

University College London

*A study on the commerce, circulation, and consumption
of Portuguese cinema (1960–2010)*

By

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Doctor of Philosophy
Film Studies

Declaration:

I, André Rui Nunes Bernardes da Cunha Graça confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

27th March 2017,

André Rui Graça

Abstract: This thesis proposes an articulation between the history of Portuguese contemporary cinema and broader political and social variables. Thus, the main purpose of the present thesis is to follow and understand the evolution of Portuguese cinema in the period between 1960 (the beginning of the decade of the New Cinema movement) and 2010 (the year of the height of the economic crisis that suddenly left the country in a difficult position), from a socio-cultural and economic perspective. Paying especial attention to post-1974 decades, this project provides an overview of the last 40–60 years and looks in depth at the identity of Portuguese cinema and the reality(ies) in which it has been inserted. This is a work on the development of this cinema, within and outside its national borders, in which the object of study is not a *corpus* of films (when understood as aesthetic objects), but rather its market context, as well as a political and social situation.

It falls within the scope of this thesis to look further into the reasons for the real and the symbolic absence of Portuguese cinema from the national and European contexts, along with its commercial problems. Three vectors of analysis will guide this research: relation with audiences; circulation and problems with distribution; and financial struggles. The driving force of this research project is fueled by the interest in addressing the historical difficulties that Portuguese filmmakers faced during this period in order to understand the origin and characteristics of those obstacles. Indeed, this work aims to identify, debate and clarify the reasons that influenced the evolution of aesthetics and determined the precarious situation in which Portuguese cinema found itself during the past decades. This thesis also analyses cases of success, in order to understand the broader frame from a holistic perspective.

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Introduction

‘Vive le cinéma!’

Manoel de Oliveira – Honorary *Palme d’Or* acceptance speech

‘Oh, memória, enemiga mortal de mi descanso!’

[Oh, memory, mortal enemy of my repose!]

Dom Quixote – Miguel de Cervantes

As the title suggests, this thesis proposes to articulate the relationship between the history of Portuguese contemporary cinema and broader political, social, and commercial variables. The main purpose of the present thesis is, thus, to track the evolution of Portuguese cinema in the period between 1960 (the beginning of the decade of the New Cinema movement) and 2010 (the year of the height of the economic crisis that suddenly left the country holding its breath) from a socio-cultural and economic perspective. Paying especial attention to the post-1974 decades, this project provides an overview of the last 40–60 years and looks in-depth at the identity of Portuguese cinema and the economic reality(ies) in which it has found itself inserted. This is a work on the development of this cinema, within and outside its national borders, in which the object of study is not a *corpus* of films (understood as aesthetic objects), but rather its market context, as well as its political and social environment.

It falls within the scope of this thesis to look further into the reasons for the real and the symbolic absence of Portuguese cinema from the national and European circuits, along with its commercial problems. To a large extent, the driving force behind this research project is the urgent need to quantify the historical difficulties that Portuguese filmmakers have faced during this period and thereby understand the origin and characteristics of those obstacles. Indeed, this work aims to identify, analyse and clarify the causes of the precarious situation in which Portuguese cinema found itself during the past decades. For the sake of balance, this thesis also takes into account some isolated cases of success, in order to understand the broader frame from a holistic perspective.

There is often a mismatch between data harvested from box office takings as compared with the reactions of critics to given films and their impact at international festivals. Therefore, another goal set by this thesis is to assess the extent to which the

dichotomy between ‘mainstream cinema’ and ‘festival cinema’, as well as the criteria used to attribute cultural value to cinematographic works — which may then be sublimated into monetary value — have had an impact on the aesthetics of Portuguese cinema. In tandem with this question, it has also been important to consider the effect of cultural and funding variables (both Portuguese and European) that influenced not only the production and distribution of Portuguese film but also the visual literacy of the population and its reception by Portuguese audiences. Ultimately, in exploring the case study of Portuguese cinema, this thesis intends to contribute both to the understanding of Portugal’s unique cultural situation and recent lines of research that have been analysing the functioning of cinema, its reception and the importance of the international circuit. In shedding some light on the local dimension, I hope to be able to add something to our understanding of the global context, given that the global environment provides me with the necessary tools to analyse the local test-case of Portuguese cinema.

Arising from the need to assess and compare the degree of commercial success and failure of Portuguese cinema, Chapter I builds on the main ideas of this introduction and establishes the main premise of the thesis. Chapter I revolves around the critical study of numbers and figures relating to the commercial viability of Portuguese cinema, and points to the poor results as the problem to which an answer is needed. In addition, Chapter I identifies and systematises three vectors of analysis that will guide the remainder of the thesis: the relationship with audiences; circulation and distribution problems; and financial struggles. Using statistics and various testimonies, this chapter grounds and establishes its basic premise — and main thread — of the thesis according to the results obtained from the analysis: the success of Portuguese cinema, in terms both of international exposure/acclaim and local audiences, is mixed. Moreover, I propose the use of the terms ‘unsuccess’ and ‘absence’ as central pointers of this study.

Chapter II, by far the longest, focuses on the domestic consumption of Portuguese cinema and, more broadly, on the evaluation and description of Portugal’s cinematic culture. A comparison of what the directors were doing in the past 40 years and what the audiences were watching will be carried out, in order to find contrasts and/or points in common. The first part (2.1) is dedicated to the place of Portuguese cinema within Portuguese culture and the links between the two. It assesses the extent to which there exists an identification by the Portuguese with the

themes and the iconography portrayed in a set of national films. Part 2.1 also travels back in time to paint a portrait of the cultural scenery from which Portuguese New Cinema was born and grasp the ideological and aesthetic atmosphere that came to influence it. The second part (2.2) opens with the question ‘what were the filmmakers doing?’ and proceeds to elaborate an overview of the main trends and happenings in the history of contemporary Portuguese cinema. The main point of the third part (2.3) is to take the pulse of the visual literacy of the average Portuguese viewer. Within this ambit, it deals with the evolution of mass culture in Portugal, namely the overwhelming importance of television and its contents, and sets out to answer the question ‘what was the public consuming?’. The last part of the chapter brings together the conclusions reached in the previous parts and triangulates them.

The question of the visibility of Portuguese cinema and its distribution will govern Chapter III. This chapter will take up once more the topic of cultural valuation introduced in Chapter I and pay especial attention to the relations of power and geopolitical tensions associated with cultural exposure and hegemony. In contrast to previous chapters, the perspective will shift from the local to the global in order to address pressing questions related to the international cinema market and its dynamics. The study of the role of film festivals and the importance of the critics in the creation and management of cultural capital is central to its first section (3.1), given that it provides a basis for assessing both the relationship between Portuguese cinema and the art-world, as well as its place within the international cinema market. Subsequently a history of the presence of Portuguese films in festivals and an account of the awards received will be presented. In addition, the historical obsession with recognition abroad will be tackled in an attempt to understand to what extent the art-house market and the criteria privileged by film festivals may have influenced the style of Portuguese films. Overall, the main task of this chapter is to situate the place of Portuguese cinema among its cinematic peers and evaluate the artistic prestige it enjoyed.

The second part of Chapter III (3.2) will be dedicated to distribution (both domestic and international), and consists of an analysis of the salient issues. It will analyse the series of problems that led, throughout the decades, to the lack of access to international markets experienced by Portuguese cinema and inhibited the circulation of films — indeed, many did not even officially premiere. The final

remarks will provide some new data concerning the reach of Portuguese cinema abroad and provide some analysis of the visibility of Portuguese cinema.

Chapter IV delves into the evolution of the legal status of Portuguese cinema, as well as into the question of its economic survival. It consists mainly of an original analysis of the legislation on activities relating to cinema (production, distribution, and exhibition). After exhaustive research and the gathering of all legal documents that had been passed since 1971, it was possible to map the legal field, and hence produce a critical history of the legislation of cinema in Portugal. With particular attention being given to the sociology of law, this chapter analyses the distribution crisis and isolates some of the reasons that justify the persistence of a predominant authorial sector in Portuguese cinematic culture.

The final considerations will articulate and wrap up elements from all the previous parts. This is the place where all the pieces of the puzzle come together in order, hopefully, to solve the enigma of the lack of commercial success experienced by Portuguese cinema.

Methodology

The present study is cross-disciplinary. Literature and topics from the domains of film studies (namely, formal analysis and film history), contemporary history, reception studies, philosophy, sociology, social and political sciences, art and cultural studies intersect and coexist in complementary ways in this research project. Thus, although film analysis can help us understand and identify the main trends and influences of Portuguese cinema, it does not provide much insight into the extra-cinematic context. Likewise, if contemporary history and statistical reading can enlighten us about the political circumstances in which a film was produced and offer quantitative information, they are unable to clarify the quality of the reception and what reasons might have determined it.

Film interpretation, such as the purely formal analysis of works where the mercantile conditions in the cultural market of a film are not directly interrogated, does not provide an in-depth analysis of the modes of production that influence aesthetics and commerce. Thus, the starting point of this study¹ is to assume the

¹ As Roy Stafford argues: ‘What is much less common, at least within film studies, is any analysis of the business practices of any film industry, especially in the crucial process of distribution’ (Stafford 2007, 2)

position of inequality occupied by Portuguese cinema comparatively to other, more pervasive cinematographies. This approach allows us to apply post-colonial theories to this topic, and throw new light on the political mechanics of Portuguese cinema. To investigate the complex relation between art and power is, in fact, at the core of this work: it is not only necessary to investigate the sociology of the audiences, their taste and cultural consumption² but also to carry out a study of the hegemonic processes affecting the offer of cultural goods in the national and trans-national contexts.

This research project is problem-based, having adopted a philosophical approach to the successes and failures of Portuguese cinema. For this reason it is not chronologically based. Even though the time-span covered by this thesis is considerable (more or less 50 years, with references to the late 1950s and 1960s) and the text will demonstrate occasional cataphorae, a chronological approach would have presented two main drawbacks: (1) the thesis would have lacked originality since generic histories of Portuguese contemporary cinema have already been produced and I believe it is time to go beyond that paradigm and delve further into specific problems; and (2) such an approach would not have allowed for the proper handling of each question that the thesis raises — and the dissection of these specific issues is intended as the main contribution of this work. Chronological logic will naturally be present in some of the chapters but it does not govern the thesis. Thus, the three chapters that follow the introductory chapter could be regarded as the three corners of a triangle that, by the end, will converge in the centre to shed some light on the reasons behind the precarious circumstances experienced by Portuguese cinema.

Finally, with regard to the research materials, it should be noted that they consist mainly of written works, public testimonies, legal documents, archival information, and news reports. Literature from the above-mentioned areas of knowledge, as well as archival and statistical data concerning cultural consumption and the evolution of the exhibition of Portuguese cinema, constitute primary sources. Legislation is also an important element. Published interviews, news reports, opinion articles and other texts related to the public sphere complement the research project as secondary sources. This thesis follows the Chicago author-date style (with

² Paradigmatic in this field are the works of Bourdieu 1984, Menger 1983, and with regard to cinema's specific case, see also the studies by Sorlin 1991, Maltby 1995, and Miller et. al. 2005.

occasional adaptations), due to its ability to integrate with easyness in-text references. The following section will explore the sources further, as it intends to assess and map out the current situation regarding Portuguese cinema studies.

State of the art review concerning the study and discussion of Portuguese cinema

As of today, the history and aesthetics of Portuguese cinema over the last four or five decades have been represented mainly by a *corpus* of written documents, accumulated over the years. These texts can be very diverse and reflect the contentious disputes that have occurred over this period of time and shaped things as they are. The texts also reflect, sometimes only in an implicit way, the change of protagonists, as well as the shifts in the perspective from which Portuguese cinema can be surveyed. As was customary in Portugal until the recent outbreak of the participative 2.0 Web and blogosphere, cultural debate used to revolve around a handful of conspicuous personalities and took place in the printed press. The printed press normally consists of three types of document: (1) proto-academic works of synthesis of the history of Portuguese cinema; (2) academic production that eventually replaced (or, coexisted with) the previous type; and (3) many unsystematised articles in newspapers or magazines. All these materials are equally valid when considered in an historical sense – i.e., meaning that they have produced an impact and contributed to the construction of certain views on Portuguese cinema and constitute a part of the history of the debate. It should also be pointed out that, apart from a few exceptions (such as Jacques Lemière), Portuguese cinema has been a domestic matter and has been mainly studied by the Portuguese.

While it is true that there has been a space in the public sphere (in the Habermasian sense of the term)³ since the 1960s for the serious discussion of Portuguese cinema, it is also the case that some of the most elucidatory and important texts about it can only be found either in academic theses or specialised low-circulation publications. Though the same issues might be discussed in these two fora, they are clearly different in nature. Broadly speaking, the domestic literature on Portuguese cinema can be divided into six main analytical threads: subsidisation; film policies and institutional interference; cultural significance and public impact; the

³ Habermas 1989.

ontological definition of Portuguese cinema – i.e., what it should and should not be; aesthetics and artistic tendencies; and the relationship between cinema and country (its history, its people, its landscape).

The historian Luís Reis Torgal, for example, mentions that academic film criticism emerged in Portugal at quite a late stage, especially when one considers the international panorama (Torgal 2011, 13-15). According to the same author, space for considerations about cinema was previously reserved only for filmmakers, critics, archivists and other technicians linked to the preservation of the cinematic patrimony (Torgal 2001, 13-15). For instance, José de Matos-Cruz, the author of many works (including an exhaustive catalogue of Portuguese cinema),⁴ was an archivist at the Portuguese Cinemateque, and Luís de Pina⁵ and João Bénard da Costa, two other prolific authors, were the directors of this institution, from 1982 to 1991 and from 1991 to 2009 respectively. Additionally, many other individuals who wrote about the films during the Estado Novo regime and attempted to summarise the trajectory of the moving image in Portugal were either closely affiliated with the Cinemateque or with its artistic milieu.⁶

As Chapter I will make clear, a consequence of the fact that a great part of the discourse around Portuguese cinema in the public sphere tended to focus on aesthetics (and the history of its evolution), its themes, and its historical ontology, is that a certain precedent seems to have been set. By focusing on the putative aesthetic successes and achievements of Portuguese filmmakers, for decades the discussion avoided having to face Portuguese cinema's real problems from an economic and pragmatic viewpoint, or finding solutions to improve the conditions.⁷

Indeed, it seems that many of those who chose to discuss Portuguese cinema opted to evade the issue of its material conditions, and instead sought to find a neutral ground in the debate of cinephile matters. This situation would only change after the establishment of the two private television channels, SIC and TVI, in the early 1990s. The advent of these new, economically-driven players changed the cinematic map concerning co-productions and sparked the debate about the

⁴ Matos-Cruz 1989.

⁵ Pina's major contributions are: Pina 1986, and Pina 1991.

⁶ A clear example is Manuel Felix Ribeiro, head of the Cinemateque during the regime: Ribeiro 1946, and Ribeiro 1983.

⁷ Examples of exceptions to this discourse are the actors, producers and directors Nicolau Breyner, and Joaquim de Almeida (Paulo Leite as well, to some extent), who always defended a sustainable way of making cinema and a more egalitarian balance between the costs supported by the state and the producers (See Breyner 2012; Menezes 2002; and Sequeira 2011).

relationship between cultural products, public space and funding. I agree in part with Torgal and consider the first doctoral thesis on Portuguese cinema, by Paulo Filipe Monteiro⁸, as a turning point in film studies for it represented both the formal acceptance of this area of knowledge in the country's academia and a step in the direction of a more consequential and methodical approach to Portuguese cinema.⁹

Yet, given their connections to the cinema world, it can hardly be asserted that authors such as Monteiro, Geada and Grilo do not fall into the same category as other, non-academic voices. Grilo and Geada were both film directors before the award of their PhDs and continued to work as filmmakers while maintaining their professorial positions at the New University of Lisbon and the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema; for his part, Monteiro is a well-known actor and has also a career in filmmaking, as well as being a lecturer at the New University of Lisbon. Thus, there has been a tradition of a degree of identification between the worlds of the cinema as practice and cinema as an object of historical study. This raises the question of the possibility of a lack of impartiality on the part of some important writers. This thesis therefore recognises citations from the work of the above-mentioned writers as representations of a study, or of a memory (with all the peculiarities and nuances that such a term implies)¹⁰ and not as unquestionable proofs; they should be used as judiciously as possible and may only help to clarify or to build up a point – and not constitute the point itself.

Paulo Cunha, a researcher from the new wave of graduate students who have dedicated their efforts to the understanding of Portuguese cinema, suggested that the valorisation of the history of cinema removed it from the cinephile ghetto. This meant that insiders of the milieu lost the monopoly of writing about Portuguese cinema, allowing the development of an independent production of historiography that originates mainly from research centres associated with higher education institutions. (Cunha 2015, 49). The same author goes as far as to claim that:

A prática historiográfica em torno do cinema português reflecte sobretudo a formação profissional e intelectual dos seus autores, denunciando simultaneamente o interesse individual de quem escreve sobre a temática e a evolução da forma como a sociedade foi entendendo o

⁸ Monteiro 1995.

⁹ Other intellectual productions about Portuguese cinema in Portugal relevant for the present work include: Barroso 2002; Geada 1977; Sousa 1989; Grilo 1994; Seabra 2008; Cunha 2005; and Granja 2006.

¹⁰ For a stimulating discussion on the relationship and ontological differences between memory and history please see Ricoeur 2004.

fenómeno cinematográfico [...] fomo-nos apercebendo e habituando a que os autores das diversas sùmulas históricas, movidos por interesses pessoais ou corporativas, construissem e divulgassem visões diametralmente opostas sobre um mesmo objecto de estudo. [The historiographic practice around Portuguese cinema reflects, above all else, the intellectual and professional background of its authors, simultaneously denouncing the individual interests of those writing about this topic and the evolution of the way the society has understood the cinematographic phenomenon [...] We came to realise and got used to the fact that the authors of the various historical syntheses, inspired by personal or corporate interests, constructed and promulgated diametrically opposed visions about the same object of study.] (Cunha 2003, 28)

João Bénard da Costa, a key character in the Portuguese cinematic scene, famously suggested in 1971 that: ‘Está por fazer uma boa história do cinema nacional, e sobre o que ele possa ter sido abundam mais os argumentos do que os factos.’ [A good history of Portuguese cinema is yet to be made, and about what it might have been there are more arguments than there are facts.] (Costa 1971, 47). As this thesis will argue, such a statement is still pertinent. Although the situation is different now and some major and more rigorous works have seen the light during recent years, there are still profound gaps in the history and understanding of Portuguese cinema that demand to be filled, and some discussions that need to be carried out. Evoking the words of Leonor Areal, the author of one of the most comprehensive works on post-1974 Portuguese cinema to date:

As condições de produção são sempre mais complexas do que os próprios filmes. Estes, pelo contrário, são explícitos, articulados, contidos numa forma final inequívoca, que, sim, se oferece a ser lida e interpretada por diversos ângulos. A realidade que os precede é cheia de contradições e omissões, e pertence a um outro tipo de estudo, que merece ser empreendido noutro lado, o do cinema enquanto veículo e instrumento de poder ou o estudo das condições de produção.’ [The circumstances of productions are always more complex than the films themselves. The films are explicit, articulated, self-contained in an unequivocal final form that, yes, is prone to be read from different angles. The reality that precedes them, however is full of contradictions and omissions, and belongs to another kind of study that deserves to be undertaken some place else, the cinema as a vehicle and instrument of power or the study of the conditions of production.] (Areal 2011, 24)

It is precisely this facet of Portuguese cinema – its market circumstances and material determinants – which Areal’s work did not address, that the present thesis intends to explore.

It is also important to stress that the 1990s was the decade in which a number of important sociological studies on Portuguese society were published. As the next chapter will analyse in some detail, these studies included cinema in their sections on culture, and they were the first to highlight, in a more or less descriptive as well as accurate way, the numbers and figures concerning national cinema from the 70s onwards.¹¹ Despite Eduarda Dionísio's declared alignment with the left wing, which gives her work undertones of political criticism and mourning for the failed revolution, *Títulos, Acções e Obrigações: a cultura em Portugal* [Titles, Shares, and Bonds: culture in Portugal]¹² offers a detailed and well-documented survey of cultural events in Portugal after 1974. Dionísio's analysis of the past two decades does not isolate cinema (it follows a chronological order, and is not thematic), but rather sets it within a broader cultural framework; it mentions some significant moments for Portuguese cinema (such as important screenings after the revolution, aesthetic developments and the debut of new filmmakers) while denouncing some of the difficult circumstances in which this cinema found itself and, indeed, despite which it managed to thrive (both in economic terms and with regard to audiences).

On a par with Dionísio's investigation is *As Políticas Culturais em Portugal: relatório nacional* [Cultural Policies in Portugal: national report], focusing on the socio-cultural component of artistic/entertainment activities and written in a more neutral style. Published in 1998 by a team of researchers from the Observatory for Cultural Activities led by Maria de Lourdes dos Santos, this book also serves as an important reference-point for it is one of the first works to date to present the cultural situation in Portugal through the collection and interpretation of statistical data. The fact that by the end of the 80s and during the 90s almost all cultural sectors were in a way institutionalised, regulated and/or subsidised by the state only heightens the importance of this study, inspired by the theories of Bourdieu, as well as highlighting the urgency of a sociological assessment of the evolution of policies and changes in the fields of cultural provision and consumption in Portugal. These studies provide a cross-disciplinary basis – although with a particular emphasis on sociology and

¹¹ The most conspicuous and relevant for the purpose of this thesis are: Barreto 1996; Barreto 2000; Dionísio 1993; and Santos 1998.

¹² The title is a play on Portuguese words that a simple translation is unfortunately unable to grasp completely.

cultural studies – for the articulation of the argument of the present thesis with regard to the Portuguese case.¹³

Material circumstances, and the relatively miniscule nature of the internal market, along with funding problems, have shaped Portuguese culture. In this respect, the main struggle of Portuguese cinema, as with its counterparts in many other peripheral countries, is for economic viability. Without the chance – or the will – to adopt an industrial method, Portuguese cinema remains a niche cultural activity; it is, and always has been, a milieu of a few directors constantly competing for scarce funding, and technicians who have been able to thrive as a result of their perseverance, making the most of what little means are available. As this thesis will show, only on rare occasions were Portuguese films able to support themselves in a market system dominated by the rules of supply and demand. Hence, the general recognition that film in Portugal is only possible due to public subsidy and institutional support implies that one of the main points where opinions collide is the debate on the desired nature of Portuguese cinema and what goals would best justify the public investment in it. I now propose to focus attention on the preeminent figures in the world of Portuguese film, their works and the differences in their discourses and stances.

The condensed historical account provided by the above-mentioned João Mário Grilo, though incomplete, is, nevertheless, valid and relevant. Yet, it should be mentioned that the text is also thoroughly imbued with the author's very strong stand against private media groups and non-authorial films (making this an example of a text on the antipodes of those from more commercially-driven filmmakers such as António Pedro Vasconcelos, Tino Navarro, and Nicolau Breyner, or scholars which prefer to naturalise the market, such as Leite)¹⁴. For example, in his 2006 book *O Cinema da Não Ilusão*, he describes how:

A cinematografia portuguesa recusou-se a ser colonizada pelo cinema americano e pela ideologia industrial que lhe está associada – a cinematografia portuguesa, entre muitas outras espalhadas por todos os continentes – optou por desenvolver, ao longo dos últimos 30 anos, uma estratégia

¹³ This sociological basis was extended during the first decade of the new century. Important databases such as Pordata, the National Institute for Statistics and Lumière database, have gathered information and made it available online. Moreover, the National Institute for Statistics (INE) and the Portuguese Ministry of Culture have released periodically acceptable and detailed reports concerning public expenditure on culture and the consumption of culture. They will be referred to when necessary.

