de la Castellana and narrates the work of the riot police (supposedly) during a European league football match. The officers shepherd a group of radical French fans who rampage in the vicinity of the Santiago Bernabeu stadium, provoking a pitched battle. The confrontation with the Spanish supporters takes place in the area of the Palacio de Congresos in Madrid, an iconic building that stands out for its striking surrealist mosaic. The brawl between the radical supporters of the two clubs and the officers is set in Plaza de Joan Miró, and the ground floor of AZCA was used for the filming of the intense chase and fight scenes (Image 4). It is a traditionally hostile and unsafe place, located beneath the large office buildings of Madrid's financial and business district, made up of countless labyrinthine passages and galleries. The scene was shot as a sequence, which was highly complex to film and required more than 30 stunt performers and 150 extras. It took six days, including rehearsal time, roadblocks, and constant interruptions by real police patrols, as filming coincided with the COP25 climate summit in 2019.

Image 4: Plaza Joan Miró, front view. Plaza Joan Miró, west view. Ground floor of AZCA.



Source: Movistar+ screenshots.

While these spaces are all in Madrid, the production also included locations outside the city, such as the A6 motorway and the cities of A Coruña, Barcelona and Valencia, where scenes with African immigrants coming ashore on Spanish beaches were filmed.

3.3. *Personal places*

The third group of spaces represented are private spaces. Nearly all of these are located in unspecified indoor locations. These are intended to depict the private sphere of the protagonists and provide information about the characters' personalities, which helps to interpret their actions, conflicts and circumstances.

These sites are usually confined to the homes of each protagonist. Therefore, some family members (children, girlfriends, partners, wives or ex-wives) are also portrayed in bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens, lounges or terraces. Constant use is made of bars, restaurants, nightclubs and cafés, as well as hotels and shopping centres. In these public places the characters meet, chase each other, socialise, sound each other out, plot strategies, make plans, or get drunk to share their feelings and emotions. Sometimes they serve as an excuse for two protagonists to share information, and other times they are used for the character (and, therefore, the viewer) to find out about, or be brought up to update by news about the investigation, usually on television: broadcasts from news programmes, or even by real journalists. An example of this happening is journalist Antonio Ferreras discussing the news with a regular guest on his programme *Al Rojo Vivo*. In these spaces, the characters generally display a sincerity not shown in the other spheres, such as professional ones.

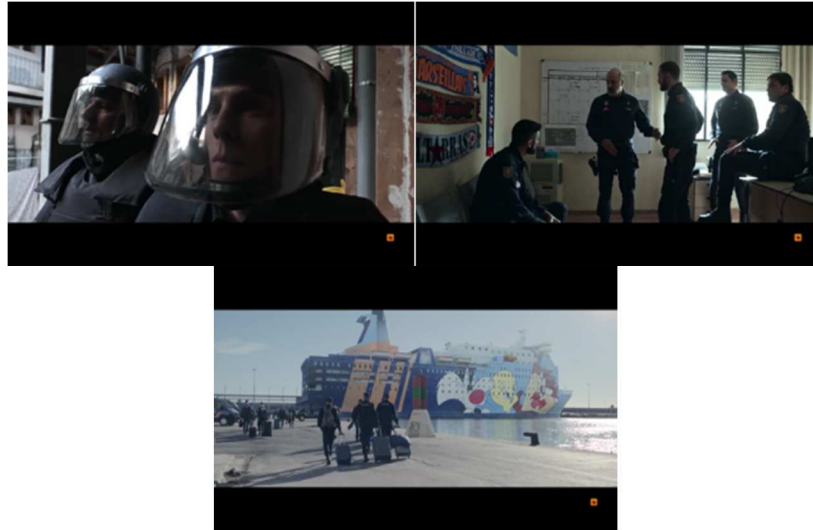
The final sequence of a dinner shared by the group of policemen in a seafood restaurant stands out for its complexity and dramatic qualities. Filmed in a single sequence shot, which required multiple attempts, filming started in the evening and lasted until the early hours of the morning, in a closed room in Calle Matapiñonera, in San Sebastián de los Reyes, specifically set for the series.

3.4. *Visual structure of the series*

Regarding the style of the series, visually there is a development from the beginning to the end of the filming (Image 5). While initially the visual style placed the spectator inside the riot police group by the use of the camera's proximity to the characters, extremely wide-angle lenses, numerous jump cuts and filming with a hand-held camera, the final episodes have a

slower pace and fixed camera movements, and are longer and distanced from the main characters. The aim is that the audience, who were visually embedded in the unit at the start of the series and experienced the action/emotion of the protagonists first hand, find that their judgement of the platoon's performance, once they are visually distanced from it towards the end of the film, is not so easy after having been part of the group.

Image 5: Eviction sequences (episode 1); police station (episode 3); door (episode 6).



Source: Movistar+ screenshots.

The fiction series is structured in three blocks. The initial one, consisting of episodes 1 and 2, was directed by Sorogoyen. This segment, which determined the narrative, is the most intense, and contains the most action and accentuates the spatial presence of the city of Madrid. The second block, comprising episodes 3 and 4, was directed by Borja Soler. The visual rhythm is slower in these episodes, and the city gives way to private scenes, filmed indoors, which were more intimate and personal. There are fewer outdoor spaces where the riot police roam, and these sequences are shortened. The final section, episodes 5 and 6, was again directed by Sorogoyen. The action picks up (although it does not reach the initial levels) and the exterior sequences are balanced with the relevant scenes shot indoors. These are directed more towards investigative processes rather than towards police action. Despite the tripartite structure, there are no substantial differences between segments, and it is generally apparent that the intention is to maintain the production's tone and patterns throughout the series.