¹⁴ Breyner 2012; Letria 2016; Menezes 2002; Leite 2013.

de dissidência em relação ao modelos americano de colonização imaginária do planeta.’[Portuguese cinema refused to be colonised by American cinema and the industrial ideology that is associated with it, and - like many others, spread over all the continents – opted to develop, in the last 30 years, a strategy of combat for the affirmation of its *dissidence* in relation to the American model of imaginary colonisation of the planet.] (Grilo 2006, 33)

When discussing a change in cinematographic law and its likely consequences in the future, Grilo goes even further, declaring that: ‘É exactamente este combate que se pretende agora acabar traiçoeiramente com uma lei que ameaça definir um conjunto de novos protagonistas, novas regras e, sobretudo, novos filmes.’ [It is precisely this combat that they are trying to treacherously end, with a law that threatens to define a new set of protagonists, new rules, and, especially, new films.] (Grilo 2006, 33) To some extent, this book encapsulates a great part of Grilo’s work throughout the years. When compared to other studies on the same subject, the silences and absences of Grilo’s book are as eloquent as what is actually in it. After a brief canter through the history of Portuguese cinema, the second part of the book comprises a selection of dialogues between the author and filmmakers, in an attempt to identify some of the tropes of Portuguese cinema, starting from the assumption that Portuguese films should, ideally, be auteur films. Throughout this research project, after many readings and conversations, I came to understand that many directors and other people closely involved in the production of cinema in Portugal share Grilo’s sentiments and complain about what they believe to be the gradual distancing of the state from its cultural obligation to finance and provide the means for the development of the arts. On the other side of the barricade, as this thesis will discuss later, the argument is that public money is not well spent on what many consider to be self-indulgent exercises with little public impact; indeed it could be argued that directors and producers ought to be encouraged to find progressively larger portions of private financing for their projects.

In effect, this latter point of view is in tune with the line of *canonisation* that João Bénard da Costa constructed over the course of many years. Due to the professional position he had in written production, Bénard was perhaps the most read and influential person in the promotion of Portuguese cinema from 1974 onwards. A *Cahiers du Cinéma* type of cinephile, the former director of the Portuguese Cinemateque imprinted, in his impressionistic prose style, all the passion he nurtured

for a certain type of cinema in many newspaper articles and several books.¹⁵ This can be verified through his own personal canon ('the films of my life', to use his own words), composed of directors such as Renoir, Rossellini, Lang, Hawks and Bergman. Even though his discourse is complex and full of grey areas, it should be noted that Costa's taste leaned towards auteur and artistic films. Considering this, it should not surprise us that his programming options at the Cinemateque also reflected this preference for art house cinema, therefore contributing towards the institutionalisation of a cult of the artistic film. Consequently, in the field of Portuguese cinema, he privileged, supported and publicly expressed his admiration for filmmakers who gathered some recognition abroad on the festival circuit. Paulo Filipe Monteiro argued that the Cinemateque gave rise to, or at least supported, the redefinition of cinema as an art form. (Monteiro 1995, 646). Ultimately, Bénard da Costa was one of the most knowledgeable people about the evolution of Portuguese cinema and without his valuable contributions and syntheses, some facts and pieces of the puzzle would probably have fallen into oblivion. Although his narratives ought to be read with caution and compared with more recent studies and official databases, Costa's testimonies nevertheless remain vital sources of information without which research in this area would have been much more difficult.¹⁶

In a slightly different quadrant from that of Grilo and Bénard da Costa, two works stand out for their scale and reach: Paulo Filipe Monteiro and Leonor Areal's¹⁷ PhD theses (the latter was published shortly after the award of the doctorate). It should be pointed out that Monteiro was Areal's PhD supervisor and, to some extent, the research of the latter picks up where the former had left off. With regard to Monteiro's thesis, and paraphrasing the author himself, the intention was to construct a critical history (more than an enumeration of events) of Portuguese cinema (Monteiro 1995, 631). Limiting his period of study to the period running from 1961 until 1990, Monteiro takes as the kernel of his thesis the question of the 'new, new cinema'¹⁸ and its metamorphoses until the early 90s. He sets out to understand where it began, what truly characterised it and what the intentional, ideological and aesthetic foundations of this movement were. In so doing, he

¹⁵ These chronicles and articles were strung together in books such as: Costa 2007b; Costa 2007c; Costa 2010.

¹⁶ Costa 1991; Costa 1996; Costa 2007a.

¹⁷ Areal 2011.

¹⁸ There is a debate in Portugal about the notions 'Novo Cinema' and 'Cinema Novo'. Effectively, they have different connotations and may mean different things. For more on that see page 86.

narrates the history of Portuguese cinema in an innovative way, by telling the story through the various disputes that punctuated its history. Monteiro is the first person to have taken such a dialectic approach to Portuguese cinema, highlighting some contradictions and dissecting long-established arguments. Although his critiques represent something of a breakthrough, and his conclusions about the essence, main features and diversity of Portuguese cinema signified great steps for their time, Monteiro overlooks the discussion of the market and only rarely questions the *raison d'être* of Portuguese film.

To some extent, as already mentioned, Areal's work, finished almost 15 years after that of her mentor, follows on from the 1,000-page study, *Autos da Alma*. It covers an even longer chronological period, from 1950 until the present day, and it is clearly more ambitious in theoretical terms. Areal addresses Portuguese cinema through an almost exhaustive analysis of feature films. The films and their aesthetics are, indeed, the main object of the study. Hardly any are left out, although some are highlighted more than others. Then again, the criterion used for this choice is classical and seems to be related to three factors that academia tends to prefer: (1) films that are 'historical' in the sense that they are paradigms, formally representing or depicting a transition; (2) films that seem to transmit the *zeitgeist* and/or something 'typically Portuguese'; and finally (3), films that experimented and introduced something new in the context of a cinematic movement or national cinema, and are therefore considered to have contributed to its aesthetic development and the narrative of that evolution. Similarly to Monteiro, suggestions concerning socio-political aspects are simply relegated to the arena of speculation and further enquiries.

The works of Daniel Ribas, Tiago Baptista and Paulo Cunha, three academics from a younger generation, shift a little from the paradigm described above and were also crucial to this research project. Daniel Ribas' 2014 doctoral thesis¹⁹ is an original sociological and cultural reading of contemporary Portuguese cinema. Although the author's analysis of the representation of a putative Portuguese character in cinema serves the ulterior purpose of understanding João Canijo's films, it generates an enlightening dialogue between Portuguese cinema since the 1960s and the question of national identity. A few years before Ribas's thesis, Tiago Baptista, had also helped to refresh Portuguese cinema studies and the debate about the representation of the

¹⁹ Ribas 2014.

country on screen. In his essay *Nationally Correct: the invention of Portuguese cinema*,²⁰ Baptista set out to achieve two goals: to defend the idea that the ‘national question’ has always been present in the history of Portuguese cinema, and to demonstrate that it was only reformulated according to the ideologies underpinning different moments in Portugal’s history. While the Estado Novo regime always portrayed an image of Portugal filled with rural references, cultural caricature and apology of poverty, the New Cinema movement and the films made from 1974 onwards attempted to ‘update’ the vision of the country. Thus, Baptista’s essay is to a large extent a journey through the different cinematic visions and representations of the country. As he suggests: ‘Exactly what constituted the country, and more specifically what should integrate its cinematographic representations, might have been diligently challenged by filmmakers, and critics alike; but the premise that Portuguese films should keep on discussing the “national question” remained undisputed.’ (Baptista 2010, 310). In addition to this, the author also points out:

A seemingly transparent and merely geographical or cultural notion, ‘Portuguese cinema’ is actually an ideologically charged concept that determined most of what Portuguese films became (and were not allowed to become) over the past century. [...] I believe the ambivalence of the concept to be responsible for the way Portuguese films allowed themselves to be walled inside the ghetto of an identity founded upon nationalism, an impossible desire to compete with foreign entertainment cinema, and finally, a ‘national authorism’ assembled from abroad which, at the same time as it praised the originality of a handful of films, threatened to reduce an entire national cinematography to a fad or, which might be worse, into a genre. (Baptista 2010, 310)

In this sense, Baptista questions the importance of the construction of a ‘typically Portuguese’ iconography or aesthetic which was seen by some as a crucial component of films made in Portugal, subject as they were to external approval and market circuits.

The last of the three, Paulo Cunha, has been a prolific author. He has published a vast body of works, most of them ground-breaking, covering a wide range of topics concerning the history of Portuguese cinema. Perhaps due to his background in history, Cunha is one of the very few scholars who has specifically focussed on the understanding of Portuguese cinema from the angle of material conditions and historical events. For this reason, his work is now key to any scholar

²⁰ Baptista 2010.

working on Portuguese cinema and has many points of contact with the methodology adopted in this research project. Cunha's most emblematic texts — which are also the ones that had most impact on the research design of the present thesis — are his contributions for the book he co-edited with Michelle Salles entitled *Cinema Português: um guia essencial* [Portuguese cinema: an essential guide],²¹ and his doctoral thesis, *O Novo Cinema Português: Políticas públicas e modos de produção (1949-1980)* [New Portuguese Cinema: Public policies and modes of production (1949-1980)].²² Therein Cunha provides a thorough account of the political conditions in which Portuguese New Cinema thrived and developed, and establishes a dialogue between cinematic culture and its broader historical context.

In addition to the writings that have been mentioned, the book *Novas e Velhas Tendências no Cinema Português Contemporâneo* [New and Old Tendencies in Contemporary Portuguese Cinema]²³ (a very recent collection of essays and interviews) and an article by Luís Nogueira are worthy of mention. The book, published in 2013, derived from a team research project, entitled 'Main tendencies in contemporary Portuguese cinema', carried out by the University of Algarve and Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema, and funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. Based on the premise that there is an 'organisational culture' within contemporary Portuguese cinema that appears to be blocking the efficient development of common good practices, this book attempts to answer (or, at least, tackle) some urgent questions, such as: what are, today, the principal characteristics of the development of cinematographic projects in Portugal? What do directors, producers, distributors and exhibitors think about Portuguese cinema? What conclusions can be drawn from their opinions, accounts and analyses of the contemporary situation? (Mendes 2013, 11)

Unlike the works that have been mentioned thus far, that are usually one-author studies, the advantage of this collection is that it offers polyhedral visions on a wide range of topics, which remain connected via the contemporary Portuguese cinema *leitmotif*. The inclusion of completely different positions – i.e. the opinions of academics and the views of filmmakers in one volume – is demonstrative of this eclecticism. In this way, the whole ideological spectrum concerning Portuguese cinema, the discussion of what it is and what it should be, is present.

²¹ Sales and Cunha 2013.

²² Cunha 2015.

²³ Mendes 2013.

Among the essays included in this edited publication, two appear to be pivotal. The first of these is Jacques Lemière's classic analysis of post-1974 Portuguese cinema. Initially published in French, under the title 'Le cinéma et la question du Portugal après le 25 avril 1974', this seminal essay was at the time a condensation of Lemière's doctoral thesis, which was perhaps the first significant case of an outsider looking into Portuguese film.²⁴ In a systematic analysis, Lemière's paper argued that Portuguese cinema after the revolution inclined towards three vectors: (1) interrogation about the national question; (2) resistance to any industrial normalisation; and (3) artistic invention (Lemière 2013, 44-45). With this contribution, the French author provided a solid analytical basis and an interesting starting-point from which to think about post-revolutionary Portuguese cinema.

The second pivotal piece contained within the book is Paulo Leite's essay entitled *Cinema Português: Que fazer para torná-lo mais competitivo e mais próximo do público* [Portuguese Cinema: what can be done to make it more competitive and bring it closer to audiences].²⁵ In straightforward prose, the author presents some statistics about the commercial impact of Portuguese cinema and discusses the many contradictions present in subsidisation policies. By considering Portuguese cinema through the lens of a 'problem', more than an artistic/cultural situation, Leite also identifies and questions some of the discursive commonplaces bandied around on Portuguese cinema (e.g. the role of the state, the idea that the market is noxious and the deliberate disregard for the actual processes of cinema as a cultural product) as well as the extent to which those opinions mar and affect the resolution of the present situation and impede the transformation of Portuguese cinema into a more prosperous cultural activity. It is relevant to mention in this context that Leite was a reader at the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema – a contrast that becomes more intriguing when considering that this school, as this thesis will see later, has privileged the authorial agenda from the outset, and not the commercial. For this reason, Leite's position, although moderate, represents a misalignment with the context of the institution from which he is coming.

In line with Leite's text is that of Luís Nogueira (a lecturer at the University of Beira Interior) included in the proceedings of the 2009 symposium of the Portuguese Association of Communication Sciences. The strong point of *A Díficil*

²⁴ Lemière 2013.

²⁵ Leite 2013.

Visibilidade do Cinema Português: um inventário crítico [The Problem of Portuguese Cinema's Visibility: a critical inventory]²⁶ is the deconstruction of the widespread belief, invoked countless times by filmmakers and press, that Portuguese cinema is seen and appreciated abroad more than at home. Implicit in this myth is the suggestion of a lack of sophistication or 'cultural deficit' on the part of the Portuguese population that renders the common citizen unable to understand and celebrate national creators – a topic that will also be addressed in this thesis.

After a brief meditation on the prestige that is usually associated with authorial cinema and the corresponding lack of recognition assigned to entertainment cinema, the author carries out a survey on the artistic prestige of Portuguese cinema, only to conclude that, according to statistics and the concrete numbers, Portuguese cinema has had very little impact on the international scene (according to Nogueira, clearly less than most of its European counterparts). Continuing his reading of the numbers, Nogueira highlights the tragic lack of success of Portuguese cinema in the domestic and international markets, when considering the scale of some countries (e.g. there are sometimes more viewers of Portuguese films in France than in Portugal, but, in comparison, they do not represent a larger percentage of the audience). That is why the choice of the word 'difficult' to adjectivate the visibility of Portuguese cinema is most interesting. Usually one would talk in terms of high or low visibility. 'Difficult' brings to the table a more complex element: it suggests a situation whereby the visibility is obstructed or inhibited; a situation in which Portuguese cinema struggles against external forces.

Finally, Nogueira articulates another problem that is seldom mentioned: the absence of Portuguese cinema in the media. Indeed, in addition to publishing numerical data that refutes decades of filmmakers' and producers' discourses, Nogueira's work is one of the first to raise the question of the commercial factors at work behind the creation and maintenance of the 'aesthetic features' of Portuguese art cinema. Unlike many previous voices, Nogueira, in line with Leite, defended the unpretentious and unprejudiced variety of different films that co-exist under the label of 'Portuguese cinema'. In the words of the author: 'Uma cinematografia de espectro vasto, que não se esgote na polaridade estéril, limitadora, obcecada e intransigente da anti-indústria e da pró-indústria, do pró-elitismo e do antielitismo.' [A cinematography of a wide spectrum, that is not confined to the sterile, constraining,

²⁶ Nogueira 2009.

obsessed and intransigent polarity of anti-industry or pro-industry, anti-elitism or pro-elitism.] (Nogueira 2009, 10)

With regard to the problem of the absence of Portuguese culture, the seminal research project led by António Pinho Vargas, one of Portugal's most outstanding contemporary composers and a sociologist, is a point of reference.²⁷ When analysing the case of the historic absence of Portuguese music from the European context, Vargas focused for the first time on the relationship between Portugal and Europe and vice-versa, i.e. the relations between periphery and core, through the lenses of post-colonial and cultural studies. The very idea that Portugal could be seen as an entity detached from (and not on a par with) Europe was deemed controversial at the time. Yet, the use of these theories and the *a priori* understanding that the reception of any work of art is intrinsically a culturally conditioned gesture proved to be most fruitful in Vargas' case and, *mutatis mutandis*, can, to some extent, provide a theoretical paradigm at some points in this thesis.

To conclude, this survey on the state of the art would not be complete without an allusion to many other contributions, some of them not directly connected with the topic of this thesis, but which are, nevertheless, important in mapping a broader perspective of the making of Portuguese cinema, its participants, and its reception (*q.v.* bibliography). The study of Portuguese cinema has definitely been embraced by Portuguese academia (as well as, in part, in Brazil), and many areas of knowledge within the arts and humanities are working towards a better understanding and discussion of the films, the quarrels, and the material circumstances of its production.

Perhaps one the most representative work of this promising generation is the previously mentioned book *Cinema Português: um guia essencial* [Portuguese cinema: an essential guide]. Published and released in Brazil towards the end of 2013, this compilation of essays was edited by Paulo Cunha and Michelle Salles (who dedicated the greatest part of her academic career to Portuguese New Cinema). It gathers together 11 texts from both Portuguese and Brazilian scholars from this 'new wave' of academics. Daniel Ribas, Maria do Carmo Piçarra,²⁸ and the above-mentioned Paulo Cunha and Tiago Baptista co-author this collection of insightful essays regarding each decade of Portuguese cinema alongside already established figures

²⁷ Vargas 2010.

²⁸ Author of: Piçarra 2013, and Piçarra 2015.

from a generation of transition (Jorge Luiz Cruz, Manuela Penafria,²⁹ Carolin Overhoff Ferreira,³⁰ Leando Mendonça, and Wagner Pinheiro Ferreira). This book has the distinction of tackling in a critical and objective way some of the most pressing questions (history, aesthetics, internationalisation, and audiences) through approaches that focus not only on the cinematographic aspect of films, but also extra-cinematographic events and framings that are crucial for a holistic understanding of the bigger picture of the past and present of Portuguese cinema.

Apart from those that have been mentioned, some other authors have recently published theses, articles, and books concerning Portuguese filmmakers³¹ or Portuguese cinema from a specific point of view, such as architecture.³² Moreover, studies concerning the history of Portuguese cultural activities in the recent past (such as performance art),³³ television³⁴ or the reception of Portuguese cinema in the press³⁵ were also taken into account and contributed towards the writing of this thesis. Although all these authors will not be individually reviewed, given that this section requires brevity, they nevertheless deserve to be mentioned here, and their presence will be acknowledged at various junctures throughout the body of the thesis.

Ultimately, the backbone of this research consists of the aforementioned works, statistics from trusted sources (such as Pordata, INE, and European Commission), and published legislation. To complement these primary sources and help frame them in an appropriate methodological context, this thesis is based extensively on authoritative literature on author cinema, international film history, art cinema, film festivals, circulation of cultural products, and film policy. Moreover, given the cross-disciplinary character of the thesis, authors and texts from areas contiguous to cinema and cultural activities are referenced. The final product ventures into *terra incognita*, attempting to fill gaps (either assumed by authors or perceived), find the cracks in the walls and address them, as well as answer questions raised by many of the works that inspired and made this one possible. In that sense, this thesis is a patchwork of carefully selected texts and thoughts, woven together by

²⁹ Author of: Penafria 2009.

³⁰ Ferreira 2007.

³¹ Such as: Navarra 2013; Giarrusso 2016; Araújo 2014; Araújo 2016.

³² Urbano 2014.

³³ Dias 2016; Medina 2006; Soares 2016.

³⁴ Ferreira 2010; Sena 2007; Torres 2015.

³⁵ Fino 2013.

the thread of a research question; a mosaic made of small tiles, coloured by critical thinking, hoping to illustrate another facet of history (for reality is polyhedral) and, in doing so, push back just a little bit more the boundaries of our knowledge and understanding of Portuguese cinema.

Chapter I – Presentation of the Research Question: the Unsuccess of a National Cinema

‘Something is rotten in the kingdom of Denmark.’

Hamlet – William Shakespeare

‘Eu quero que o público se foda!’³⁶ [I want the audiences to go fuck themselves!]
João César Monteiro in an interview during the premiere of his film *Branca de Neve*

‘The song remains the same.’

Led Zeppelin

1.1 Can a national cinema be successful or unsuccessful?

‘The film industry is unlike any other [...] No other industry has similar non-economic pretensions’ (Hoskins et al. 1997, 3). Commenting on this premise, Anne Jäckel acknowledges in her 2003 book on film industries, that this tension is particularly evident in the European context (Jäckel 2003, 1). Indeed, if it is true that cinematic works are, inherently, cultural products with a significant symbolic significance, it is also undeniable that they are produced and circulate via a market system that, since its origins, has always been international (Jäckel 2003, 1).

Although there is no clear opposition between the two terms, the distinction between the *value* of a film and its *price* from the standpoint of the private initiative that produces it, is not exempt from controversy. The variety and conflict of criteria used to assess the value of film is oftentimes overshadowed by reference to the *profit* it produces. That profit can, of course, belong to the public (e.g. the pleasure of enjoyment, the interpellation of the spectator and their sensibilities, the patrimonial dimension of the image) or to the private sector (i.e. the profit made at the box-office from tickets sold and copyrights, capital that is used to cover the expenses of the investment made). Given such apparently irreconcilable facets of profit, it is not surprising that measuring the success of a group of films made in a specific country is particularly challenging.

³⁶ It is important to acknowledge that this statement was uttered in the context of the reception of César Monteiro’s *Branca de Novo* at a time when the director was under scrutiny from the press. When questioned about the legitimacy to push the boundaries of authorial dare, he bursted and stood his ground, delivering one more of his controversial *boutades*.

The long tradition of state support existing in European countries (as well as in EU policies), is a sign that cinema is deemed too important from a social perspective to be left at the mercy of market forces (Jäckel 2003, 3). Indeed, the coexistence between cinematic culture and the market is somewhat paradoxical. This issue, which is clearly a matter of contention in Portuguese legislation concerning cinema, has been studied by Paulo Leite. To paraphrase Leite, the argument for some is that the market is noxious for the liberty of creative expression, and therefore it is not desirable to be within it; on the other hand, there are those who argue that the market is an essential part of creative industries and thus that without it they would not exist or possess the dynamism they currently possess (Leite 2013, 480-481).

With regard to the measuring of the success of a film (and, more broadly, of a national cinema), Anne Jäckel proposes the analysis and accounting of four indicators: number of prints (which, to a certain extent, used to represent the same as the reach of distribution); budget/revenue ratio (i.e. economic profit); total number of spectators; and last but not least, prizes and awards (Jäckel 2003, 120-121). This approach represents a shift from the discussion of the aesthetic or technical success of a given film, and favours instead a focus on its socio-economic context and reception. When considering the test-case of Portuguese cinema, João Maria Mendes seems to be in line with Jäckel's axes as described above. For him, a 'failed' film is one that does not manage to attain visibility or notoriety in the A-list festival system, nor from the critic (even from the philo-Portuguese faction) that accompanies it, nor manages to obtain considerable box-office revenues, nor expression in the home cinema market, DVD, and television. (Mendes 2013, 105).

The question initially posed does not have a straightforward answer and could in itself motivate a spurt of philosophy or social sciences theses – especially when the literature in those areas about culture, class, and economics is prolific. Cinema can be regarded as an investment³⁷ rather than an expenditure. From a historiographic standpoint, it could even be said of a given sub-set of films (such as those belonging to Portuguese author cinema) that they were not designed to generate economic profit. Yet, the fact that something was not designed to be profitable does not necessarily mean that it will not be – as happens with practically

³⁷ In every sense of the word indeed. For instance: an investment in the spectator's aesthetic experience and cultural life; an investment in a product to generate revenue; an investment in a much broader economical machine, fuelled by areas such as education, tourism, foreign affairs, and jobs (Fino 2013, 413-414).

everything on the market, sometimes expectations are not met, and sometimes they are even exceeded. Oftentimes, marginal works of artists become mainstream, through a process of cultural commodification (Jameson 1992, 4). Even if it is the case that films were not made to be profitable, analyses concerning their performance and context can still be carried out. Hence, it seems reasonable to consider as valid the arguments presented by Jäckel and Mendes and thus accept that commercial performance can effectively be assessed through quantification and via the analysis of several concrete elements. In addition to the evaluation criteria already proposed, others, concerning the development of economic activity, can be taken into account when measuring success or failure – labour conditions, technological resources, and modes of production will also be considered in this thesis.

1.2 – The Portuguese case

This chapter will address the research problem that underlies this project and serves as a *leitmotif* of the present thesis: the problems surrounding the commercial performance – i.e. success or lack thereof – of Portuguese cinema. Thus, it is imperative to produce a study of the key features underpinning the economics of Portuguese cinema in order to clarify its commercial relevance and cultural presence. This chapter will serve the purpose of identifying the difficulties and challenges Portuguese cinema has faced, and therefore test the fundamental hypothesis of this thesis.

Although many aspects and facets of this problem and its context(s) will be tackled in the body of the thesis, it is nevertheless crucial at this initial point to present illustrative evidential markers of a statistical nature. In order to assess and define the level of commercial success of Portuguese cinema, the ensuing text presents an account of the various ways in which the ‘absence’ of Portuguese cinema has been evident. For this reason, this chapter focusses on providing some context to this ‘absence’.

Before continuing with the analysis of some facts and figures, two aspects should be stressed. First, that ‘success’ or ‘unsuccess’ are, in this thesis, two concepts completely detached from their qualitative connotations. They are complex terms in the sense that they are related to much broader issues than just the results of Portuguese cinema at the box office. Hence, they do not express by any measure a

statement on the putative artistic quality or the level of technical achievement of Portuguese films.

It does not fall within the scope of this work to produce a 'balance-sheet' of the symbolic importance of certain films or directors – a task usually carried out by critics, and sometimes appropriated by academia. Instead, it seems more fruitful for this thesis to provide an account of the reception of Portuguese cinema. This is to say that what is ultimately proposed is not to judge Portuguese cinema, but rather to draw conclusions from the way it has been judged by audiences, critics, and markets alike. Cultural value is not measurable in an empiric or quantifiable sense since it is dependent on evaluations based on oscillating systems of criteria. That is why the ontologies of Portuguese cinema and its aesthetic currents are of more interest to the present case than the elaboration of any considerations about their quality. The decision to not engage in formal analysis is intentional and occurs naturally from the main premise of this work. Taking much more into consideration than just quantifiable criteria, this thesis wants to distance itself from a paradigm dominated by filmic discussion and intends to follow a different path, focused on modes of production and economic history, to provide a depiction of the state of affairs of Portuguese cinema; therein lies much of the originality of this thesis.

The second point that ought to be underlined from the start is that Portugal, alongside many other countries around the world, has a minor cinematography – a situation caused by the overwhelming presence of Hollywood cinema since the first quarter of the twentieth century and the fact that Portugal has not been regarded as a major international player or a commercial powerhouse in the world of film. Though Portuguese cinema is not, perhaps, minor in terms of quality, for that is, again, a subjective statement, it appears to be minor when judged according to quantitative factors, such as: volume of production, state of development of the infrastructures, services dedicated to cinema and the audiovisual, and the amount of money available to invest in film (whether coming from the state, Brussels, or from the pockets of private entrepreneurs). Moreover, as Chapter II will make clear, Portugal has possessed, since the 1960s, a strand of cinema that abides by strict precepts of post-war visions on the figure of the author and the claim of cinema as art. As Steve Neale notes, 'Art cinema is a niche within the international film market' (Neale 2002, 118). Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, it is important to regard Portuguese cinema from a realistic perspective, that is, based on the perception that Portuguese

cinema is not as relevant in the international context as cinemas with longer and more established traditions, such as the ground-breaking French, Italian or American art cinemas.

Despite being the elephant in the room, curiously enough, as of yet, the reasons that have determined the commercial performance and cultural reach of Portuguese cinema remain quite unexplored. Being a delicate and inconvenient subject, until very recently, this topic has always been treated with extreme care and only addressed directly on rare occasions. Even though problems concerning circulation, finance, and lack of spectators are old and persistent, they have been treated almost as if they were social taboos. As mentioned, the majority of the discussions on the problems faced by Portuguese cinema revolved mostly around complaints about the shortage of money and the absence of more protective policies. These complaints were mainly uttered by insiders of the milieu who dominated the space of public sphere for many decades. There has been a lack of distanced analyses that would contemplate the broader picture and focus on the spectator's point of view as much as on the filmmakers' perspective. The importance of drawing attention to this gap between spectator and filmmaker and the need to investigate why it has occurred will become clearer as this thesis develops.

The predominance of a discourse that emphasises a narrative of success and the consequent victimisation of Portuguese cinema (often underpinned by the subjective discussion of its aesthetics) should be further stressed. This version of events, which is the strong, apparently coherent and prevalent view, is the antithesis of another, less explored view of Portuguese cinema predicated on the practical and commercial side of the question. To some extent, these two levels of discussion do not even seem compatible in nature: what is lacking in one (the assumption that Portuguese cinema must change in order to break the vicious cycle of economic failure) is seen as excessive in the other (a certain disregard for artistic identity and value) and *vice versa*. Although I am aware of the incompatibility between the two camps and have attempted to bring about a dialogue between them, it is sensible to assume that the predominant vision may find itself somewhat at odds with the premise of this work. As was stated, this is due to the fact that Portuguese cinema is not seen here through the lens of its putative aesthetic successes, but rather through the facts relating to its market circumstance. The following episode illustrates a case

where the friction between the two camps described in this paragraph achieved an extreme point.

In May 2012, just three months after Miguel Gomes and João Salaviza had won three high-profile awards at the Berlin Festival (an unprecedented situation for Portuguese cinema and a turning point in its history), the journalist João Pereira Coutinho, known for being a right wing liberal, questioned the impact of such prizes on the careers of Portuguese filmmakers and ergo on the national cinematography as a whole. In his article entitled *Geniuses* the columnist expressed with a hint of stingy irony his perplexity over the imperceptible impact of the prizes on international investment and the incapacity of Portuguese filmmakers and producers to attract foreign and/or private investment. In the words of the author, after the awards ‘os nossos génios lá voltam para a pátria, de chapéu na mão, em busca do dinheiro público. Triste sina. E contraditória também [...]’ [our geniuses come back to the country, hat in hand, looking for public money. Sad fate. And a contradictory one too [...]] (Coutinho 2012a). Coutinho went as far as to criticize what he believed to be the ‘descolada vaidade com que são usados [os prémios] para chantagear a caridade do Estado’ [misplaced vanity with which they (the awards) are used to blackmail the charity of the state.] (Coutinho 2012a).

A response to this controversial article was not long in coming and it appeared in the voice of João Salaviza, the wunderkind who had won the Palme d’Or at the age of 26 with his short film *Arena*. The filmmaker wrote an open letter (which gained particular notoriety through the news website of Bloco de Esquerda, a Portuguese left wing party) attacking an economic vision of art, as well as every type of cinema that lacks cultural ambitions. Furthermore, Salaviza heightened the emotional and intellectual value of cinema while also highlighting the fact that the award-winning films *Rafa* (Salaviza) and *Tabu* (Gomes) were funded primarily by international funds and that Portuguese money covered just a small portion of the overall budget. Salaviza ended his letter with the following words:

o cinema português nunca recebeu dinheiro do orçamento de Estado, [mas] apenas de uma taxa de 4% sobre a publicidade, portanto se existe sector em Portugal que não beneficia de subsídios e apoios estatais esse sector é exactamente o do Cinema. Em segundo lugar, porque é precisamente o oposto da caridade aquilo que se pretende: um país onde exista o sentido de dever, por parte do Estado, de estabelecer condições para que os seus artistas criem em Liberdade. [Portuguese cinema never received money from the government’s budget, but only from a 4% tax on

advertising, and therefore if there is a sector in Portugal that does not benefit from subsidies that sector is precisely Cinema itself. Secondly, it is precisely the opposite of charity that is intended here: a country where the state has the sense of duty to establish the necessary conditions for its artists to create in Freedom.] (Salaviza 2012)

At the closing of this hostile exchange of ideas Coutinho wrote another article a few days later in the same newspaper (*Correio da Manhã*), justifying his stance and reiterating his position:

A consagração internacional do cinema luso devia ter como consequência a autonomização do seu financiamento face ao Estado. Lamentavelmente, isso não acontece: os prémios, quando muito, servem para exigir mais dinheiro aos portugueses – sob a forma de fundos públicos, sim; ou, então, pela continuação do saque de 4% sob a publicidade – uma maquia que, pelos vistos, Salaviza acredita que paira no ar, sem dono; e que lhe pertence por direito. Essa ilusão é própria de quem considera a economia um assunto reles, sem a grandeza da ‘Cultura’. [The international acclaim of Portuguese cinema should bring the autonomisation of its funding from the State. Regrettably, this does not happen: the prizes, if they even do this, are used to demand more money from the Portuguese – in the form of public subsidies, yes; or, alternatively, by the continuation of the act of stealing of 4% from advertising revenues – an amount that, apparently, Salaviza believes to hover in the air, ownerless; and that he thinks rightfully belongs to him. This illusion is typical of someone who considers economics a paltry subject, without the grandiosity of ‘culture’.] (Coutinho 2012b)

This is not simply a clear example of the latent tension between the two sides of the debate; it is more a question here of the fact that none of those concerned is completely right or wrong. On the one hand, Coutinho omits the fact that the number of co-productions and international partnerships has increased, thus allowing the making of more films. Although this is very far from solving Portuguese cinema’s problems and the number is still rather low, European funds and the support from broadcasting companies have changed the face of the cinematic market in Portugal since the early 1990s. On the other hand, Salaviza’s assertion that Portuguese cinema is not supported by the state is not accurate given that films can benefit from public funds more or less directly, depending on which channel the money comes from – not to mention the fact that the cinematic activity as a whole benefits from state funded investments. Firstly, Salaviza’s argument that the 4% tax on advertising revenues – something that does not concern the general public – is

the ICA's³⁸ only source of income is inconsistent. Law n° 95/2007, from 29 March 2007, founded the Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual (ICA) and clearly stipulated in Article 10 that this institution is primarily supported by endowments coming from the government. Secondly, the existence of a mandatory contribution for the audiovisual sector³⁹ means that it is also likely that Portuguese production will profit from public funds indirectly: RTP's (Portuguese National Television) participation can take the form of co-production and/or broadcasting rights (Leite 2013, 479).

The point to be underlined in all of this is that, ultimately, regardless of their ideological position, all sides agree that Portuguese cinema, in many respects, is not in good health. The blame for this has been apportioned to many different things, ranging from lack of funding, to distribution, to the type of film made, but the conclusion has been unanimous. Many may consider that there have been substantial developments (especially in the last five years) or that some directors have occasionally achieved much (either aesthetically or commercially) with very little, but there is a consensus that 'something is rotten to the core'.

1.3 – Diagnosis: different types of 'unsuccess'

One of the first persons to overtly highlight the 'difficult' visibility of Portuguese cinema and systematise its various deficiencies was, as mentioned above, Luis Nogueira. In his article, believing that the poor results of Portuguese cinema should no longer be kept quiet, Nogueira listed a number of facts that led to the logical conclusion that Portuguese cinema has been unsuccessful, despite the continuous attempts to remedy the situation (Nogueira 2009, 5). Nogueira did not dwell on the reasons behind this diagnosis – and for that reason it is somewhat superficial – but raised many important questions. One of the aims of this thesis, thus, is critically assess his premises, pick up where he left off, provide more information, and delineate more clearly the complexity of this situation.

According to Nogueira, Portuguese cinema suffers from three types of unsuccess that, altogether, generate a picture bigger than the sum of the parts: (1) the lack of artistic prestige; (2) a difficult relationship with the audiences; (3) and problems of visibility in general. Paulo Filipe Monteiro is another who has also

³⁸ ICA is the main entity responsible for the attribution of funds to film production in Portugal.

³⁹ This tax, an addition to the electricity bill, is enshrined in law n° 230/2007 from 14 July 2007, and applies to all households or companies that consume more than 400kw per year.

acknowledged that the progressive deficit of legitimisation and the difficult relationship with the public constitute the two main ‘Achilles heels’ of Portuguese cinema's milieu (Monteiro 2001, 335). More than merely being identified, these adversities need to be fully understood. They seem in fact to be better problematised through an analytical process that takes into account the pressing and long-lasting problems with distribution, as well as a relational perspective that regards Portugal as the subaltern opposite of a hegemonic centre from which the aesthetic discourses emanate. The above-mentioned criteria for the measuring of a film's success set by Jäckel and Mendes, can be intertwined with Nogueira's observations. Brought together, these ‘symptoms’ will be central to the ensuing scrutiny of the unsuccess of Portuguese cinema.

1.4 – A critical analysis of the available statistics and numbers

Before proceeding with the exposition of the data, it is important to critically assess their legitimacy and consistency. Statistics must be approached with a certain care and used as judiciously as possible – especially with regard to numbers of spectators. The following text relies heavily on numbers to explain the historical circumstance of Portuguese cinema – as well as the broader context of consumption of cinema in the country for comparative purposes. Thus, such a responsibility necessitates a prior clarification concerning all the problems this research encountered when dealing with cultural statistics regarding the Portuguese test-case.⁴⁰

Statistics on the number of viewers of Portuguese films that were commercially released during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s do exist, but cannot be cross-checked, and the ICA, as simply the keeper of the records, does not assume direct responsibility for them. The same happens with the Instituto Nacional de Estatística [National Institute for Statistics] (INE). Until 2003 the distributors provided the central organisation in charge of supervising the cinematographic activity with the number of admissions. The figures were not communicated directly by the exhibitors,⁴¹ which means that their accuracy might be compromised.

⁴⁰ What will be described consists of a problem of its own, probably beyond remedy, which shows the chaotic organisation of data. In a way, this situation seems to double the instability and tensions that were going on have been permeating the cinema milieu itself.

⁴¹ Unlike the past two decades, especially after the multiplex phenomenon, in which the exhibitors and distributors are part of the same big company, in earliest times the majority of film theatres used to belong to small, independent entrepreneurs (Peixoto 2012, 57).

Previous studies have referred to the numbers and some of these studies acknowledge their limitations either because of incompleteness or due to the questionable organisation of the statistics. António Barreto, a sociologist and pioneer in the gathering and study of the statistics from contemporary Portugal, for example, has alluded to the poor quality and uncertainty of the statistics concerning this sector. (Barreto 1996, 51) Five years later, in 2000, the same author, when writing on the cultural habits of the Portuguese warned that ‘Este capítulo é, do ponto de vista da qualidade e do rigor da informação estatística, um dos mais deficientes. As séries são muito incompletas e verificou-se durante estas décadas uma quase permanente oscilação de critérios e de definições [...] nem todos os espetáculos de cinema estão recenseados’ [This chapter is, with regard to the quality and rigour of the statistical information, one of the most deficient. The series are very incomplete and a permanent oscillation of criteria and definitions could be verified during these decades [...] not all cinema screenings are accounted for] (Barreto 2000, 53). Eduarda Dionísio, when producing her study on the state of Portuguese culture (1974-1994) could not have been more direct: ‘Os números que se seguem estão obviamente errados (fonte: INE). São aqueles de que dispomos’ [The following numbers are obviously wrong (source: INE). They are the [only] ones we have] (Dionísio, 1993: 479). In some cases, this research has even noted a mysterious, slight disparity in the figures presented⁴² by different authors quoting the same source. Yet, regardless of oscillations, the numbers tell the same story. Therefore, it seems possible to proceed along the same line as our above-mentioned predecessors, that is, treating these figures with a large caveat.

By way of example, some obscure lacunae and the existence of a considerable amount of round numbers between 1976 and 2003 (they cease from the moment ICA starts to certify the process) are too suspicious to be ignored (see Appendix 2). Effectively, the figures can be used as an instrument of power if the entity that releases them is not neutral (as is the case of the distributors), especially in the context of a country with tight legislation over cinematographic activity. The conclusion of this warning is that the information concerned may not provide the

⁴² For instance, José Manuel Castello Lopes, owner of the Castello-Lopes distribution company refers to 42 million spectators in 1976 and 11 million in 1990 (Lopes 1992, 31). The first figure is in line with the Pordata database (INE is mentioned as the source) but it does not concur with António Barreto’s statistics (Barreto 2000, 192) – the author also quotes the INE. In its turn, Barreto’s statistics and Pordata agree on the figure of 9.593 million spectators in the year of 1990, which is not the same as 11 million spectators as presented by Castello-Lopes.

assurance needed to establish an absolute truth, but only an approximate overview of the real situation during those decades. As Barreto mentioned, the lack of specification at times combined with changes in categories also poses problems. That granted, despite their limitations the numbers available are a reference nevertheless and can be found in Appendix 1. Bearing this in mind, priority will be given to the figures that seem to be the most consistent and appear to be the most valuable to the question debated.

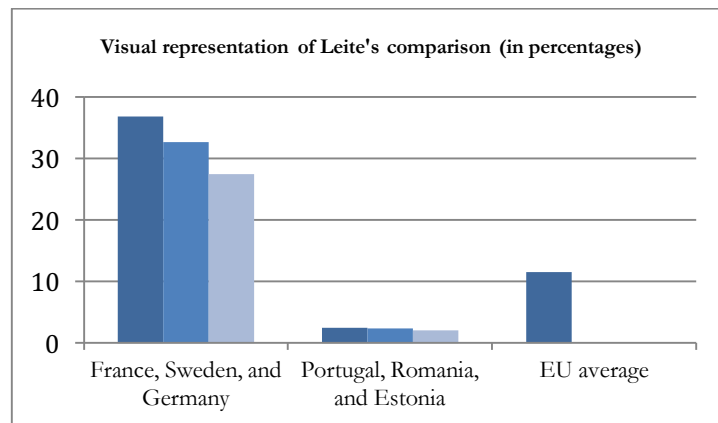
1.4.1 – The lack of spectators

The persistent low scores of spectators throughout the years is a recurrent feature of the financial performance of Portuguese cinema. This item speaks volumes not only about the degree of its economic competitiveness, but also about a more general set of problems. The number of films distributed and revenues are two indicators that will also be taken into account even though they will be tackled separately in the following subchapters which tackle distribution and financial viability. In a second stage an overview of the correlation between the number of sessions and admissions will be carried out.

The next five quotes are paradigmatic since they correspond to different time spans and entities, and help to set the scene for the present discussion. According to the comparison devised by Paulo Leite, quoting official data from the ICA:

Portugal é um dos países da União Europeia que menos consomem o cinema nacional. Na Europa dos 15, a nossa quota de mercado de cinema nacional é a segunda mais baixa (apenas a Irlanda consome menos cinema nacional). Na Europa dos 27, a media é de cerca de 11,5%. No topo da lista estão países como a França (36,8%), a Suécia (32,7%) e a Alemanha (27,4%). Portugal ocupa do 28º lugar, com apenas 2,5% - menos de um quarto da média -, ligeiramente a frente da Roménia (2,3%) e da Estónia (2%). Esta péssima quota de mercado não tem variado muito ao longo dos anos: 2004 (1,3%), 2005 (3,2%), 2006 (2,7%), 2007 (2,8%), 2008 (2,5%), 2009 (2,5%) e 2010 (1,6%). [Portugal is one of the European Union countries that consume less national cinema. In the Europe of the 15 countries, our share of the national cinema in the market is the second lowest (only Ireland consumes less national cinema). In the Europe of the 27 countries, the average is 11.5%. At the top of the list are countries such as France (36.8%), Sweden (32.7%), and Germany (27.4%). Portugal occupies 28th place, with only 2.5% - less than a quarter of the average -, slightly ahead of Romania (2.3%) and Estonia (2%). This awful market

share has not varied much throughout the years: 2004 (1.3%), 2005 (3.2%), 2006 (2.7%), 2007 (2.8%), 2008 (2.5%), 2009 (2.5%) e 2010 (1.6%).] (Leite 2013, 478)



For his part, Luis Nogueira stresses that Portuguese cinema circulates and is exhibited less than desired, and he states that:

ao nível das audiências os factos apresentam-se bem mais objectivos e, em certa medida, sem defesa razoável. Chegados ao box-office, tudo tende a ser mensurável. E tudo aqui é medido por baixo: os valores das receitas de bilheteira, o número de obras produzidas, o total de espectadores, a média de espectadores, o retorno financeiro apresentam números baixíssimos' [at the level of the audiences the facts are objective and, to some extent, do not provide a reasonable defence. When it comes to the box office, everything tends to be measurable. And everything in this respect achieves low scores: the value of the ticket revenue, the number of works produced, the total number of spectators, the average number of spectators, and the profits present extremely low figures.] (Nogueira 2009, 5).

Indeed, a 1997 government report not only corroborates to some extent Leite's and Nogueira's assertions while also demonstrating that the situation was actually worse before 2004, but also reveals the actual situation of the cinema in Portugal until that time: 'Cinema and audiovisual sectors, are, in Portugal, underdeveloped when compared to other European partners, as they suffer significant constraints. Portugal has the smallest number of cinema screens and the lowest rate of spectators per capita in the European Union, as well as the lowest revenues of tickets selling for national films.' (Council of Europe 1997)⁴³ With regard

⁴³ Text originally available here: http://www.obs.coe.int/oea_publ/eurocine/00001524.html and now available here, after the archival of this website by the Council of Europe: <http://wayback.archive->

to the 1980s, and in line with institutional discourse is Eduarda Dionísio, one of the most radical spokeswomen of the era of post-revolutionary disillusionment, who argued that the second half (of the decade) would be marked by another sort of phenomenon: Portuguese films would have less spectators once again (85 per cent of the population had never watched a Portuguese film) (Dionísio 1993, 362). Even though Dionísio's percentage might not be precise, for she does not clarify the reasoning behind her calculations, Paulo Cunha's paper on the success of Portuguese films in the 60s reveals that this negative trend was already present throughout the phase of inception of Portuguese New Cinema, which is itself the aesthetic and ideological reference-point for the upcoming generations of filmmakers – it can be told from many declarations and statements from various members of the new cinema movement, namely those who work in the Cunha Telles productions, the lack of spectators was a disappointment and a surprise that contributed to the collapse of this first period of the new cinema (Cunha 2011, 83).

Ultimately, all these texts, with more or less detail, present a preoccupying and persistent picture of the commercial unsustainability of Portuguese film. As the chapter on the Portuguese cinema laws suggests (pages 204–235), this situation seems to be better explained by the adoption of policies based on a markedly protectionist model of support for national production (Santos 1998, 196). The continuous legislation helped to maintain minimal film production numbers, thus clarifying that Portuguese art-house cinema did in fact exist, but ultimately failed to improve the situation significantly beyond that. The following analysis of the figures will attempt to shed some light on the history of this unsuccess.

As suggested by more recent statistics from the Portuguese Ministry of Culture, from 2004 to 2009 (a relatively prosperous period), the yearly revenue of Portuguese films, in Portugal, in the second half of the past decade was around two million Euros (except in 2004, when it was only 901,712) (Neves and Santos 2011, 65), a rather modest figure for the film business. Comparatively, films from other European countries in Portugal grossed between 500,000 and a million Euros more, and American films, by far the most lucrative in almost any country, registered the lowest mark in 2008 when the profits totalled 38,417,175 Euros (Neves and Santos 2011, 65).

[it.org/4015/20131105183055/http://www.obs.coe.int/oea_publ/eurocine/00001524.html](http://www.obs.coe.int/oea_publ/eurocine/00001524.html) (Accessed on: 5/4/2013)

Going further back in time can help to contextualise this downward spiral in Portuguese cinema since it provides a broader basis for the understanding of this question. Paulo Filipe Monteiro shows that, between 1941 and 1951, the number of spectators of Portuguese cinema rose from 11,668 to 20,942, having reached the figure of 24,658 in 1961 (Monteiro 1995, 638). This attests to the tendency of a growing number of viewers just before the eruption of Portuguese New Cinema. However, as odd as it may seem, even taking into account the progressive increase in production costs, this did not prevent the bankruptcy, six years later, of two of the most important companies associated with Portuguese New Cinema. As Monteiro writes: 'Em 1967, sem público, falidas, nem a Cinedex nem as Produções Cunha Telles estão já activas' [In 1967, without an audience, broke, neither Cinedex nor Cunha Telles Productions are active any more] (Monteiro 2005, 670). To some extent, as this thesis will address later on in Chapter II (see pages 88-99), this fact does not bear out the widespread idea (as expressed in João Mário Grilo's opinion), that the Cinema Novo generation revitalised Portuguese cinema after the stagnation which occurred during the 1950s, following the decay of the popular and formulaic musical comedies (Grilo 2006, 17-19).