4. Conclusions

Antidisturbios belongs to the genre of police drama and, as in quality fiction of this type, the narrative space is crucial to the story. Thus, the places that prevail in the story are closely and directly related to the police sphere, matching the main characters and the main plot lines.

The series places corruption as one of the dominant themes of the story, in line with previous works by the series' creators (Sorogoyen and Peña), such as the feature films *Que dios nos perdone* (Rodrigo Sorogoyen, 2016) and *El Reino* (Rodrigo Sorogoyen, 2018), which garnered critical acclaim. Corruption as a means of enriching a few powerful people (politicians, judges) at the expense of the poorest. The creators' thesis seems to be based on the assumption that corruption is a practice that is strongly rooted in (all spaces of) contemporary Spanish society. In *Antidisturbios*, property speculation is used as the vehicle for this; it is therefore not surprising that the main spaces of the fiction series refer to

property, farmyards, plots of land, or tourist flats located in a generally rough metropolis, which can be frightening at times.

The city of Madrid is shown by revealing architectural elements that evoke iconic sites including Gran Vía, Santiago Bernabéu stadium, Plaza del Museo Reina Sofía, Paseo de la Castellana, among others. Noisy, crowded, outdoor sites that harbour varying degrees of violence and require the regular presence of police capable of restoring order.

Other lesser-known Madrid locations are also depicted, where this type of police officers also operate. This view of the city eschews grandeur and is more realistic, as it shows more modest and unpretentious buildings, areas, neighbourhoods and facilities. It is interesting that some unique places are chosen for their historical connotations. They are real places where events similar to those narrated took place in the past and, at the same time, they are directly related to the thematic directions that the fictional series takes. In addition to being realistic and true to the original, these are spaces that convey veracity because they have witnessed similar events to those being narrated. These locations are also a tribute, albeit a symbolic one, to the real events and the victims of those events. They seem to operate like an exclamation mark, calling for social attention to be paid unjust events.

It is worth noting the evolution of space in relation to the narrative of the series. The story about corruption begins when police officers from the Moratalaz police station carry out an unsupported action in the modest neighbourhood of Lavapiés. From there, a development is seen in terms of space that moves viewers from the humble areas of the capital to more affluent settings, as the episodes and the internal affairs investigations progress. When the subject of the investigation changes from the riot police to the judges and politicians of the upper echelons, the spaces are different, and both actions and protagonists seem to move to more affluent areas of Madrid, such as the Castellana (the restaurant where the corrupt suspects are watched is located in Calle del poeta Joan Maragall, 43), and the Salamanca neighbourhoods (where the safe house is located).

The creators of the series were aware that they were dealing with a cultural product intended for entertainment. However, *Antidisturbios* is a production that aims to be true to reality and be credible. Its scriptwriters manipulated the narrative to adapt current situations to television fiction, reconstructing facts, events or characters. Thus, it went from the general, with a plausible story about corruption, to the particular, rescuing the figure of Superintendent Villarejo (renamed Revilla in the story). This name is a play on words between (Re)-Villa and Villa(re)-jo, a former police superintendent that is part of the Spanish social imaginary, as he spent more than three years in prison accused of being part of a criminal organisation, and of bribery and money laundering, who in fiction acts as the ultimate schemer in a manipulated reality.

The plot, therefore, appeals to current events, as the final frame demonstrates, which shows the so-called ‘Tweety Bird’s ship’ that served as a police base and was anchored in the port of Barcelona during the attempted referendum on Catalan independence on 1 October 2017.

Antidisturbios chose Madrid as its setting. Madrid as the capital of Spain and the hegemonic centre of political and economic power. Madrid is thus understood as an extrapolation of this representation of Spanish-ness. It is not for nothing that Madrid is the city most represented in Spanish fiction, both on film and television. This centralism plays to the advantage of the narrative, which seeks to reflect on aspects that ultimately somewhat allude to a Spanish identity (at least institutionally).

Moreover, the fact that the series is set in specific time coordinates, alluding to the Partido Popular government of Mariano Rajoy’s absolute majority, amplified the echo of the statement made by the president of the Madrid Region, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, on 21 September 2020, before the regional election that she won. In a fragment of her speech, Díaz Ayuso referred to Madrid as being “Spain within Spain. What is Madrid if it is not Spain?” This seems

to be taken as truth in some regions governed by secessionist political parties, as exemplified by a *La Vanguardia* columnist:

Madrid is today a region characterised by strong Spanishness and a predominance of right-wing ideological values. The new Spanish nationalism, the one emerging from Aznar's PP and its media terminals, has been spreading in Madrid until it has become part of the region's landscape (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2021).

In contrast to this approach, *Antidisturbios* provides a more inclusive contrast. The image of Madrid given in the series in the midst of this identity debate also adds a discussion on a much more worrying issue, namely, immigration, which tends to be more muted. Moreover, it deals with the reality of the present time and portrays a recognisably contemporary world, even though it only reflects some isolated real events.

It can be concluded from the above that the city of Madrid plays a leading role in the story. It is understood as the symbolic centre of the Spanish state and as a space of hegemonic power that brings together the political and economic elites.

Antidisturbios refers to and discusses a specific historical period when the social problems that beset Spanish society were emerging to a greater or lesser extent. Some of these major ills such as inequality, racism, migration and violence are nowadays shared globally. Others, however, are considered more characteristic of and rooted in Spanish identity, such as the incessant deterioration of the image of the political class and the persistent institutional corruption at all levels.

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