The new directors may have propelled a refreshing shift in the aesthetic paradigm, but that did not translate into commercial profits, despite the Portuguese Cinemateque having opened in 1958, Portugal having benefited from 150 new cinema screens built between 1927 and 1959 (Peixoto 2012, 14), and the 1960s being still infused with the atmosphere of the heyday of the 'movimento cineclubista', the first, and until that time the most remarkable independently organised manifestation of cinephilia that occurred in Portugal (Costa 1991, 113-118). Thus, not even during the time when the predisposition of audiences to watch Portuguese films and follow new, European cinematographic trends reached its peak before the television era, did the Portuguese New Cinema break through and flourish in the national cinema market.

It should be underlined, however, that the conditions in general were never that favourable; the Portuguese had, after all, never been avid cinemagoers. In 1996 António Barreto stated that 'Nos anos 60, cada indivíduo frequentava o cinema, em média, duas a três vezes por ano. Hoje cada um vai menos de uma vez por ano.' [In the 60s, each individual went to the cinema, in average, two to three times a year. Nowadays each person goes less than once a year.] (Barreto 1996, 51). Audience

admissions reached their high point from 1974 to 1977, a period immediately after the revolution, when state censorship was lifted and the demographics of the mainland changed due to the arrival of the *retornados* from Africa. During that period the distributors released into the market on a massive scale films that had been banned, and which audiences were eager to watch (Dionísio 1993, 172). After this period there was a very clear break in the number of spectators (Barreto 2000, 192). Data provided by the Pordata shows that a crisis occurred in the 80s and the early 90s until 1994 when the admissions scored just 7,133,000. This downward trend would be reversed and mitigated during the period from 1995 to 2002 when a slow, continued growth took place, only to drop off again until 2012.⁴⁴

Concerning the general decrease in the total of screenings and admissions during the second half of the 1980s, the Observatory for Cultural Activities mentions that there was an influx of -24% of films premiered between 1985 and 1995 (Santos 1998, 211). The increasing popularity of other media such as television and video, as well as the abandonment of the city centres can also explain this depression in the number of screenings. However, as the chapter on Cinema laws will investigate, in great part due to new policies regarding co-productions and funds from European programmes, as well as the premiere of previously unreleased films, Portuguese cinema follows tendency of continuous growth, representing 6% of the premières. The evolution of the number of premieres of Portuguese films goes in the opposite direction of that pertaining to the total of premieres. (Santos 1998, 211)

When it comes to decades before the new millenium, there are, unfortunately, no official figures available breaking down the total number of admissions to all Portuguese films per year. There is also the problem that for many years short films were not accounted for, or there was confusion concerning the type of film (documentary, fiction, feature film, animation short or other) in statistics. The way found to circumvent this situation in this thesis is to add up the number of admissions accounted for each feature film commercially released (see Appendix 2), and the results can be seen on graph 4 (which is a visual representation of the numbers in Appendix 1).

Another, more straightforward way of assessing the commercial performance of Portuguese cinema is to focus on the overall number of screenings. The figures in graph 1 below reveal that, in 1979, there were 39,792 screenings of national films in

⁴⁴ <http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Cinema+recintos++ecras++sessoes+e+espectadores-184>.

Portugal. However, ten years later, in 1989, during the 1980s cinema crisis, there were only 4,944, and, in 1993, the numbers dropped to an historical low of only 1,496 screenings of Portuguese films in the whole of Portugal – about four per day. The calculation of the ratio between the number of admissions and the number of screenings reveals that, in 1979 there were more sessions than actual viewers (0.9 admissions per session), while there were 5.6 spectators of Portuguese cinema per screening in 1989, and 77.6 in 1993 – the year that had fewer screenings. This means that, although the total number of admissions to Portuguese films had been increasing over the years, the decrease in screenings seems logical for economic reasons. In other words, according to these numbers, the tendency of concentration of more admissions per session indicates that the shortage of sessions did not directly prevent audiences from actually going to picture-theatres to watch Portuguese cinema.

The three graphs show that in the ensuing years cinema gained a new vitality, and the decade of the 2000s, with the exception of the year 2008, experienced a progressive increase in the number of screenings of Portuguese cinema. Yet, comparatively, the presence of national cinema in Portugal was still very small, as already mentioned. At the other extreme, according to information made available by the Pordata database, American cinema clearly dominated the market during this period, with a vast offer of films and the number of screenings always in the hundreds of thousands.⁴⁵ Indeed, as the second graph below shows, it seems that the real story of success belongs to American cinema, for it rose from 102,089 screenings in 1979 to 422,448 in 2012,⁴⁶ representing an almost 400 per cent increase. Other cinemas, such as the Spanish and the British, have had a diminishing impact in Portugal since the end of the 1970s, until they reach the point of being almost residual in statistical terms.⁴⁷ According to graph 1 and the Pordata figures, Spanish cinema, for instance, has less than a thousand screenings over a period of many years.

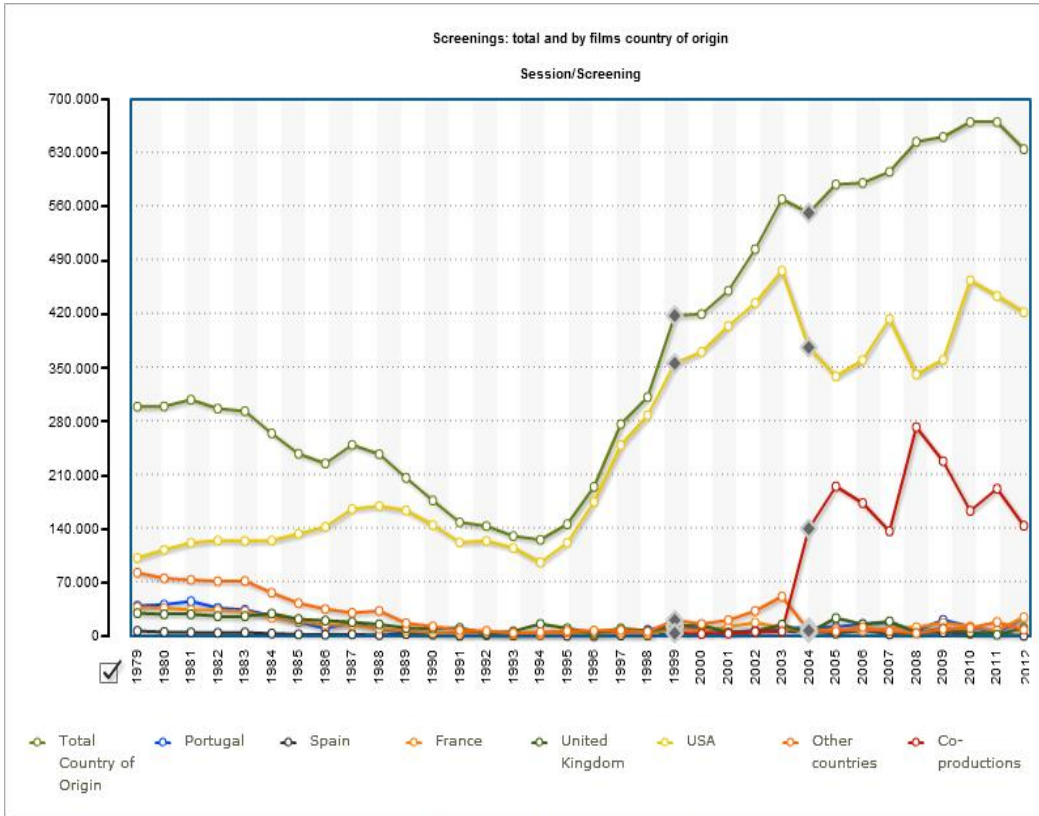
⁴⁵<http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Cinema+exibicoes+sessoes+total+e+por+pais+de+origem+dos+filmes-321>.

⁴⁶<http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Cinema+exibicoes+sessoes+total+e+por+pais+de+origem+dos+filmes-321>.

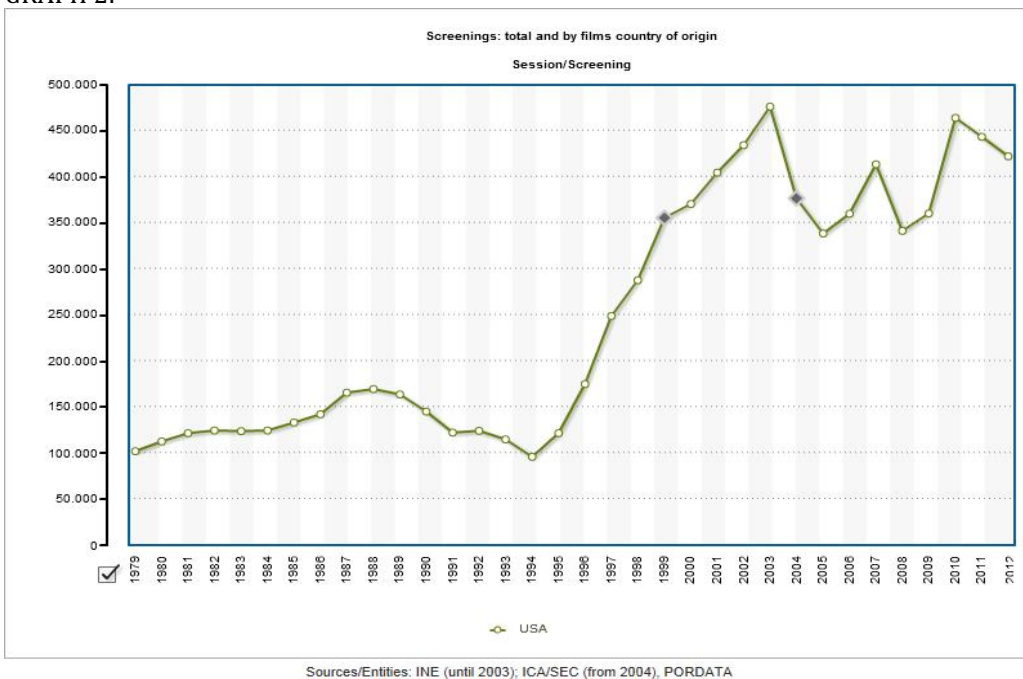
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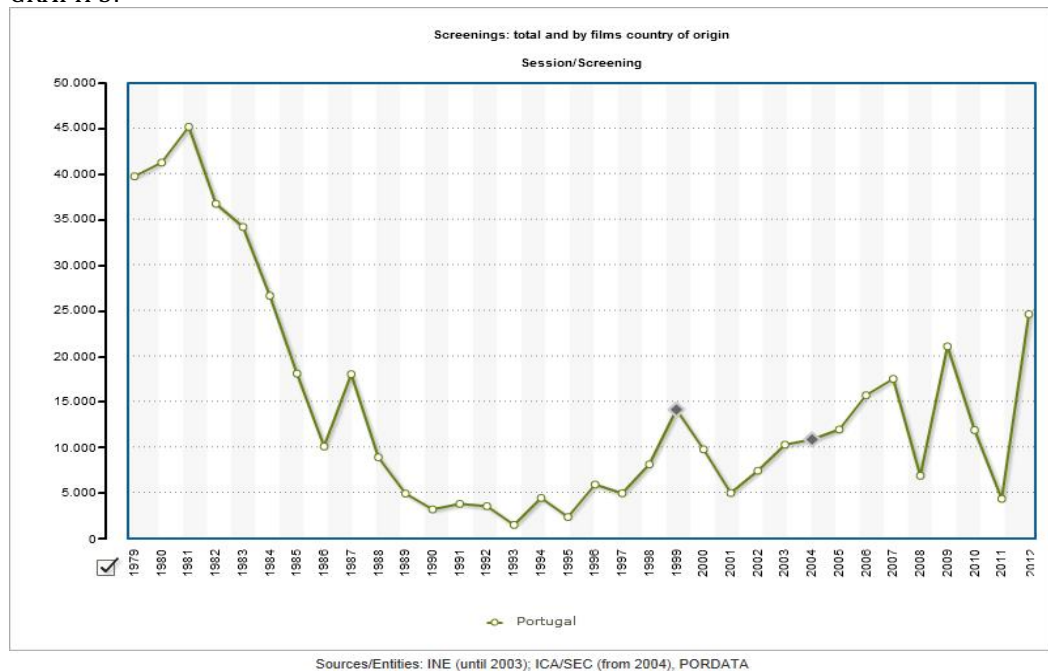
GRAPH 1:



GRAPH 2:



GRAPH 3:



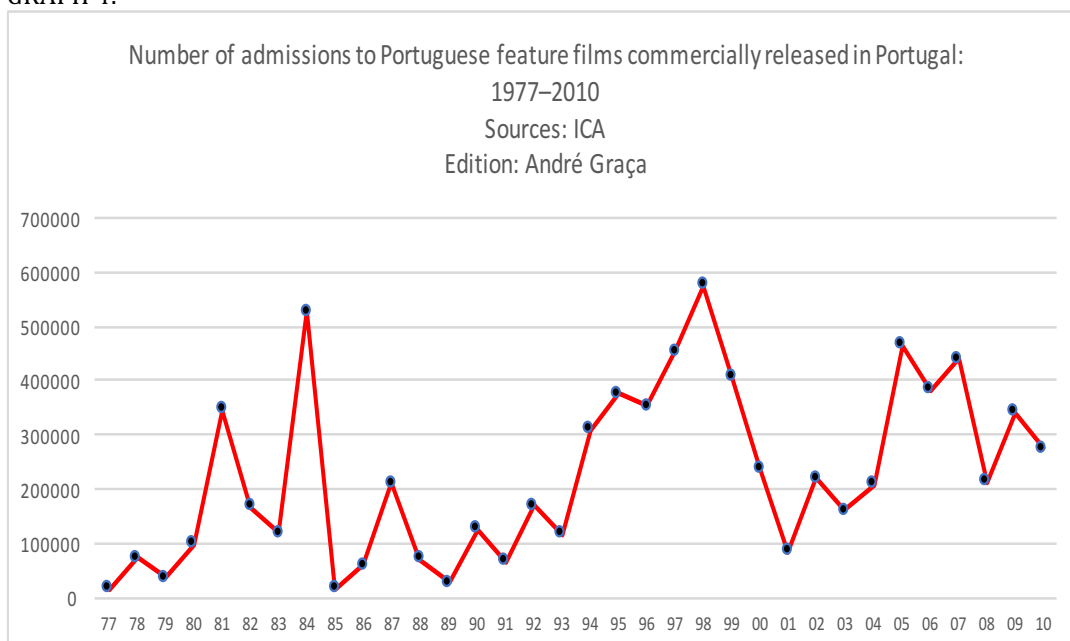
While the first graph shows an imbalance of the market share throughout this period, the last two portray in detail a very clear *décalage*. Portuguese and American cinema cannot even be calculated separately according to the same scale (50,000 for Portuguese and 500,000 for American). When put in perspective, the result is clear. Furthermore, as graph 3 shows, Portuguese cinema suffers a major drop in the early 80s. Indeed, the number of screenings will never be the same as 1980, and signs of a slight, yet unstable recovery occurs only from 1999 onwards. However, this is practically insignificant when compared to the massive rise in American cinema. The growth that starts in 1993 and applies to both cinemas is not exponential. In practical terms, given that the number of screenings is not a direct consequence of cinema goers' decision-making process – whereas the choice of attendance might be – this analysis suggests that there was not a problem concerning a lack of infrastructure, i.e. this has been a question of distribution and programming options which clearly favour American cinema.

Based on the above, it is legitimate to conjecture that the growth in the number of screenings of American films may have been achieved at the expense of Portuguese and other national cinemas that were not marketed and/or had troubles in finding a space to be screened, in a market flooded by American productions. João

Mário Grilo sums up the situation well: ‘As condições não são só adversas para o cinema português, mas para todas as cinematografias, exceptuando a Americana; 30 anos depois, é uma nova censura que se perfila no negro horizonte do espectáculo cinematográfico em Portugal.’ [The conditions are adverse not only to Portuguese cinema, but also to all other cinematographies with the exception of the American; 30 years later, it is a new censorship that is taking shape on the dark horizon of the cinematographic showbiz in Portugal.] (Grilo 1992, 164).

It is difficult to assess clearly whether Portuguese films are, comparatively speaking and on average, seen by more or fewer spectators throughout the years. While it is undeniable that, by looking at the numbers in Appendix 1, and oscillations apart, there are periods of a considerable increase in the total number of admissions, it is also true that the number of films – as well as their diversity⁴⁸ - has increased.⁴⁹ The proportion could be easily calculated by dividing the admissions by the number of films injected into the market, if it were not for the presence of a bias. Paying close attention to Appendix 2 and Graph 4, one can find a relatively stable pattern: in some years, namely from the mid-90s onwards, we find just one film that can be considered a ‘big hit’, while in other years this situation does not occur.

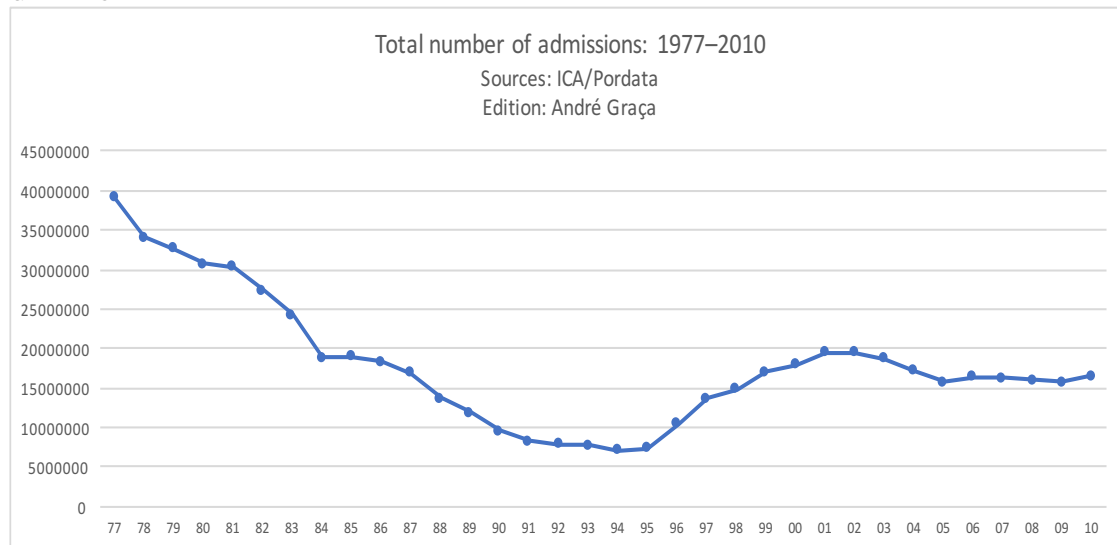
GRAPH 4:



⁴⁸ For extensive information concerning the consolidation of the practises of the documentary, short and animated films in Portugal, as well as the description of the situation of Portuguese cinema since the year 2000, please see: Ribas 2013.

⁴⁹ Number of Portuguese films premiered graphs 6 and 7.

GRAPH 5:



Usually this type of successful film has more viewers than the sum of all other films released in that year, therefore inflating the total number of admissions – and sometimes the figures of two outstanding films can produce the same effect, as occurred in 1996 (when *Mortinho Por Chegar a Casa* and *Adeus, Pai*, had about 100,000 viewers each). When this does not happen, the numbers dramatically decrease, as is the case for 2001 and 2003, when 12 and 17 films respectively were premiered, and the admissions did not exceed 85,542 for 2001 and 159,875 for 2003.

Due to this sort of discrepancy, this thesis can, once more, only ascertain an approximate idea of how many spectators a Portuguese film attracted on average, and, with this, attempt to establish a correlation between the number of admissions and the number of films. When comparing distant years that have similar characteristics, i.e. based on the the presence or absence of bias, the overriding conclusion is that in more recent times a film was in average watched by fewer people than before.⁵⁰ The years 1979 and 2001 had no big hit, and the average of admissions per film indicates that a film would typically have been watched in 1979 by 12,110 spectators while, in 2001, it would have only registered 7,128 admissions.

When comparing years that had a ‘big-hit’ film, the conclusion is not that different. In 1984 Antonio-Pedro Vasconcelos’ *O Lugar do Morto* achieved 271,845 admissions, while, in its turn, in 2005, Carlos Coelho da Silva’s adaptation of *Eça de*

⁵⁰ One should also bear in mind that a more recent film has, hypothetically, the chance of being less watched because of the decrease in the number of screenings.

Queirós' novel *O Crime do Padre Amaro* attracted 377,234 individuals to the theatres. Comparing the average of viewers for the two years,⁵¹ it can be verified that a film in 1984 would have more spectators (75,203) than in 2005 (36,680). When removing the bias from the final calculations, thus avoiding the dilution of the enormous and distorting attention that a single film received, a similar result is attained: an average of 42,429 viewers in 1984 as compared to 7,902 in 2005. To give another example: while, on the one hand, in 1981, 7 films were released (totalling 346,228 admissions, it was the year of *Kilas, o Mau da Fita* that had a box-office record of 121,269), on the other, the 15 films that premiered in 1999 amounted to 408,367 admissions, António-Pedro Vasconcelos' work *Jaime* having been responsible for 220,925 of them. All in all, 1981 had an average of 49,461 spectators per film, against 1999's figure of 27,224. When the bias is extracted from the figures, the results are: 37,493 (1981), and 13,388 (1999).

The figures contained in Appendices 1 and 2 and the graphs above, show that the majority of Portuguese films did not captivate many viewers (a good portion did not reach the five digit milestone) and have, on average, attracted progressively fewer spectators in more recent years. Although a plethora of reasons may explain this consistent phenomenon, this study would like to stress that the increasing number of films premiered seems to be the main reason behind the apparent decline, i.e. more films potentially bring more viewers, but also mean the possibility of dispersion and statistical dilution when considering the calculation of the average. On the other hand, with the advent of new technologies and significant alterations in consumer habits, it becomes gradually more difficult to calculate the real impact of Portuguese films and determine how many people actually watch them, since some viewers have migrated from the theatres to other viewing environments.⁵²

Indeed a few films are available in DVD format (especially musical comedies from the 1930s and 1940s, some films by the most recognised Portuguese

⁵¹ The difference of admissions between the two films even shows an increase of 45,385 for the year of 2005.

⁵² It should be mentioned that the downward curve seen on the total number of admissions graph is not exclusive to Portugal. Indeed, other European countries experienced a similar situation during that period (see Stafford 2007, 150-152; <http://www.launchingfilms.com/research-databank/>, for statistics concerning the UK; and <http://www.cnc.fr/web/en/sectoral-statistics>, for French cinema statistics). In the Portuguese case, this goes hand-on-hand with the increase of ownership of televisions and other audiovisual equipment (such as Betamax and VHS), as well as the progressive desertification of the centre of the cities where theatres were located (Santos 1998, 206-208; Barreto 1996, 52; Lopes 1992, 31-32). However, it is important to look beyond the 'usual suspects' (tv and video).

filmmakers or films that performed well at the box office, all which, in the end, account only for a small part of Portuguese cinema), a situation that facilitates informal screenings in classes, faculties or other events of the sort held in venues for which authorisation from a distributor is not sought. Furthermore, these films, when supported digitally, have permeated the Internet sharing systems sphere. In large part due to legal issues associated with this marginal practice, most download sites do not provide statistics (especially of the year 2010 and before), and it is difficult to ascertain with any certainty the number of viewers who access films in this way. Some Portuguese films can be watched in their entirety – although usually the quality is bad – following YouTube links, which provide the number of hits. However, due to the volatile nature of YouTube videos and their sharing systems (many links have been blocked and removed because they contravene copyright laws) to carry out an approximate estimate of the number of viewers of Portuguese cinema in alternative media is not possible. Yet the fact that the circulation and consumption of cinema has changed with Internet 2.0 must be acknowledged. The presence of Portuguese films on television is also a matter of interest for the present thesis (see below Chapters II and III).

Since this idea will be central in the following chapters, it is important to pose the question why it is that the decline in Portuguese films at the box office has coincided with the consolidation of an authorial cinema that, in any case, has survived precariously in a country progressively beginning to shift away from the paradigm of poverty that the Estado Novo regime had imposed. As it will be seen, this new era in the cultural history of Portugal favoured a different mainstream lifestyle, focused on consumerism, depolitisation, and artistic alienation.⁵³ It should also be noted that, in two rare but revealing moments, two of the main protagonists of the so-called Portuguese School reflected on the unsuccess of Portuguese cinema. In 1970, Fernando Lopes stated the following in *Jornal de Letras e Artes*:

Em termos práticos, se fizéssemos um balanço realista, evidentemente que falhámos em relação ao nosso contacto com vastas camadas de publico. [...] Tenho a impressão que cometemos alguns erros de avaliação. Assim, em primeiro lugar, parece-me que todos nós contávamos um pouco excessivamente com a existência de um público esclarecido, para utilizar um chavão da

⁵³ With regard to contemporary individualism and cultural transformations/commodification in general see Baudrillard 1998; Bauman 2000; Jameson 1991; and Lipovetsky 1983. On the Portuguese specific case: Estanque 2012; Gil 2004; Trindade 2016; and Dias 2016.

época, público que teria sido formado pelos cineclubes, público universitário, e outro, que de facto não apareceu para os nossos filmes. [In practical terms, if we take a realistic look, it is clear that we failed to reach vast types of audiences. [...] I get the impression that we made some errors in our assessment. Thus, firstly, it seems to me that all of us took for granted just a little too much that an enlightened public did exist, to use a buzzword, a public that would have been shaped by the cine-clubs, a university audience, etc..., that, effectively, did not show up to watch our films]. (Lopes 1970, 25)

Almost two decades later the director Alberto Seixas Santos was of the same opinion, believing that the Portuguese public did not care at all about Portuguese cinema because directors could be missing out on the topics that really interested the public (Strauss 1989, 28). Commenting on this matter, Paulo Monteiro suggested that the absence of audiences, if it was a consequence of the sort of cinema that was being made, was not a desired one (Monteiro 2001, 335).

Both the wide range of testimonies presented here and the analysis of the statistical data needed to corroborate them point to the same diagnosis: the poor economic competitiveness of Portuguese cinema. However, as this thesis will argue, this diagnosis is something that transcends to a large extent the films themselves; it is also a circumstance determined by socio-cultural issues that, indeed, deserve further investigation.

1.4.2 – International recognition

On a par with the issue of the spectators for national cinema in Portugal was the question concerning the artistic prestige and outlook of Portuguese cinema abroad. As this thesis will argue and explain in detail in Chapter III, a relative and questionable prestige managed to guarantee the presence of a handful of directors in international festivals and niche film circuits, but was not enough to propel the circulation of Portuguese cinema worldwide or increase the number of awards, therefore enhancing its artistic cache.

In early years, Portuguese cinema was absent from commercial, international circulation routes, and this despite all the efforts to get it in the limelight. But, from 2009-2010 onwards, a consistent reception and widespread acceptance of Portuguese cinema abroad has been evident. Perhaps this post-economic crisis era will be a new chapter in the internationalisation of Portuguese directors, and a departure from the gloom of earlier days. As Luís Nogueira has pointed out, it is not only that Portuguese

films were excluded the palmarès of international festivals, there was also a scarcity of information in specialised publications about Portuguese film directors:

Portugal é um dos poucos países da Europa Ocidental que nunca foi vencedor ou sequer nomeado para o Óscar de Melhor Filme Estrangeiro [...] Facto absolutamente extraordinário para uma cinematografia que tem feito do cinema de autor a sua doutrina estética [...] Em nenhum dos cinco maiores certames mundiais de celebração e reconhecimento da arte cinematográfica Portugal teve até hoje o nome inscrito. [Portugal is one of the few countries of Western Europe that never won, or even got a nomination, for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film [...] It is absolutely extraordinary for a cinematography that has made of auteur cinema its aesthetic doctrine that, in none of the five main global events of celebration and recognition of the cinematographic art, has Portugal had its name inscribed.] (Nogueira 2009, 3)

This situation is particularly problematic if one bears in mind the obsession shared by both artists and legislators in Portugal for recognition abroad, especially in film festivals; the idea was that this would influence public opinion and hopefully bring about more opportunities for external funding (Lopes 1985, 66). As Nogueira suggests, the ‘presença de filmes portugueses é praticamente clandestina’ [the presence of Portuguese films is practically clandestine] in the Internet Movie Database, as well as in lists of best films (Nogueira 2009, 4). This applies to both generalist (such as *1001 Films You Need to See Before You Die*) and speciality publications such as *Sight and Sound* or annual reviews in cultural sections of Portuguese newspapers (Nogueira 2009, 4). Does this mean that cinema suffers the same fate of absence from international visibility as other fields of Portuguese culture such as music, as António Pinho Vargas suggests (Vargas 2010, 239-248)?

A certain absence from the spotlight has had a real impact on Portuguese cinema in the international circuits, since artistic prestige and the possibility of distribution contracts, and thus some profit from box office takings, are usually linked (Wong 2011, 14-19). In a world governed by the concept of cultural value ‘fields are generally characterised by a polarisation between those who are endowed with honour within them and those who are not’ (Bennett et al. 2010, 12). Portuguese cinema appears to have been a loser in these honour stakes. But there is a silver lining to this story. Portuguese cinema has managed to maintain an international presence via the acclamation of a handful of directors, such as Manoel de Oliveira (the great exception), João César Monteiro, Pedro Costa, and more

recently, Miguel Gomes and João Salaviza, and this fact allows us to call into question the idea of a resounding, dogmatic ‘unsuccess’ on the part of Portuguese cinema. This complex issue will be analysed in Chapter III.

It is important to clarify at this point the decision to use the term ‘unsuccess’ instead of other similar (but not equivalent) terms such as failure, flop or unaccomplishment. Failure is, in fact, the closest term to describe this situation and will be used throughout the thesis when referring solely to cases where this word can be consciously used without putting the whole of Portuguese cinema at stake. However, the word failure fails to grasp the desired meaning of the set of problems here in question in that it presents itself to the reader as a final, affirmative statement of irreversible loss. Far from being an euphemism, unsuccess is preferable for it separates – while maintaining together – the word ‘success’ from the prefix ‘un’, which is crucial to describe the situation. The inclusion of the word ‘success’ leaves open to readers the possibility of considering it isolated, thus respecting all the eventual exceptions to the general scenario and reminding them that the dignity of Portuguese cinema and its history is not being judged. It is because ‘unsuccess’ is capable of not distorting the gravity of the problem while simultaneously conserving the positive facet of Portuguese cinema that it is preferred and shall be used in this thesis.

1.4.3 – Problems with distribution, ‘difficult visibility’, and access

As suggested above, the lack of sufficient visibility of Portuguese cinema and the disappointing viewer figures might, perhaps, be just a part of a broader problem, a consequence as well as a cause. Problems of access in general, especially with regard to distribution and circulation, are at the very root of the obstacles surrounding of Portuguese cinema, thus making this the third major axis of this thesis. In short, the double bind is the following: on the one hand the film market does not invest in a product that represents little cultural value; but on the other hand, the lack of investment produces absence due to the fact that there are costs associated with distribution and exhibition and whole economic dynamic surrounding those two components of cinema. This is a vicious cycle difficult to break.

Even though the branch of the international film business dealing with art cinemas is not traditionally regarded as being as money-driven as Hollywood, many

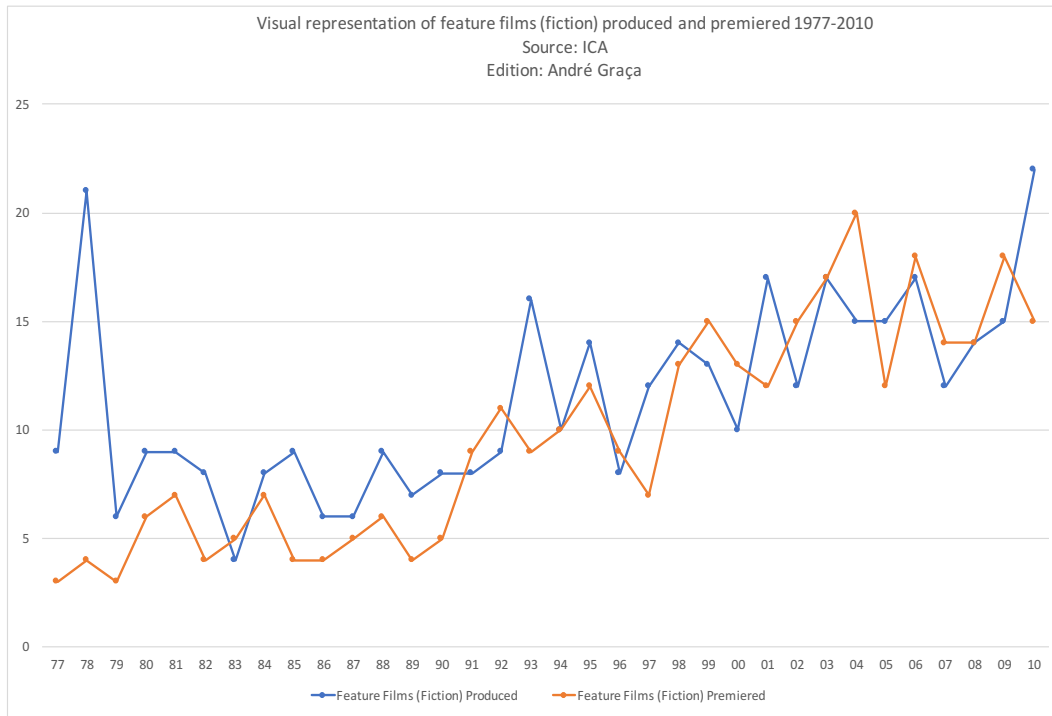
authors have pointed to the intrinsically commercial nature of cinema, and the numerous assimilations of experienced marketing strategies on the part of niche circuits that have been occurring over the years.⁵⁴ However, Portuguese cinema has not attracted significant interest from the film market to fully explore these options. Furthermore, there is also a chronic problem with the distribution of Portuguese cinema (although there are exceptions when it comes to co-productions), both domestically and abroad, that needs to be scrutinised in greater detail. With regard to the variation between the number of films produced and those actually released into the market, Eduarda Dionísio notes the following: ‘Em Março de 77, há 20 filmes por estrear e o IPC anuncia que os vai estrear todos ao mesmo tempo, em cinemas de Lisboa e do Porto. Em 1977, apenas se estrearão no circuito commercial dois filmes portugueses [...] em 4 anos rodaram-se 200 filmes, mas o ritmo de estreias é de 2 a 4 por ano.’ [In March of 77, there are 20 films to be premiered and the IPC announces that they all will be released at the same time, in theatres in Lisbon and Oporto. In 1977, only two Portuguese films will be released in the commercial circuit [...] in 4 years 200 films were produced,⁵⁵ but the rhythm of premieres is 2 or 4 per year.] (Dionísio 1993, 293). These testimonies, along with many others that corroborate them⁵⁶ and also attest to the gravity of this situation, not only demonstrate an underlying conflict between different actors and different powers, but also an incapacity to address this problem adequately. The following two graphs illustrate what is at stake here and provide some insight into the evolution of this situation during the last decades.

⁵⁴ See Kerrigan 2010, 35-40; Jäckel 2003, 27-30; Finney 2010, 79-80

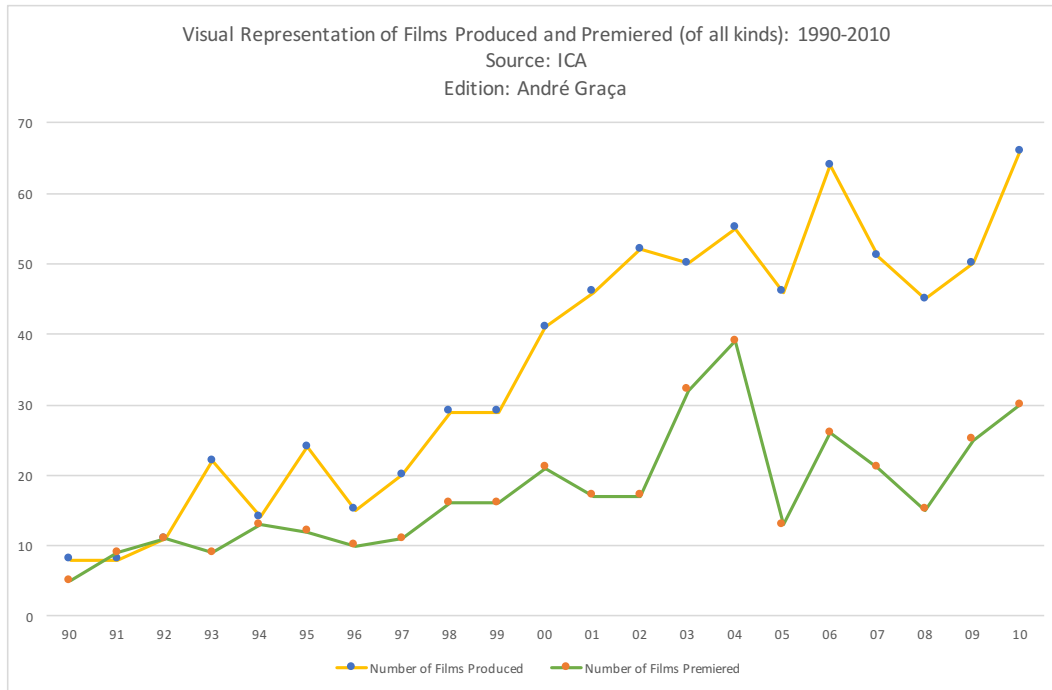
⁵⁵ This figure is an approximation (probably exaggerated) and includes all sorts of filmic materials, and not only feature films. According to Paulo Filipe Monteiro, between 1961 and 1990 a corpus of 226 feature-films of fiction was produced (Monteiro 1995, 754)

⁵⁶ See Grilo 2006, 27-29; Monteiro 2001, 334-337; Costa 1991, 177-178; and Santos 1998, 202.

GRAPH 6:



GRAPH 7:



Note: Only films that were in some way supported by the Portuguese Institute for Cinema (first IPC, then IPACA, then ICAM, and finally ICA) are included in these calculations. Thus, any films that were produced entirely with external funding are excluded. The latter should be, however, a very small

minority, and would only serve to increase the number of productions line, given that the line of releases applies to the total.

Graph 6 covers a time-span of 33 years and refers to fiction feature films, which is the type of film more prone to be screened, while graph 7 refers to total numbers and includes documental and fiction feature, short, and animation films. Despite the gradual increase in the number of premieres in more recent years, there is no consistent continuity throughout the years, and, while there is a general upward trend,⁵⁷ it consists of oscillating results that offer no guarantee of a stable growth. Instead of ideal matching lines, the lines on graph 6 are mainly separated during the 1980s, and out of phase from then on. The orange line chases the blue and emules its trajectory in a reacting attempt to compensate. Moreover, it also hints that multinational distributors still find little commercial potential in Portuguese cinema. Given their close connections to the main exhibitors – namely Lusomundo Audiovisuais, which is both a distribution and exhibiting company – the multinational distributors therefore have possessed the lion's share of screens and theatres (multiplexes) in Portugal since the mid 90s (Taborda 2001, 3).⁵⁸ As graph 6 shows, before the dynamism of the 2000s (which end again with a *décalage*), apart from some exceptional years, the number of feature films produced is higher than the number of feature films premiered.

Graph 7 puts this situation in perspective and heightens this perception of separation by showing a clear division between the overall state-supported filmic production and its market penetrarion. It is true that the green line follows the shape of the yellow line, but after a brief intersection in the early 90s, they will never touch each other again and will gain distance. Indeed, if we zoom out from the fiction feature films realm to look at the bigger picture, it is possible to see that, through the 90s (when the chase begins in graph 6) and the 2000s the gap between production and commercial release is still a reality⁵⁹. This leads to the conclusion that even

⁵⁷ The evolution and the reasons for this trend (which is mainly due to the increase in the number of filmmakers and technicians in the country, as well as to the appearance of specialised distributors in the 90s that explored niche markets, such as Paulo Branco and Atalanta filmes) will be addressed in the chapter on distribution.

⁵⁸ Simillar results, i.e. the hegemony of Lusomundo Audiovisuais with almost half of the total Market share were confirmed in 2008 in the 2006-2007 Yearbook of Communication (Cardoso 2008, 15)

⁵⁹ The numbers in graph 7 are composed of some short films, of which the majority does not reach the market and some not even specialised contexts, but also by a fair amount of full-length documentaries, as Appendix 2 reveals.

though the number of films produced has been growing – this is good news especially for Portuguese filmmakers – major issues with distribution plagued Portuguese cinema (and still do).

Another problem that ought to be mentioned is the scarcity of copies available in portable formats, such as VHS and DVD. Some films have been converted to at least one of these formats, but the vast majority of Portuguese films remain unavailable to general audiences – even those films that were actually premiered. The lack of a digital copy therefore implies that the film cannot circulate, either legally or via the pirate circuits.

To some extent this un-distributed cinema is a mirage: a visual heritage locked with restricted access within the vaults of the Cinemateca of which only the spectrum has been surviving in academic tales. The true diversity of Portuguese cinema remains, arguably, unknown to the general public. As we can see, it was not only the aesthetic criteria and judgement that governed the inclusion or exclusion of Portuguese films on the international market – it was also the distributors who had a role in this ‘unsuccess’.

1.4.4 – Politics and regulation of the sector

The last question of the four problems that determine the commerce of Portuguese cinema to be addressed by this thesis is the legal regulation, which in turn affects the financial situation. To some extent, the shortage of money is responsible for all the other variants listed so far. The poor box office revenues (the main source of profit during the 70s, 80s and part of the 90s) and the residual royalties figures led to financial losses and the permanent need for state support. Without it, Portuguese cinema, in the shape that it came to have, would never have been economically feasible.

While the Portuguese case is not that different from other European nations,⁶⁰ the amounts of money injected into culture and cinema was out of step with the tension between ever-increasing production and marketing costs and film budgets, which were barely covering the minimums. This makes it all the more important to tackle the role played by the cinema laws and their impact on the

⁶⁰ Jäckel calculates that only 10 per cent of European state-funded film production actually re-pays the loans and is profitable (Jäckel 2003, 51).

financial course of Portuguese cinema, as well as the ends to which the money was channelled. According to Paulo Filipe Monteiro, box office revenues, in a reduced market such as the Portuguese, would never cover the expenses of a film (a factor which increased from the 70s onwards) (Monteiro 2001, 335). Dionísio adds that in the 80s the costs doubled and that, without public support, the costs would always be superior to the revenues (Dionísio 1993, 362). Alas, as we have seen, much of this investment, borne by the state, was not culturally capitalised, as originally envisioned.

Issues with the distributors as well as the minuscule funds available to invest in marketing campaigns or update technical resources, are among the various factors that have been decisive in the obstruction of the communication routes between Portuguese cinema and the international film market. Evaluating the bad box office results as well as the meagre success of arthouse films has raised more questions than it has answered. The basic questions – ‘how?’ and ‘why?’ – have re-surfaced. To scrutinise the *nuances* and delve into these two big questions, as well as interrogating the complexity of systems of power and their relation to cinema, is the aim of this thesis from this point onwards.

Chapter II – Spectators and Contrasts in Culture

2.1 – The Place of Portuguese Cinema Within Portuguese Culture

In assessing the commercial fragility and the ‘difficult’ visibility of Portuguese cinema, this chapter will focus mainly on the relationship between domestic audiences and Portuguese cinema; it is divided into three main parts. After setting out the research problem, it is now time to provide a framing of the cultural scope of Portuguese cinema, in order to assess its aesthetic and thematic trajectories and map out its place among other artistic expressions in particular and Portuguese culture in general. The first section will evaluate the presence of Portuguese cinema within the broader artistic scene, in order to contextualise its cultural space and better understand the ways it has incorporated putatively national characteristics, assimilated influences and encompassed other relevant forms of art in Portugal. The primary aim of this section is to contribute to the understanding of the cultural stance of Portuguese cinema and its status.

In contrast to the first part of this chapter, the second section provides a chronological summary – which is necessarily generic, for this section requires brevity – of what happened aesthetically in Portuguese cinema after the decline of the musical comedies of the 1940s. Changing structural patterns and commercial phenomena, such as the global ebb and flow of spectators, will also be taken into account. The goal here is to identify and clarify beyond doubt the features and metamorphoses of Portuguese cinema during the period under consideration.

Operating as the opposite side of the same coin, the third and final section of this chapter will provide as accurate an overview as possible of the development of average audiovisual cultural consumption in Portugal. The conclusion will consist of a dialogic confrontation of what filmmakers and producers were doing with what audiences were consuming during the same period of time (roughly from the 1960s until the first decade of the new century). This type of juxtaposition has not been carried out previously and it will help to put into perspective, and provide a detailed understanding of, the history and evolution of the ‘*décalage*’ between audiences and filmmakers. More than being a brief history of Portuguese contemporary cinema, this chapter ultimately focuses on what audiences were getting from both sides, i. e. filmmakers and producers of mass culture.

2.1.1 – Portuguese history and culture and cinema (depictions of the past – both recent and remote)

Ever since the making of the 1908 film *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*, filmmakers from all around the world have known that cinema, like theatre or literature, may serve as a vehicle for historical representation. One of the possible topics of a national cinema is either the semi-fictional re-enactment of historical events or the portrayal of the consequences of a nation's past. In the case of Portuguese cinema, however, the weight of history should be understood in a broader sense – that is, not just as historical narrative but also as embracing other aspects of Portuguese life and mentality, especially before the era of globalisation.

The analysis of the intersection between history and film in Portugal is an already well-explored line of research enquiry that has captured the attention of a number of scholars, such as Baptista, Areal, Cunha, Monteiro and Ribas. This overlap, or meeting, between a country's history and film is by no means original or uncommon, given that all national cinemas incorporate this dimension. For the purpose of this thesis, the nature of this connection should be nonetheless asserted, given that it will serve as a foundation on which this thesis will build the structure to explore a more complex set of problems as related to the reception and marketability of Portuguese cinema.

Tiago Baptista, in his seminal work on Portuguese cinema as 'nationally correct', argued the case that, despite the profound political changes, the tendency to unveil the country's reality through the camera lens and the quest for 'Portuguese-specific' qualities persisted. Baptista argued that this desire was addressed in different forms, and with very disparate political and economic objectives. Initially, in the context of a dictatorship, certain socio-cultural features were extolled, exaggerated to the point of distortion and conveyed to audiences as authentically Portuguese.⁶¹ Filmic material as national content was deeply in line with propaganda and the nationalist celebration agenda (Ribas 2014, 46-47) (Cunha 2015, 104).⁶²

⁶¹ For more concerning the creation of a narrative and myth of 'Portugueseness' see Cunha 2001, 31-62.

⁶² For complete studies on propagandistic cinema, see Vieira 2011; and Piçarra 2015 (complement with Piçarra 2006, and Seabra 2008).

However, after the revolution and in spite of the stigma, this impulse to portray the country as authentically Portuguese did not cease; instead, it went through a process of metamorphosis. According to Baptista:

To call it a turning point is to acknowledge that this shared feature [portraying the country] became prevalent in Portuguese films produced during the 1960s, the 1970s, and especially during the 1980s, when the ‘Portuguese school’ label emerged. But it is also to acknowledge that many Portuguese films had thrived on the ‘national question’ since long before, and from as early on as the very first years of the history of Portuguese cinema. (Baptista 2010, 4)

In competitive circumstances, the country’s idiosyncrasies and landscapes were transformed into factors that helped Portuguese films set themselves apart from films produced in other countries. While some filmmakers (mainly documentary makers)⁶³ turned to rural sides of the country, in pursuit of genuine traditions (as opposed to the invented folklore created by the Estado Novo regime) that were being threatened by European integration and homogenisation, others tackled, directly or indirectly, pressing issues in contemporary Portuguese society,⁶⁴ such as

⁶³ This was the case with almost every director of the new generation of Portuguese cinema, as Leonor Areal has explained (Areal 2011, 94-97). The urge to capture reality was particularly strong during the first half of the 1970s and seduced many filmmakers into experimentation with documentary formulae. The mixture of documentary features with fictional storylines also became a trend – Manoel de Oliveira’s *O Acto da Primavera* (1962) and Fernando Lopes’s *Belarmino* (1964) are two early and ground-breaking examples. Afterwards, António Campos (with *A Almadra da Atuneira*, 1961; *Vilarinho das Furnas*, 1971; *Gente da Praia da Vieira*, 1975; and *Histórias Selvagens*, 1978), Ricardo Costa (with *Mau Tempo, Marés e Mudança*, from 1976, but also through continuous and consistent documentary work in different film lengths since the mid-1970s) and the couple António Reis and Margarida Cordeiro (with *Trás-os-Montes*, from 1976, and *Ana*, from 1982) left a particularly relevant mark in this field and inspired many directors from future generations. Three major examples are João César Monteiro’s *Veredas* (1975), which borrowed many features from *Trás-os-Montes*, Miguel Gomes’s tribute in *Aquele Querido Mês de Agosto* (2008) and Pedro Costa’s entire work.

⁶⁴ Films concerning this issue are too many to be mentioned here individually. However, for the sake of argument, a few films should be briefly listed. First of all, the documentary *O Povo e as Armas* (1974), collectively recorded and edited by a considerable number of filmmakers, is a film shot during the revolution and one of the most trustworthy testimonies of that event. Alberto Seixas Santos’s *Brandos Costumes* (1972-74) is the first film to metaphorically and tangibly underline the end of the Estado Novo regime – notably through the insertion of the documentary image of the dictator Salazar in the coffin. José Fonseca e Costa’s *Os Demónios de Alcácer-Kibir* (1975-77), also adopting an allegorical approach, juxtaposes the invocation of the Sebastianist mythology and the Portuguese distant past with the archetypes of society promoted during Salazar’s years. Solveig Nordlund’s *Dina e Django* and Luis Couto’s *Lerpar* are also worthy of note: relatively distant from a political stance regarding the revolution, both revolve around a certain ‘teenage angst’ and eventually frame the changes underway through the eyes of the youth. Finally, João Botelho’s *Um Adeus Português* (1985) inaugurates a strong tie with the trauma of the colonial war, establishing this politically (and emotionally) historical period as an endless source of filmic material. For a comprehensive analysis of the films after the fall of the Estado Novo period see Areal 2011, 20-106; and Monteiro 1995.

the shattering of the 400-year empire and the advent of democracy, the trauma of political oppression, or the ‘disenchantment’ with the fate of the country.⁶⁵ In line with what has been suggested, Leonor Areal re-assessed the question previously tackled by her tutor, Paulo Filipe Monteiro, and states that three main trends dominated Portuguese cinema after 1974: (i) films that addressed the past and somehow related it to the fascist regime; (ii) films concerning the revolution; and (iii) those films that attempted to find in the rural parts of Portugal its ‘cultural roots’ – from a social, symbolic, or aesthetic perspective (Areal 2011, 19).

With regard to the relationship between history and cinema, the revisiting of both the historical and the cultural legacy does not come as a surprise in the context of the assessment and redefinition of Portuguese national identity that began in April 1974. Indeed, the possible bridge between cinema, which is in theory a universal expression, and something intrinsically Portuguese, such as the country’s history, is what bestows cultural relevance and substance on Portuguese films within Portuguese culture. The results of this relationship have naturally taken many shapes and forms, from fatalist period dramas, to comedies that used history as mere background, or ‘artisanal’ documentaries.

In line with the argument described above, while commenting on contemporary documentary cinema, Ana Isabel Soares went so far as to suggest that this set of films comprises a certain kind of *literary* cinema. For her, these documentaries follow from a descriptive impulse (although in a stylish, authorial manner), once a prerogative of literature, and narrate the histories of the country and its people (Soares 2016, 46-63). In Soares’ words:

documentários recentes partem de uma geração de cineastas mais atentos e conhecedores do mundo para além das fronteiras do país –, os filmes aqui referidos parecem ter como tema destacado o próprio país. Talvez esse traço não surpreenda, dada a proximidade dos realizadores aos temas explorados nos filmes – mas pode parecer surpreendente que um corpo tão vasto de filmes documentais concentre a sua atenção sobre uma mesma realidade estruturante e basilar. [recent documentaries come from a more cosmopolitan generation of filmmakers, who have seen the world beyond the country’s borders –, the invoked films seem to have the country itself as their main theme. Maybe that feature does not come as a surprise, given the filmmakers’ proximity to the themes explored in the films – but what might be surprising enough is that such

⁶⁵ This theory can be found in the assessment of the Portuguese mentality by prominent thinkers, mainly Eduardo Lourenço and José Gil. It is particularly present in Lourenço 1999; and Gil 2004.

a vast *corpus* of documentaries points its attention towards the same, foundational and structuring reality.] (Soares 2016, 51)

Soares' statement about documentary cinema appears to be perfectly in tandem with what Jacques Lemièrè⁶⁶ and Maria do Rosário Lupi Bello had written, regarding a more generic panorama, a few years earlier. Taking into account the information provided in the last paragraphs, it seems reasonable to infer a consensus among scholars regarding the perception of this ubiquitous need for making cinema the place of social, historical and political scrutiny.

Three examples of the relation between history and cinema in this period are worth mentioning. The aftermath of the colonial war brought with it two of the most original films ever made in Portugal: João Botelho's stark *Um Adeus Português* (A Portuguese Farewell), in 1985, and Manoel de Oliveira's *NON! Ou a vã glória de mandar* (NON! Or the vain glory of command), in 1990. Whereas the former inaugurates a line of post-traumatic films about the colonial war in Africa through the disrupted lives of common people (a theme that would be pursued later, mainly in *A Costa dos Murmúrios* and *Tabu*) and focuses only in that period, Oliveira's film is a staggering filmic meditation on Portuguese memory. Defying mainstream historiography, it tells the history of the country, not through its military victories, but rather through its defeats. Oliveira highlights critical moments such as Viriatus' assassination in 139 BC, the battle of Alcácer Quibir, in 1578, which effectively doomed the second dynasty thus bringing Spanish rule shortly thereafter, and the colonial war in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, a very brief reference to Pedro Costa's filmic practice should be made, especially concerning the 'Fontainhas trilogy'. Adopting a perspective somewhere between reality and fiction, Costa managed to find an alternative way of telling something about the present and the past of Portugal through the voice of the Cape-Verdean community living in the slums in the outskirts of Lisbon. Even though he focuses on the idiosyncrasies of specific people inside this particular group from a very personal angle, his films are nonetheless widely perceived as valid testimonials to Portuguese history, given the intertwining of the memory of the Cape-Verdean community and the old colonial power.

⁶⁶ See Lemièrè 2013, 38-63; and Bello 2010, 19-32.

As Areal noted, a great number of films carries on a neo-romantic trend, based on an interest in popular culture and its fantastic and mythological lore (Areal 2011, 97). The same author also pointed out that in the 80s and 90s a considerable amount of histories revisit the memory of fascism while others go even further back in time and the interest for legends and past histories is kept alive (Areal 2011, 101). To support this claim, Areal provides a list of 47 fiction films (in which the above-mentioned works by Botelho and Oliveira are included) that fall within the category of historical.

As will be seen in Chapters III and IV, this intricate relationship between Portuguese cinema and the country itself may very well have been influenced by ulterior motives, such as the need to follow certain criteria in order to obtain external funding or the creation of a mark of differentiation in order to attract the attention of organizers of international film festivals – indeed, Thomas Elsaesser (Elsasser 2005, 82-104) showed how decisive film festivals in the 60s were in encouraging the creation of discourses around filmmakers, styles and movements based on the national framework. Yet, it should also be taken into account that, as Ribas mentioned, it is widely accepted that the intellectual circles have had an obsession with the leitmotif of ‘Portugal’ for the past two centuries (Ribas 2014, 33). Some years before, Paulo Filipe Monteiro had stated: ‘A literatura portuguesa, desde pelo menos a geração de 1870, passando por Pessoa até os contemporâneos Lobo Antunes e Saramago, constantemente se tem debruçado sobre o caráter ou a questão nacional [...] O cinema retomou esses pressupostos’ [Portuguese literature, since at least the 1870s generation, along with Pessoa and contemporary authors like Lobo Antunes and Saramago, has constantly focused on the character or national question [...] Cinema followed those premises] (Monteiro 2004, 28-29).

The reasoning presented by this thesis so far leads to the conclusion – in close agreement with what Ribas also suggested (Ribas 2014, 164) – that cinema was, in a way, an extension and continuation of that tradition of addressing social, existential and historical preoccupations. Films served, in a more or less overt manner, and in different degrees of lyricism, as a vehicle allowing for comment on the country from a subjective perspective, in an attempt to reflect the homeland or shape the popular perception of it. In a nutshell, as Soares put it, reflecting the consensual opinion of older studies (mainly those by Monteiro, Areal and Baptista), in the end it boils down to a ‘vontade de inventar uma imagem do país’ [a desire to

invent an image of the country] (Soares 2016, 20). One obvious and effective way of achieving this was to narrate and analyse either the recent or distant past.

To force the argument that an entire production, across many decades, was interested in a sole theme would naturally be inaccurate. However, to argue that filmmakers only used Portugal as the default option, when so many brought it intentionally to the very fore, would be equally unwise. Depending on the point of view one takes, there were plenty of trajectories in Portuguese cinema and paths followed. And yet, it can be argued that there have been major confluences throughout the decades. That is why the main aim of this section 2.1.1 is not to reduce Portuguese cinema to its quest for the depiction of the country and its historical legacy. Instead, the main point is to underline the fact that, regardless of extra-cinematic reasons, the association between the country's histories and film was an inescapable and often very desirable thread that continuously ran through the multifaceted fabric of Portuguese cinema. Therefore, this thesis argues that this thematic trend proves to be not just an important feature of this national cinematography, but also one of the strongest bonds between film and the Portuguese intellectual scene.

2.1.2 – The arts and Portuguese cinema

Another way of understanding the context and the aesthetics of Portuguese cinema from the 1960s onwards is to look at the dialogues and exchanges it established with other arts, alongside an analysis of the influences that filmmakers absorbed. In 1929, Ricciotto Canudo proposed one of the most pervasive ideas regarding the ontology of film: that cinema was the synthesis of all six arts of space and time,⁶⁷ thus becoming the seventh. Indeed, in many parts of the world, the expression 'the seventh art' is still a synonym for cinema. As the following examples will attempt to demonstrate, given the small size of the artistic milieu in Portugal in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, all the arts were somehow intertwined. Filmmakers had a tendency to approximate their aesthetic choices to other artistic languages – in some cases, protagonists would even be dedicated to more than one creative or intellectual practice.

⁶⁷ The other 'ancient' expressions being dance and the five arts proposed by Hegel: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry.

In the many interviews assembled and published in the books *Rio do Ouro*, *Fernando Lopes por Cá* and *Fernando Lopes, Profissão: Cineasta*, a roll of personalities close to the cinema milieu is affectionately remembered by Fernando Lopes and Paulo Rocha when they look back on the 1960s. Some of these people were, at the time, relatively unknown. However, many eventually came to play major roles in Portuguese cultural circles. According to Paulo Rocha, João Bénard da Costa (the future director of the Portuguese Cinemateque), Nuno Bragança (aristocrat and literary author) António da Cunha Telles (producer and pivotal figure of the New Cinema movement), Fernando Matos Silva (filmmaker), Pedro Tâmen (writer, critic, and distinguished translator), M.S. Lourenço (mathematician and scholar) and Nuno Portas (architect and film critic) seemed like ‘personagens fugidos de um romance do Musil’ [characters out of one of Musil’s novels] (Melo 1996, 35). This group, closely tied to the University of Lisbon Law School, and complemented by other intellectual cells (most notably the Café Vá-Vá ‘tertulia’), placed filmmakers inside an intellectual, hermetic ecosystem that bore little or no similarity to the reality of the average Portuguese.

Indeed, Café Vá-Vá, located in the then newer quarters of Lisbon, was a crucial environment (Rocha even paid tribute to it by using the interior of the coffee shop as a set for his film *Os Verdes Anos*), where young artists from all walks of life regularly intersected in a Viennese or Parisian way. As Paulo Rocha stated:

O meu rés-do-chão, o Vá-Vá, era agora ponto de encontro de uma juventude de Avenidas Novas que ia de auto-stop ao Quartier Latin aos fins-de-semana ver as fitas de que se falava. Nas mesas do café, de dia e de noite discutiam-se artes e políticas, cruzavam-se os jornalistas da oposição, os universitários inquietos, as beldades namoradeiras, os futuros cineastas. [My ground floor, the Vá-Vá, was now the meeting point of youths from the Avenidas Novas that went to the Latin Quarter in Paris at the weekend to watch the films that everyone was talking about. At the coffee shop tables, art and politics were discussed day and night; journalists from the resistance, curious college students, flirtatious beauties, and future filmmakers could all be found there.] (Rocha 1996, 23-24)

Although very personal, and therefore rather partial, Paulo Rocha and Fernando Lopes’ accounts of the effervescent cultural atmosphere in Lisbon provide an accurate enough depiction. They describe the paradigm and nature of the fruitful

interconnections that moulded Portuguese intellectual history during the late nineteenth and a good part of the twentieth centuries.

The previous point provided a thematic characterisation. What follows is an overview of another facet of Portuguese cinema: its aesthetics and how the cultural scene shaped the evolution of that aesthetics.

2.1.2.1 – Literature

The close connection between film and literature has been widely accepted, analysed and theorised throughout the world. This is mainly due to the fact that both expressions share narrative properties, and that a script usually precedes a film. Portuguese cinema is no exception and has been prone to literary inspiration and adaptations from both classic authors (such as Camões or nineteenth-century writers) and contemporary works. Similarly to what was mentioned regarding history and cultural features, the link between literature (mainly the novel) and the moving image is very old and was crucial in the process of distancing cinema from its industrial and popular origins and asserting its legitimacy as an artistic expression in its own right. Indeed, the cultural prestige stemmed from the *film d'art* (as well as its variants) was made possible by the fact that it resorted to both established literary authors and national cultural heritages. Furthermore, as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat suggest: 'The fiction film also inherited the social role of the nineteenth-century realist novel in relation to national imaginaries' (Shohat and Stam 1994, 102).

There is an ongoing discussion about the literary character of Portuguese cinema. However, this issue has been usually more a series of studies of specific cases,⁶⁸ or efforts to evaluate and affirm its lyrical and poetic impact, than an objective assessment of this broader interconnection. Indeed, the concept that Portuguese cinema has a preponderant literary inclination is an old impression and a favoured topic – one that deserves to be discussed and deconstructed here. Although neither proven nor rejected by statistical methods, as will be seen, this idea of a literary cinema is something that has been perpetuated throughout generations, perennially hovering over the mainstream perception of Portuguese cinema. In a way, it is already intrinsic to the self-image constructed by Portuguese cinema – and that is, *per se*, a meaningful symptom. To ascertain whether or not this preponderance

⁶⁸ Three examples of this trend are Cardoso 2007; Sobral 2010; and Preto 2011.

is quantitatively accurate, in comparison to the number of original scripts, does not fall within the scope of the present investigation. What is at stake is not the degree, but rather that this connection – and its dimension, regardless of size – is worth mentioning because it is both a shaping fact beyond doubt and an important part of Portuguese cinema’s own mythological image.

A recent article entitled ‘Cinema Português/Cinema Literário?’ [Portuguese Cinema/Literary Cinema?] by Ana Isabel Soares, and Michelle Sales’ book ‘Em Busca de um Novo Cinema Português’ [In search of a New Portuguese Cinema] are two exceptions to the somewhat superficial vein of discussion just mentioned. While Soares manages to provide some numbers and presents the argument that cinema in Portugal dialogues with literature on three levels (with perhaps even a fourth), Sales re-assesses the origins of the New Portuguese Cinema and links it to the neo-realist literary movement, confirming strong ties between the two that had been overlooked until her study. Taking the reader back in time, Sales states:

Desde o surgimento do cinema em Portugal, ainda no Porto, era notória a importância capital que a literatura assumia em face ao cinema. Basta recordar que boa parte da produção realizada pelos diretores imigrantes radicados em Portugal, como foi o caso do Georges Pallu entre outros, estava sedimentada na adaptação literária – espécie de garantia de êxito e sucesso [...] até ao ano de 1930, contamos com oito adaptações literárias para o cinema. Todas estas, de grandes mestres da literatura portuguesa do século XIX [Since the inception of cinema in Portugal, still in the Oporto days, the major importance that literature had over cinema was clear. One needs only to recall that a good part of the production directed by immigrant filmmakers based in Portugal, such as George Pallu, among others, was founded on literary adaptation – a kind of guarantee of success [...] Before 1930, we can count up to eight literary adaptations for cinema. All of them derived from great masters of nineteenth-century Portuguese literature]. (Sales 2011, 78-79)

According to the same author, who studied at length the intersection this thesis intends to highlight, António Ferro continued this winning formula after having been appointed by Salazar as head of the ‘Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional’, in 1933. A man directly involved and with an acknowledged interest in literature, Ferro became one of the main protagonists in the history of Portuguese cinema in the twentieth century by conceiving the connection – that would become structural – between cinema and literature, resuming from then on themes of notorious interest that used to belong to the realm of literature – such is the case with the ‘invention’ and the narration of a nation. (Sales 2011, 80).

The flow of literary adaptations continued until the present time, independently of any connotations with the old regime, political or even aesthetic stances. This trend preceded the dictatorship (and even then it had many *nuances*) and more than 40 years after its ending is still the basic structure of cinema in Portugal. Ana Isabel Soares provides an interesting overview of this matter that deserves to be transcribed in full:

Se olharmos para as obras literárias que mais atraem os realizadores portugueses, e contando para cima de 250 filmes (portugueses e não só) adaptados de obras literárias portuguesas, a estatística revelada com o rigor de uma aproximação põe lado a lado Camilo e Eça, com 11 adaptações cada e em tempos dilatados de um século. Agustina, por força do par criativo que forma com Manoel de Oliveira, foi adaptada nove vezes (seis, então, por Oliveira). Pessoa, o poeta e a obra, inspirou oito filmes, entre os quais seis portugueses. Cardoso Pires foi sete vezes ao ecrã e Fernando Namora teve seis adaptações, como seis teve José Régio (beneficiado, tal como Agustina, do olhar de Oliveira). Júlio Dinis e Vergílio Ferreira foram adaptados cinco vezes cada. Quatro filmes houve para Almeida Garrett, Ferreira de Castro, Jorge de Sena, José Gomes Ferreira, José Rodrigues Miguéis, Manuel Pinheiro Chagas, e Miguel Torga. Três vezes foram adaptados Herberto Helder e José Saramago, como Júlio Dantas, Luísa Costa Gomes, Manuel da Fonseca e Mário de Carvalho. [If we look at the literary works that keep attracting Portuguese directors, and, counting more than 250 films (Portuguese and other) adapted from Portuguese literary works, the statistics, as rigorous as an approximation can be, reveal that Camilo and Eça are on an equal footing, with 11 adaptations each, throughout the extended space of a century. Agustina, via her creative partnership with Manoel de Oliveira, was adapted nine times (six by Oliveira). Pessoa's works (as well as himself as a character), inspired eight films, of which six are Portuguese. Cardoso Pires was seven times screened and Fernando Namora had six adaptations, just like José Régio (who benefited from Oliveira's vision, in the same way as Agustina). Júlio Dinis and Vergílio Ferreira were adapted five times each. There were four films for the works of Almeida Garrett, Ferreira de Castro, Jorge de Sena, José Gomes Ferreira, José Rodrigues Miguéis, Manuel Pinheiro Chagas, and Miguel Torga. Three times Herberto Helder and José Saramago were adapted; and the same number for Júlio Dantas, Luísa Costa Gomes, Manuel da Fonseca and Mário de Carvalho.] (Soares 2016, 59)

This roll-call listed by Soares not only reflects a certain eclecticism (for the authors represent several artistic styles and periods), but also supports two ideas: first, that both arts are intricate and, therefore, share many of the same worries, themes and points of view on the country; and second, that Portuguese cinema has benefited from the prestige and aesthetic elevation of the most canonical and highly esteemed

literary works – and, from a certain point onwards, vice versa. All this deliberate process and history of adaptations did more than shape the themes and even the aesthetics of the moving image. It was also a way of associating cinema with pre-existing or coeval Portuguese culture (which, for the educated population, had its expression in literature) and thus integrating it among the ‘iconic’ group of works that was believed to have the capacity to crystallise and convey any national reality. Furthermore, especially during the dictatorship, when the illiteracy rate was high, adaptations were a convenient way of condensing stories and bringing them in a simplified version, in audio-visual format, to the unlettered population.

So far, attention has been focused on adaptations. However, the influence of literature in Portuguese cinema reached far beyond them. In fact, there is a second way in which this connection proved most fruitful and which this thesis insists should not be overlooked: the inspirational dimension, or, in other words, the intellectual capital that literature silently exchanged with cinema. Onésimo Teutónio Almeida mentioned the constant ‘obsession for Portugal and Portugueseness’ during the 19th and 20th centuries (especially during times of political crisis) (Almeida 2017, 29-48) expressed in all kinds of written formulation, and Michelle Sales brought this question to the fore by suggesting the possibility of the involvement of literature (namely, neo-realism) in the complex roots from which the aesthetics of the Portuguese new wave sprang.

With regard to the cultural reach of Portuguese neo-realism, Sales states: ‘De forma geral, a questão resvala menos para o tema das adaptações literárias que partiam do neo-realismo para o cinema do que para a maneira como as ideias que circulavam entre as produções culturais de resistência’ [Broadly speaking, this issue has not so much to do with the topic of literary adaptations from neo-realism than it has with the way ideas circulated between cultural productions of the resistance] (Sales 2011, 113). The author carries on with her reasoning, clarifying the nature of the connection:

não só é do neo-realismo que se constitui uma gênese possível de um novo cinema (porque é de lá que partem *Saltimbanco* e *Dom Roberto*), mas também que é exatamente das discussões estéticas que envolviam o neo-realismo que surge a necessidade de construir um ‘cinema melhor, um cinema moral e democrático na melhor tradição neo-realista’, como aponta Baptista-Bastos [neo-realism not only constitutes a possible genesis of a new cinema (for *Saltimbanco* and *Dom Roberto* belong to it); it was also from the aesthetic discussion that surrounded neo-realism that arose the

need to build a ‘better cinema, a moral and democratic cinema according to the best neo-realist tradition’, as Baptista-Bastos mentioned]. (Sales 2011, 119-120)

Finally, Sales concludes:

o novo cinema português foi germinado nos ‘verdes anos’ do debate neo-realista (presente na literatura e também no cinema) acerca do conceito e da função social da arte, pois o questionamento e até mesmo a negação veemente de uma vertente realista cinematográfica será o principal elemento aglutinador do moderno cinema português que se consagra nos anos 1960. [Portuguese New Cinema germinated in the early years of the neo-realist debate (present in both literature and cinema) about the social function of art, for the questioning and even strong denial of a realist tendency in cinema will be the main binding element of the modern Portuguese cinema that establishes itself in the 1960s.] (Sales 2011, 130)

To summarise, it can be argued that cinema in Portugal owes more to literature than a vast number of adaptations – though this is the most tangible facet of this contribution. There has been an intellectual contribution with two strands: one, the *intra-literary*, regarding the themes and aesthetic tonalities found in books; and another, the *extra-literary*, sponsored by the educated circles of novelists and philosophers. The example given was that of 1960s’ neo-realism, that illustrated so well the dialogue between intellectuals and the arts, but this close connection did not cease to exist during the 70s, 80s, 90s and early 00s. It should therefore be acknowledged that the environments (and the types of environment) in which ground-breaking filmmakers dwell have been fertile ground for the incubation of the premises that help to shape their concept of cinema, and thus their personal networks and future creations.

2.1.2.2 – Other arts

In framing the foundational moments of Portuguese contemporary cinema with their *zeitgeist*, there are other relations (some more obvious than others) and intersections that complement the current discussion. It can be said that the moving image in Portugal established many different connections, of varying degrees, with every sort of artistic expression – sometimes blurring and stretching the boundaries of the concept of cinema itself. All of these links contributed to the identity and history of

Portuguese cinema. However, as will be explained in detail below, chief among them (besides literature) are the ties with theatre and architecture, as well as with the experimental poets of the 1980s.

As of yet, there is no detailed work on the intricacies of the relationship between cinema and theatre in Portugal – apart from the occasional reference or article about the ‘filmed theatre’ concept, as proposed by Manoel de Oliveira (Araújo 2010, 38-46) or the appropriation of the theatrical or operatic apparatuses by João Botelho (Graça 2013, 501-509) and others. However, film credits, general bibliography and all the other examples adduced in this thesis make it possible to discern with some certainty that the connection with the cultural space of the theatre was a relatively straightforward one.

Due to the lack of an audiovisual industry (which would only appear in the 90s and become a reality in the early 00s), actors, stage staff and other technicians moved many times between the two worlds (Mendes 2013, 99). Even though they constitute two different realms, it can be said that, materialistically, they were extensions of each other. Indeed, theatre has historically been one of the main sources of talent for cinema; during the first decades of the twentieth century, when film was developing the language that would set it apart and allow it to stand on its own, theatrical apparatus served as the backbone of the definitive shift from actualities to the production of narrative cinema, therefore suggesting that theatre and cinema are two strands sharing a common stem.⁶⁹ Even today, there is in Portugal a fringe of actors who insist on being identified by the public first with theatre, and secondly with art cinema (e.g. Luís Miguel Cintra, Marcello Urgeghe, Leonor Silveira, and Beatriz Batarda). Perhaps because they perceive TV productions and their creative limitations as the poorer relative of stage acting, they have rarely appeared on mass-produced platforms and collaborated with TV only in very specific circumstances.⁷⁰ As will be discussed later in this thesis, there has been an effective tension between theatre, cinema and TV in Portugal, which has been mainly fuelled by dichotomies between perceptions of high and low culture, as well as by all the preconceptions and connotations this topic tends to carry.

⁶⁹ For further insight concerning the relation between theatre and film in Europe during the early years of the past century, see Abel 1994.

⁷⁰ Most notable was the participation of both Silveira and Urgeghe in RTP’s TV series *Terapia* (2016).

With regard to architecture, similarly to the kind of connection between literature and cinema, there were crucial and intriguing intellectual affinities – particularly during the 50s and 60s. The architect and researcher Luís Urbano dedicated his doctoral thesis to the assessment of the tones and shades of the dialogues between cinema and architecture during the period of the influx of the new wave. Paraphrasing this author, there was a common struggle: in the mid-fifties, both architecture and cinema were in similar circumstances, beleaguered by a regime that invested in a false national identity, deploying a folklore policy that spread throughout all cultural areas and was particularly visible in films and buildings promoted by the dictatorship (Urbano 2014, 18). In addition, there was a shared anxiety: the central question was the same in architecture and cinema. People from both crafts had to manage the influences that were coming from abroad – which they used extensively – but also the will to reflect local specificities and the worries of a population they wished to set free (Urbano 2014, 25).

Both cinema and architecture were in the process of redefining and renewing their languages in the 1960s. It was the feeling of an aesthetic – and to some degree, ideological – stagnation that, combined with a strong desire for rapprochement to a new paradigm of modernity, contrived to bring film and architecture together. There were architects closely associated with cinema, such as Nuno Portas and António de Macedo⁷¹ among others. In fact, it should be underlined that, when it comes to modern Portuguese architecture, its intimate relation and articulation with other arts (particularly the visual) became preponderant after the I Congresso Nacional de Arquitectura, in 1948. In this gathering the main figures of Portuguese modernism asserted their intentions to design according to the rationalist principles of the Athens Charter and to make use of other modernist movements for decorative purposes, in order to enhance the architectural experience (Urbano 2014, 188).

This affinity between the New Cinema and the new architecture had a very concrete practical translation in the case of Paulo Rocha's *Os Verdes Anos*. Shot in the new avenues (notably at the intersection of Avenida dos Estados Unidos da América with Avenida de Roma, where the director lived and Café Vá-Vá was located), Rocha placed the action inside this avant-garde version of Lisbon, in order to accentuate novelty and convey the thrilling urban dynamics proposed by the vision suggested by the new architecture. Abandoning a predominantly rural vision that had shaped

⁷¹ Macedo gave up architecture to become a full-time film director.

Portuguese culture until very recently, Rocha's work was the first film to be shot in Lisbon outside the typical, popular neighbourhoods. This contemporary Lisbon was crucial in broadening the distance between rural and urban Portugal, perceived by Júlio and Ilda, the main characters of the film, as simultaneously fascinating and alien to them. In this sense, architecture did not merely serve as a background or plateau – it created meaning as part of the *mise-en-scène*.

As Urbano argued, the way Rocha presents this new Lisbon throughout the film, showcasing its architectural, decorative and social modernity, attests to this particular case (Urbano 2014, 176-209). It was inside the new architecture that the conditions were found to support a cinema which was so desperate to be modern. Many years later, this type of strong relationship with architecture, initiated by Rocha and maintained episodically over the years, is still being honoured by directors such as João Botelho (especially in *O Filme do Desassossego*, a lyrical adaptation of Fernando Pessoa's fragments of the *Book of Disquiet* from 2010), João Salaviza (in the shorts *Arena*, 2008, and *Rafa*, 2012, and in the feature film *Montanha*, 2015), João Canijo (in *Sangue do Meu Sangue*, 2011) and Pedro Costa (notably, his famous Fontainhas trilogy is named after a slum, which directly implies a strong connection with the configuration and social relevance of that place for Costa's work). In their own ways, all these authors pay attention to urban/suburban tensions and draw inspiration from architecture, incorporating in their films its aesthetic and social dimensions – much as Paulo Rocha did. Ultimately, Portuguese New Cinema would not have been the same, nor would it have made such an initial impact, without the landscape offered by modernist architecture.

By the same token, as exemplified by the case of *Os Verdes Anos*, there has always been a fundamental link between film and architecture as landscape or as liveable space – a circumstance that motivated a whole strand of film theory. However, as with literature, this thesis stresses that the relevance of this connection between cinema and architecture cannot be solely quantified in *intra-cinematic* terms, since a good part of its impact was due to a series of serendipitous encounters of creative people following their own personal paths.

At this point, it should be underlined that, although it might seem that all the examples above come to reinforce one key moment – the inception of the New Cinema – the connections did not dissolve but instead continued over time. The researcher Sandra Guerreiro Dias provides an insightful account in her thesis on

poetry, experimentalism and performance in Portugal during the 1980s of the effervescent artistic and creative impulse evident in the country post-1974. In one of the most comprehensive studies on late-1980s Portuguese cultural history, rather than a monolithic version of events, Guerreiro Dias presents notes on fragmented happenings that, when assembled, formed something greater than the sum of their parts. She reminds the reader that it was a group of small, more or less concerted, initiatives taking place in the country over two decades that eventually came to mould a much larger experimentalist movement.

In line with what had occurred in previous years, Guerreiro Dias stresses many times throughout her work that the hybridisation of the frontiers between the various arts⁷² and the appropriation of languages and artistic apparatuses were in the DNA of poetic experimentalism and performance art in Portugal during their heyday in the 1980s. Paraphrasing Dias's point, the intensification of these experimental practices and performance art, after and in the aftermath of the 'Alternativa Zero', would culminate in the effective emergence of a field of reflection and experimentation in this area during the 80s. Thus, major transformations occurred on three levels: in the effective opening to new, postmodern art trends; in the experimental dialogue between visual arts, PO.EX, and other arts and supports, such as music, video, sculpture, photography, among others; and the institutional and operational criss-crossing in the organisation and making of events and works, mainly between visual arts and experimental poetry (Dias 2016, 95-96). Ultimately, the author implies that the 1980s in Portugal was the decade in which intermediality and trans-media experimentation came to maturity. It was the time when artists felt the need to push boundaries and were encouraged to leave their comfort zones, which were imposed by the traditional limitations.

Another important aspect highlighted by this author and related to what this thesis tackled in the introduction to this point, is the tendency for intercommunicating groups of artists and other individuals to be formed. As Guerreiro Dias explains, between 1977 and 1986 this context was due not only to intellectual reasons, but also to material conditions:

Duas linhas demarcam o campo: de um lado, a vitalidade e renovação da experiência estética visual e experimental; do outro, a ausência de um diálogo e ação política e institucional

⁷² See Dias 2015 pages 11, 90, and 97.

condizente. São instituições como a Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, a Sociedade Nacional de Belas-Artes e a Cooperativa Diferença, em Lisboa, o Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis, a Escola de Belas-Artes, a Cooperativa Árvore, no Porto, o Círculo de Artes Plásticas, em Coimbra, mais um conjunto de galerias, entre elas a Quadrante, a Quadrum, a Módulo, a Ogiva, a Cómicos, a 111, e outras, que irão enquadrar o trabalho daqueles/as artistas. [Two lines mark the cultural field: on the one hand, the vitality and renovation of visual and experimental aesthetics; on the other, the absence of matching public action and institutional dialogue. It is institutions such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the National Fine Arts Society, Cooperativa Diferença, in Lisbon, the Soares dos Reis National Museum, the Fine Arts School, Cooperativa Árvore, in Oporto, the Círculo de Artes Plásticas, in Coimbra, along with a number of galleries, such as Quadrante, Quadrum, Módulo, Ogiva, Cómicos, 111, to name a few, that will frame the works of these artists.] (Dias 2016, 89)

Once more, this thesis is confronted with the pivotal role played by independently organised associations of people. Although the picture drawn by Dias should be framed in the context of a young democracy, with political turbulence and therefore the impossibility of implementing coherent cultural policies,⁷³ as has been seen, the intellectual exchanges and the mode in which they occurred predated the revolution. As far as cinema was concerned, the best examples were the Clube Português de Cinematografia, as early as 1945, the Centro Português de Cinema, in the late 1960s, the previously mentioned Vá-Vá group and, in a way, the Cineclubist movement, in the 50s and early 60s, and the Film School in Lisbon.

A transcription of an account from the renowned architect and scholar Alexandre Alves Costa corroborates much of this point – the implicit conversation between cinema and other forms of artistic expression. Almost in the style of a ‘family portrait’, the author invokes a moment where worlds converged, in December 1967, at the ‘Cineclubes do Porto’:

Juntaram-se, talvez pela primeira vez, fora do Vá-Vá, o João Bénard,⁷⁴ o Machado da Luz,⁷⁵ o Manuel Pina,⁷⁶ o José Vaz Pereira,⁷⁷ o Vítor Silva Tavares,⁷⁸ o Artur Ramos,⁷⁹ o António-Pedro

⁷³ Nogueira 2007, 146

⁷⁴ João Bénard da Costa: cinephile and future director of the Portuguese Cinemateque.

⁷⁵ Raimundo Machado da Luz: neo-realist painter and art scholar.

⁷⁶ Manuel António Pina: journalist and award-winning writer.

⁷⁷ José Vaz Pereira: actor.

⁷⁸ Vítor Silva Tavares: independent publisher, literary editor, intellectual and writer.

⁷⁹ Artur Ramos: theatre director, filmmaker, literary author and translator.

Vasconcelos,⁸⁰ o Luís de Pina,⁸¹ o Jorge Peixinho,⁸² o Manoel de Oliveira, o Ernesto de Sousa,⁸³ o António Macedo,⁸⁴ o José Cardoso Pires,⁸⁵ o Neves Real,⁸⁶ o Fernando Lopes, o Paulo Rocha, o Gérard Castello-Lopes,⁸⁷ o Lauro António,⁸⁸ o Roberto Nobre,⁸⁹ o Alves Costa,⁹⁰ o Fonseca e Costa, o Manuel Azevedo,⁹¹ e o Wallenstein,⁹² pela Gulbenkian... Por lá andou o José Régio,⁹³ a Maria Barroso,⁹⁴ a Ilse Losa,⁹⁵ o Augusto Gomes,⁹⁶ o Júlio Resende,⁹⁷ o Ângelo de Sousa,⁹⁸ o Álvaro Siza,⁹⁹ o Alcino Soutinho,¹⁰⁰ o Rui Feijó¹⁰¹... [It was the first time they got together outside the Vá-Vá, João Bénard da Costa, Machado da Luz, Manuel Pina, José Vaz Pereira, Vítor Silva Tavares, Artur Ramos, António-Pedro Vasconcelos, Luís de Pina, Jorge Peixinho, Manoel de Oliveira, Ernesto de Sousa, António Macedo, José Cardoso Pires, Neves Real, Fernando Lopes, Paulo Rocha, Gérard Castello-Lopes, Lauro António, Roberto Nobre, Alves Costa, Fonseca e Costa, Manuel Azevedo and Wallenstein, on behalf of the Gulbenkian Foundation... Also José Régio, Maria Barroso, Ilse Losa, Augusto Gomes, Júlio Resende, Ângelo de Sousa, Álvaro Siza, Alcino Soutinho, Rui Feijó...] (Costa 2014, 103)

This quotation ultimately demonstrates the force of attraction exerted by cinema, as well as the status enjoyed by cinema inside the artistic and intellectual milieu – it was fully integrated. The extension of the network in this rendezvous of personalities helps to clarify the interpersonal synergies that existed between cinema and other ‘forces’ which welcomed cinema into their midst with enthusiasm, thus allowing it both to influence and be influenced.

⁸⁰ António Pedro Vasconcelos: filmmaker, one of the main protagonists – and dissidents – of the ‘Portuguese school’.

⁸¹ Luís de Pina: director of the Portuguese Cinemateque from 1982 to 1991.

⁸² Jorge Peixinho: composer, pianist, conductor, and performance artist.

⁸³ José Ernesto de Sousa: filmmaker, founder of the first ‘cineclube’ in Portugal, photographer, performance artist, organiser of ‘Alternativa Zero’ exhibition.

⁸⁴ António de Macedo: architect turned filmmaker and writer.

⁸⁵ José Cardoso Pires: celebrated literary author – six of his novels were adapted for cinema.

⁸⁶ Luís Neves Real: cinema entrepreneur, exhibitor, and cultural programmer.

⁸⁷ Gérard Castello-Lopes: Photographer, critic, distributor, and exhibitor.

⁸⁸ Lauro António: Filmmaker, critic, TV personality.

⁸⁹ Roberto Nobre: modernist painter, filmmaker, and critic.

⁹⁰ Henrique Alves Costa: cinephile, film critic, and director of Cineclube do Porto.

⁹¹ Manuel Azevedo: cinephile and prominent figure of the Cineclube do Porto.

⁹² Carlos Wallenstein: writer, actor, and director of the theatre section of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

⁹³ José Régio: conspicuous intellectual, public figure, writer, and scholar.

⁹⁴ Maria Barroso: actress.

⁹⁵ Ilse Losa: writer and translator.

⁹⁶ Augusto Gomes: painter.

⁹⁷ Júlio Resende: painter

⁹⁸ Ângelo de Sousa: celebrated artist (painter and sculptor).

⁹⁹ Álvaro Siza Vieira: one of the most preeminent Portuguese architects.

¹⁰⁰ Alcino Soutinho: architect

¹⁰¹ Rui Feijó: scholar.

However, it should be noted that this confluence and organisational efficiency – which proved to be central during the process of attainment of power by the New Cinema group – should by no means be confused with absolute unity. Despite the fruitful and fortifying dialogue that existed between these groups and artists from different backgrounds, some did not communicate easily, as they were competitors or associated with different ideological and/or aesthetic affiliations. Although all part of the intellectual scene, differences were deepened and major fragmentations occurred after the military coup in 1974, when the common enemy was overthrown and the quest to find a solution for the country began.¹⁰² Afterwards, the competition for funding and visibility was like salt on a wound. As Paulo Cunha came to conclude, from 1955 to 1974, the main elements of the movement oscillated between moments of strong collective spirit and moments of friction and furious aesthetic disagreements. New Cinema was thus born out of a complex amalgam of moments of differences and convergences, intensively lived by their protagonists (Cunha 2005, 164).

Ultimately, what should be retained is that cinema managed to acquire its space within the high-brow intellectual circuits – and thus shaped itself according to specific premises and in order to identify itself with high-culture practice – for three main reasons: thematically, it adhered to trends that already had a prestigious history, such as the discussion of the country and its lyrical mirroring on screen;¹⁰³ aesthetically, it shared the common anxiety to renovate an artistic idiom regarded as outdated, and overcome national confinement by ‘catching up’ with post-war European movements; and, last but not least, because personal connections wove the tight link that made the first two reasons a reality. However, as this process of ‘updating’ was developing, according to the statistics presented in the previous chapter, Portuguese cinema was getting progressively more distant from audiences and becoming less able to capture the interest of distributors. Despite the initial euphoria of the momentum experienced in the artistic milieu when the first films came out, their box-office results were not enough to prevent the producer Cunha

¹⁰² For first-hand details about this situation, see Costa 1991, 157-160; and Pina 1986, 168.

¹⁰³ This was particularly evident in *Os Verdes Anos*, as well as in the already mentioned docufictions of the following years that created a certain tradition in Portuguese cinema. Examples worth mentioning are: Manoel de Oliveira’s *O Acto da Primavera* (1963); Fernando Lopes’s *Belarmino* (1964) and *Nós por Cá todos Bem* (1978); António Campos’s *Gente da Praia da Vieira* (1975); Manuel de Guimarães’s *Cântico Final* (1974-76); *A Culpa* (1979-81), by António Victorino de Almeida; Seixas Santos’s *Brandos Costumes* (1972-75).

Telles (one of the main people behind the making of the inaugural films of the Portuguese New Cinema) from filing for bankruptcy.

In an attempt to avoid writing a sort of ‘great man theory’¹⁰⁴ concerning Portuguese cinema – which could result from a decontextualised assumption of Portuguese New Cinema as the isolated propelling force of events – the examples provided and discussed have a twofold purpose: to reveal contextualising information of the backstage of the cultural panorama from which the type of cinema that came to dominate production and influence future generations and policies appeared; and to complement the more linear, chronological narrative that will be recounted in point 2.2. Thus, this was not so much of an effort to characterise descriptively the aesthetics or the main trends in contemporary Portuguese cinema as of understanding its cultural roots. Effectively, the intellectual activity that was going on behind the scenes shaped a great deal of the visible facets of Portuguese cinema. The main goal of this section has been to explain, through a depiction of the intellectual scene, the backdrop of contemporary Portuguese cinema. The knowledge of the mind-set of the dominant faction of Portuguese cinema will be essential to help us frame much of the aesthetic ontology that will be described and discussed in the next point.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the reason this thesis has attached so much importance to a period that precedes its main temporal delimitation is that, even though the period under consideration (1960-2010) has its own specificities, it is tributary of the happenings of the 1950s and before. The birth of the new waves were, indeed, the turning point that would determine the course of many future actions and decisions.

2.1.3 – ‘Portugueseisms’ in cinema

By way of a coda to the research carried out so far in this chapter, what follows will be a condensation of some elements of previous points, seen through the prism of the theory of the *shibboleth*. In a book on the expression of Portuguese national identity in art, inspired by the work of French historian Fernand Braudel, João Medina invokes the term ‘Portugueseisms’ (composed of Portuguese and the suffix

¹⁰⁴ This is a reference to the 19th-century quarrel between Thomas Carlyle and Herbert Spencer about the importance of a cultural and sociological framing of conspicuous figures in historiography.

'ism', an allusion to the history of art taxonomy) and reminds his readers of the discursive significance of the shibboleth as the rhetorical manifestation of something exclusive within a group, community, or nation. The author underlines something that has merited a long history of discussion, especially in the post-colonial strands of academia: how symbols (forged, amplified, or widely disseminated), on the one hand, matter for the construction of unity inside societies, and, on the other hand, play a major role in how a particular society is perceived by outsiders, who in turn assess those symbols based on their own values (Medina 2006, 34-38).

Medina's book is aligned with a current of analysis of the discussions about the country, to which Eduardo Lourenço's works and José Gil's contributions have been central in recent decades. Medina weighs in with the dissection of some symbols (such as the 'Galo de Barcelos', anthropomorphic metaphors such as 'Zé Povinho', or legends of Portuguese heroes, saints, and martyrs), which he uses as pretexts to deconstruct abstract ideas. Although this book is not exhaustive in terms of asserting and enumerating the different facets of a putative 'Portugueseness', it raises some interesting questions that can be incorporated in this research project. At an artistic level, the historian states that there are five 'myths' or national shibboleths: Sebastianism;¹⁰⁵ '*saudosismo*', or the mythology of nostalgia (*saudade*); a strong lyrical inclination,¹⁰⁶ capable of composing the richest and most aesthetic literary form of Portuguese literature; Manueline art; and decorative ceramic tiles (*azulejo*).¹⁰⁷ In a way, in social contexts these shibboleths, in their capacity as producers of differentiation,

¹⁰⁵ Sebastianism can be defined as a feeling of 'orphanhood' and of an endless wait for promised and expected greatness. This was provoked by the disappearance of the young and highly promising King Sebastião in the battle of Alcácer Quibir, in 1578 (the height of the age of Portuguese expansion), along with the dreams of further conquests. After the king's mysterious vanishing (his fate was never known, nor the body found), the country plunged into a profound crisis. Because Sebastião left no heir, the dynasty had a short life under the command of King António, who was at the time of his coronation an old priest and could not therefore provide continuity. After King António's death, the Portuguese throne fell into the hands of Felipe II of Spain and the Portuguese lost their independence to the Spanish for about 60 years, until 1640. This was perhaps one of the most traumatic events in the history of the country. Four centuries later, the feeling of 'Sebastianism' became immortalised in Fernando Pessoa's *Mensagem*, where the author invokes this episode to convey what he thought to be Portuguese lethargy and decadence since the missed opportunity and consequent tragedy in the sixteenth century.

¹⁰⁶ This idea is indeed very old. For instance, Fidelino de Figueiredo, in a book entitled 'Características da Literatura Portuguesa' (Characteristics of Portuguese Literature), written in 1913, asserts this lyrical inclination as being the backbone of the national literature.

¹⁰⁷ The last two points are particularly interesting from a sociological point of view. They comprise two good examples of stylistic traits that were disseminated as 'typical', with nationalistic purposes. Manueline is the Portuguese classification to describe a late gothic expression without a particular aesthetic specificity. As for the 'azulejo', although this form of handicraft may have reached its zenith in Portuguese architecture, it was not exclusive to it. Effectively, painted ceramic tiles were also used in Arabic, Spanish and Flemish (known as *Delftware*) construction for centuries (Medina 2006, 70-72).

become self-fulfilling prophecies, i.e. they are likely to actually become a reality if one truly believes that they are inescapable or part of one's identity, and therefore the path one is supposed to tread.

This thesis will not go into much further detail concerning the representation of Portuguese symbols in film.¹⁰⁸ Instead it will focus on establishing a connection between the 'tone' of much of contemporary Portuguese cinema and two other, much deeper, elements: the heavy, sad feeling of nostalgia or longing (*saudade*) and the lyrical inclination. This will provide a case study of how the spectres of this Portuguese mentality came to inhabit cinematic works.

The anthropologist João Leal mentioned that, during the building of Portugal as a 'collective individual', in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, that the individual was characterised by a peculiar idiosyncrasy that would find in *saudade* its condensed expression (Leal 2000, 18). This feeling of quiet anxiety and longing poured profusely into a series of literary works. The vast bibliography that, from many angles, addressed the literary manifestation of *saudade* attests to this and, as Ribas mentioned: 'O saudosismo aparece, assim, fundamentalmente, como uma ordem temática essencial para vários setores literários, de que o exemplo iniciático é António Nobre, mas que adquirirá maior importância com Teixeira de Pascoaes' [*Saudosismo* becomes, thus, fundamentally, an essential theme for various literary sectors, of which the example of António Nobre is seminal, but will achieve more importance with Teixeira de Pascoaes] (Ribas 2014, 37)¹⁰⁹. Furthermore, according to Moisés de Lemos Martins, *saudade* finds its artistic co-relation, for instance, in fado music (Martins 1990, 98).

Among the many possible considerations about contemporary Portuguese cinema, the reference to its stark tone has been many times emphatically underlined. This topic has, in itself, enough richness to generate a separate independent research project. Given that this thesis requires some brevity at this point, instead of a comprehensive list and analysis of a corpus of films, an overview and some illustrative examples will be provided. As the following paragraphs will explain, this impression of 'darkness' works at both a visual and a more abstract level and is perceived as a broad brushstroke of Portuguese cinema by several authors who have

¹⁰⁸ That is indeed a fragmentary task. As was mentioned before, there are lengthy studies dedicated to this issue, such as Ribas 2014; Areal 2012; Cunha 2015; and Lemièrre 2013.

¹⁰⁹ In addition, for a very recent, brief and yet pertinent critical sum and reading of the texts on *saudade* and their role in the broader context of 'Portuguese philosophy', see: Almeida 2017, 153-223)

looked in some depth at the style and aesthetics of these Portuguese films. It will be useful to grasp the outlines of this feature as it contrasts sharply with the structure of feeling of a number of cultural products consumed by the masses, which are under scrutiny in part 2.3 of this Chapter.

Concerning this perception of a generalised seriousness and dark tonality in Portuguese films, one empirical episode is worth mentioning. In October 2012, I was invited to the Centro de Documentação 25 de Abril from the University of Coimbra to analyse a recently acquired collection of about 105 film posters, referring to Portuguese films from the 1970s until the late 1990s. From an inspection of each poster a common feature emerged: the majority of those that presented faces featured worried, serious and, to some extent, sad faces. The observation of this unsettling coincidence motivated me to write a conference paper in which I publicly presented the posters and elaborated (Graça, 2014a) on the subject of the dark, sad tones that had permeated Portuguese cinema throughout the years. That presentation will be further developed here.

According to Paulo Filipe Monteiro, Portuguese cinema has been attracted to decadence and the portrayals of ‘depressão, derrota, morte, ausência, impotência e nostalgia’ [depression, defeat, death, absence, powerlessness and nostalgia], in a practice that seems to conform to a supposed ‘Portuguese destiny’ (Monteiro 1995, 950). Exploring a similar line of thought, Leonor Areal writes about a certain ‘tónica psicológica e simbólica relacionada com o sentimento de orfandade’ [psychological and symbolic emphasis, perhaps related to a feeling of orphanhood] (Areal 2011, 269), as well as a ‘cinema com laivos de tragédia – que Oliveira, Rocha, Reis-Cordeiro e Monteiro assumem [e que se torna] um dogma estético que fará sucessivos discípulos’ [cinema with hints of tragedy – which Oliveira, Rocha, Reis-Cordeiro and Monteiro assume as (and which becomes) an aesthetic dogma that will produce several disciples] (Areal 2011, 271). The same author continues: ‘Na década de 80 ressurgem as representações do fatalismo enquanto fundo mitológico nacional’ [In the 80s the representations of fatalism as national mythological background reappear] (Areal 2011, 278). Maria do Rosário Lupi Bello is also of the opinion that, since the 90s, a strand of films ‘procuram figurar um ‘Portugal’ sofrido e sofrível, em luta com os seus fantasmas históricos, sociais e políticos [...] favorecido pelo ‘fado’ da muito lusa natureza melancólica e melodramática’ [seek to portray a suffering and long-suffering ‘Portugal’, struggling with its historical, social and political ghosts [...]]

favoured by the ‘fado’ (fate) of the melancholic and melodramatic Lusitanian nature’ (Bello 2010, 26). Another voice adding to this choir is that of Jacques Lemière. When commenting on Pedro Costa’s cinema, often seen as miserabilist by its critics, the French scholar urges the reader to believe that this type of cinema has not abandoned its artistic premises and that is the reason why it continues to work on the Portuguese question (Lemière 2013, 62-63). In a way, Lemière seems to be implying that this stark way of presenting the country is at heart a matter of art (and not of ideology, tradition, or other motivation).

Effectively, Paulo Filipe Monteiro believes that the profound movement that started in the sixties presents with fascinating and fascinated recurrence Portuguese defeat (Monteiro 1995, 959). In an interview about the way films depict Portugal, Bénard da Costa also expressed the view that what is channelled to the audience is a ‘mundo claustrofóbico, isolado, sem abertura para o exterior e uma profunda tristeza’ [an isolated, claustrophobic world, without opening to the exterior, and a deep sadness] (Monteiro 2004, 24). Even Eduardo Lourenço, after a screening of ‘Trás-os-Montes’, in Aix-en-Provence, said: ‘É incrível até que ponto os nossos realizadores fazem um cinema enraizado na temática da morte, do luto da lembrança, da memória.’ [It is unbelievable the lengths our directors go to make a cinema rooted in the themes of death, mourning, remembrance, and memory.] (Lourenço 1995, 32). Monteiro, who analysed Portuguese films up until 1990, concludes:

Não existe em todo o novo cinema português [que, como se sabe, fez ‘escola’] um autor que se desprenda desta tradição melancólica do ‘mal de vivre’, ‘la vie est tellement triste’: ninguém que ocupe no cinema português o lugar solar que, na poesia, Sophia de Mello Breyner, ou mesmo Eugénio de Andrade, quiseram e souberam inventar.’ [There is not, in all Portuguese new cinema (which, as it is known, created a ‘school’) an author that detached from this melancholic tradition of the ‘mal de vivre’, ‘la vie est tellement triste’: no one that fills in Portuguese cinema the optimistic place that Sophia de Mello Breyner, or even Eugénio de Andrade, wanted and managed to create in poetry.] (Monteiro 1995, 960)

This alignment of perceptions about Portuguese cinema is not that far removed from the essence of the above-mentioned ‘Portugueseisms’, as well as from the way important thinkers have placed Portugal within a lugubrious perspective. In his ground-breaking and controversial essay ‘Labirinto da Saudade’, Eduardo Lourenço states:

Treze anos de guerra colonial, derrocada abrupta desse império, pareciam acontecimentos destinados não só a criar na nossa consciência um traumatismo profundo – análogo ao da perda de independência – mas também a um repensamento em profundidade da totalidade da nossa imagem perante nós mesmos e no espelho do mundo. [Thirteen years of colonial war, the abrupt collapse of that empire, seemed events destined not only to create in our consciousness a deep trauma – similar to the loss of independence – but also to have us rethinking in depth the totality of our image before ourselves and in the face of the mirror of the world.] (Lourenço 1999b, 46)

Concerning what the author calls a schizophrenic notion of historical reality by the country – that never fully understood its role as noble background actor of history (Lourenço 2011a, 107) – Lourenço asserts that after 1974: ‘Tudo parecia dispor-se para enfim, após um longo período de convívio hipertrofiado e mistificado connosco mesmos, surgisse uma época de implacável e viril confronto com a nossa realidade nacional de povo empobrecido, atrasado social e economicamente.’ [Everything seemed to be ready, after a long period of hypertrophied and mystified coexistence with ourselves, for the dawn of an era of relentless and virile confrontation with our national reality of an impoverished, lagging-behind socially and economically, people] (Lourenço, 1999b, 52).

The philosopher José Gil, who produced an influential essay on contemporary Portuguese mentality, also contributed to this debate when he proposed the theory that Portugal lives with the ‘fear of existing’, a consequence of previous repressions and a cause that still shapes the country in the twenty-first century. Gil affirms: ‘O medo herda-se. Porque interiorizado, mais inconsciente do que consciente, acaba por fazer parte do ‘caráter dos portugueses’ (ditos tristes, taciturnos, acabrunhados).’ [Fear is inherited. Because it is internalised, more unconscious than conscious, it ends up making part of the ‘character of the Portuguese’ (said to be sad, sullen, and woebegone)] (Gil 2004, 78). Notably, the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno also wrote extensively about Portuguese sadness. After the regicide, in 1908, Unamuno visited Portugal and wrote *Por Tierras de Portugal y de España*, which would only be translated and published in Portugal 78 years later. Among his many observations about the country, the Lusophile author emphasised a certain nihilist posture:

Portugal é um povo triste, e é-o mesmo quando sorri. A sua literatura, inclusive a sua literatura cômica e jocosa, é uma literatura triste. Portugal é um povo de suicidas,¹¹⁰ talvez um povo suicida. A vida não tem para ele sentido transcendente. Querem viver, talvez, sim; mas para quê? Mais vale não viver. [Portugal is a sad people, and it is so even when it smiles. Its literature, including comic and satirical literature, is sad literature. Portugal is a people of suicides, perhaps a suicidal people. Life has no transcendent sense for the Portuguese. They want to live, yes; but for what? Better not to live.] (Unamuno 2010, 73)

Still concerning this ‘fatalist’ vein made manifest in Portuguese cinema, it seems pertinent to invoke ‘decadence’, a feature that characterised the dominant currents of Portuguese high culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Monteiro 2004, 24). Some of the most canonical Portuguese authors adhered to the decadent movement, which spread from France all across Europe. It can be argued that the heavy and sombre atmosphere present in a good portion of Portuguese cinema can be considered, to a certain extent, as another consequence of these strong ties with literature. It should be noted that this decadent current, intrinsically pessimistic and preoccupied with the nation’s direction and its historical development¹¹¹ (or lack thereof), incorporated the shibboleths of *saudade* and ‘Sebastianism’. In its turn, in tandem with the literary tradition and the shibboleth of lyricism, Portuguese directors mirrored and translated these cultural premises, finding that the poetic presuppositions of *auteur* cinema offered the more appropriate expressive vehicle for their ideas. Moreover, this psychological dimension is in line with David Bordwell’s thoughts about the essence of art cinema:

The art film defines itself as realistic. It will show us actual locations, ‘realistic’ eroticism, and genuine problems (e.g. contemporary ‘alienation’, ‘lack of communication’). Most important, the art cinema depicts psychologically ambivalent or confused characters. Whereas characters in Hollywood film have clear-cut traits and objectives, the characters of the art cinema lack precise desires and goals. (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1991, 373)

¹¹⁰ This is a direct reference to the suicide of some of the preeminent intellectuals of the time, such as Antero de Quental, Alexandre Herculano, Soares dos Reis, Manuel Laranjeira, and Camilo Castelo Branco.

¹¹¹ The two major non-fiction examples of this discourse are perhaps Antero de Quental’s *Causas da Decadência dos Povos Peninsulares nos Últimos Três Séculos* (Quental 2008 – originally published in 1871) and Manuel Laranjeira’s *Pessimismo Nacional* (Laranjeira 2012 – originally published in 1907).

Finally, the connection between fatalism, disenchantment and the arts brings us to another set of three questions, which are worth mentioning. What does this *praxis* mean in terms of cultural value? Where is the place – as well as what is the cultural outlook and relevance – of comedy? Has this exploitation of the tragic been a mere stylistic option and coincidence, or was it utilised for ulterior purposes – namely, commercial motivations or the pursuit of artistic prestige? While the third question will be meticulously analysed in Chapter III, the answer to the first two may lie in a longstanding, Western association between seriousness and genius; of shocking tragedy as the reward for the successful capture of crude reality. This hierarchy privileges the *pathos* conveyed by the tormented artist – conferring it with the status of high art and the pinnacle of lyricism – over humour, more usually connoted with lesser forms of expression and popular culture.

Regarding the importance of seriousness and the tragic in Western cultural perception, George Steiner considers that there is a close connection between the idea of artistic exceptionalism and melancholia.¹¹² This connection, as contradictory as it may appear, Steiner argues, in his essay ‘The Great Ennui’, has structured European culture since the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the author suggests that a certain ‘nostalgia for disaster’ (Steiner 1971, 20) – so well presented in Wagner and neo-classical adaptations of the three great ancient Greek tragedians – emerges as a reaction to the rise of anaemic, alienating expressions directed towards the bourgeoisie (Steiner 1971, 17-24). Indeed, it could be argued that the repeated use of tragic elements may have been deployed in an instrumental way by Portuguese filmmakers, in an attempt to associate their works with high-culture cinema.

In short, the previous pages have asserted that there was a powerful will to represent the country, to invent and constantly re-invent its image, by resorting to historical, cultural and aesthetic matrices. The point has also been made that this desire resulted from an intersection of similar mind-sets, as was made manifest through the continuation of an intellectual tradition. In other words, emphasis was placed on the notion of ‘Portugueseisms’ and various shades and degrees of ‘darkness’ in Portuguese cinema. There is much more to it than sadness, confinement and despair, of course. However, like the literary (poetic) inclination or the rejection of film genres and Hollywood homogenisation, the stark tone has been one of the

¹¹² This idea is mentioned by Filipe Monteiro (Monteiro 1995, 950).

most remarkable and recognisable features of Portuguese cinema for decades, as well as a connotation from which it will not be able to escape anytime soon.

2.2 – Contemporary Portuguese Cinema

2.2.1 – What were the filmmakers doing?

In the previous section (2.1) this thesis clarified two main points: the intellectual background and tradition upon which Portuguese contemporary cinema was founded, and the relationship between films from the 1950s onwards, Portuguese cultural legacies and the broader artistic milieu. Shifting slightly from an approach that privileged the cultural entourage of films and their connection with their surrounding environment, this thesis will now zoom in on issues concerning film history. Thus, the present point (2.2) intends to provide some context about the history and aesthetics of Portuguese cinema in order to complement the research already carried out and help to frame the third part of Chapter II. Consequently it will present some events and aspects in an abridged version and in a necessarily brief and partial way. It will follow a chronological order and will cover the major events and aspects that pertain to the overall research question.

The main objective, as the question posed above suggests, is to characterise Portuguese cinema through the understanding of its aesthetic and ideological development, and not to write another history of contemporary Portuguese cinema. That has already been done in many competent ways and it is the close reading and critical processing of that literature that will serve as the basis for the following pages. It should also be noted that many of the situations mentioned throughout this contextualising subchapter will be further developed in other parts of the thesis. Indeed, the history of contemporary Portuguese cinema presented here should serve the overriding purpose of this chapter, which is to describe what happened in the realms of cinema and the public, allowing these two worlds to overlap in order to see where they converged and where they diverged. First, however, it is necessary to establish a clearer idea of both.

As will be explained below, different forces have always existed within the broader group of filmmakers working inside Portugal. In a country where cinema has always been dependent on limited public funding, competition was fierce and mainly

motivated by different ideologies of what cinema should be as well as by the struggle for viability. However, inside the art cinema section, the *nouvelle vague*-inspired strand became preponderant. This group not only managed to establish itself, but also inspired many young filmmakers that would continue a certain way of making films, thereby creating and consolidating a certain tradition. To provide an account of the continuities and disruptions in Portuguese cinema will be the task of the following pages.

2.2.2 – The end of formulaic cinema and the rise of the ‘novo cinema’¹¹³ movement

After the first cinema years in Portugal, the first stable platform of film production – and with it the first cell of influential filmmakers – gained shape after the consolidation of the Estado Novo regime. Believing that cinema and radio could be used as efficient propaganda tools, the regime soon began supporting and experimenting with these two mediums. According to João Bénard da Costa, it was in this context that José Leitão de Barros rose to prominence, bringing along with him a number of filmmakers, namely: António Lopes Ribeiro, Chianca de Garcia, Cottinelli Telmo, Jorge Brum do Canto, Arthur Duarte, and Adolfo Coelho¹¹⁴ (Costa 1991, 41). According to Bénard da Costa, these directors would dominate Portuguese production until the end of the 50s, making the rules, the patterns and the styles. They would bring a series of technicians and artists of approximately the same age

¹¹³ To avoid any possible confusion in the reader’s mind, it should be highlighted here that the expressions ‘novo cinema’ and ‘cinema novo’, when used in the context of Portuguese cinema, have no relation at all with the terms used to designate the similar Brazilian movement. Although ‘cinema novo’ originally belonged to the Brazilian context, the expression (along with ‘novo cinema’, which is used interchangeably given the linguistic proximity) became common in Portugal to refer to the New Cinema inaugurated by *Dom Roberto*, *Os Verdes Anos*, and *Belarmino*. Despite some affinities and occasional intersections (both situations are, after all, new waves, cinematically speaking), the Portuguese and the Brazilian new cinemas were two independent movements running on parallel tracks. This meant that, over time, it became implicit in texts that, when writing or talking about the Portuguese case, the expressions ‘cinema novo’ or ‘novo cinema’ (without specifying Portuguese) never refer to the Brazilian movement, and vice versa. That is why the terms should be read and understood taking into account the overall context in which they are used. In the case of this thesis, there is no risk of overlap given that it revolves around the Portuguese case and the Brazilian movement is not part of the equation. Considering all the above, unless stated otherwise, the expressions ‘novo cinema’ and ‘cinema novo’ should always be read and understood according to the Portuguese context, and there is thus no reason to confuse it with the Brazilian case. Paulo Filipe Monteiro discussed this situation in more detail and explained the origins of the overlap between the two terms (Monteiro 1995, 665).

¹¹⁴ Paulo Cunha estimates that about three quarters of the production of feature films between 1933 and 1944 was due to this small conglomerate of filmmakers (Cunha 2015, 74).

that from the end of the 20s onwards would dominate and prevail during two or three decades in all Portuguese cinema productions. (Costa 1991, 41).

Contrary to the plans initially envisioned by António Ferro, from the beginning of the 1930s until the 1950s musical films (some of them dramas) and comedies populated Portuguese cinema. Although allowed by the censorship and half-heartedly encouraged by the state, these simplistic films did not actually mirror the aesthetic wishes of the regime (Mendonça 2013, 147), which would have preferred to invest in historical and literary adaptations (Baptista 2010, 7).¹¹⁵ However, these films thrived and left their name in the history books in large part due to their popularity. Films such as *Fado*, *Capas Negras*, *A Severa*, *Aldeia da Roupa Branca*, *Canção de Lisboa* and *As Pupilas do Senhor Reitor* managed to surpass the 100,000 viewers mark, a feat that would not be repeated until the 1980s (Costa 1991, 72). Capitalising on the popularity of ‘revista’ theatre actors such as António Silva, Ribeirinho (António Ribeiro Lopes’s brother), Vasco Santana and Beatriz Costa, these films depicted in a caricatured manner the petite bourgeoisie in Lisbon of small merchants and servants that was a consequence of the rural exodus (Pereira 2013, 128).

After the end of António Ferro’s era as the head of Secretariado Nacional de Informação (SNI) in 1949, the above-mentioned group of filmmakers started to slow down their production rhythm and gradually retired, leaving future productions in the hands of their disciples. The latter became known as the ‘assistants’ generation’, the name reflecting the fact that, in general, these filmmakers reproduced pre-existing formulae and methods and did not dare to innovate or re-invent (Sales 2013, 170). This creative crisis, along with the lack of interest on the part of audiences who were growing tired of a repetitive style and the lack of institutional support, resulted in an ‘irreversible decadence’ of national production during the 1950s (Reia-Baptista and Moeda 2013, 27). Without public acclaim, held back by a tighter censorship,¹¹⁶ and deprived of funding for full feature films,¹¹⁷ the old paradigm seemed headed

¹¹⁵ António Ferro encapsulated his scorn for popular productions when he referred to them as ‘the cancer of Portuguese cinema’ (Baptista 2010, 7). As will be shown, this tension would have consequences in the long run.

¹¹⁶ Cunha suggests that the censorship changed their strategy, privileging repression over prevention, which delayed the finishing of films and conditioned the overall timings of production (Cunha 2015 78).

¹¹⁷ After António Ferro’s resignation, SNI entered a period of turbulence until 1958. One of the consequences was a decrease in the budget to spend on cinema (Cunha 2015, 70-71). In addition, the matrix of cinematic activity in the early 1950s shifted from feature films to short films. 1955 was considered for a long time the ‘year zero’ because not a single feature film premiered. This

towards a route of evanescence even during a time when cinema consumption was in expansion.¹¹⁸

The turning point came in 1958 when the SNI stabilised under the leadership of César Moreira Baptista. Seeking to revive Ferro's vision of an aesthetically vanguardist cinema and aware of the stagnation in Portuguese cinema, now aggravated by the fragmentation of the old generation, Baptista rebooted the policies for national cinema (Monteiro 2001, 311). In effect, the state carried out this project by discovering new talents and providing them with the means, mainly through grants, to study abroad at prestigious schools (such as the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC), from which António da Cunha Telles and Manuel Costa e Silva graduated, or the London Film School, attended by Fernando Lopes) or to work as assistants to prestigious filmmakers (for example, Paulo Rocha assisted Jean Renoir, and Fonseca e Costa worked with Michelangelo Antonioni in *L'Eclisse*) (Monteiro 1995, 649). This atmosphere even led these filmmakers to believe that at the beginning of the 1960s European youth was in vogue – even in dictatorial Portugal. Being young, having new ideas was all of a sudden a valuable thing. (Monteiro 2001, 312).

These policies promoting cosmopolitanism, along with a certain cinephile environment,¹¹⁹ created the basis for the emergence of a new wave of young filmmakers who, along with veterans such as Ernesto de Sousa, Manuel de Guimarães and Manoel de Oliveira, were eager to renew filmic languages and experiment with a fresh approach to cinema. After Guimarães's isolated incursion into a proto-neo-realism in 1951 with *Saltimbancos*, three seminal films decisively inaugurated Portuguese cinematic modernity: *Dom Roberto*, from 1962, Ernesto de

was understood as the height of the cinematic crisis and perceived as a disinvestment. However, as Cunha has shown recently, 99 short films were made during that same year and the state never actually ceased to, more or less directly, support cinema; it simply did not support the group of directors that had previously benefitted from that funding (Cunha 2015, 71-79).

¹¹⁸ During the 1940s and 1950s the number of theatres and screens in the country almost doubled in order to keep up with the demand. This was also the result of some economic development in the country and changes in society (Reia-Baptista and Moeda 2013, 27).

¹¹⁹ In contrast with the previous generations, the 1960s gave to the country the 'primeira geração de cineastas cultos existente em Portugal' [first generation of cultivated filmmakers in Portugal], according to João César Monteiro (Monteiro 1969, 407). Effectively, alongside the stays abroad, echoes from central Europe arrived via magazines such as *Cahiers du Cinéma*, *Positif*, *Bianco & Nero*, and *Cinema Nuovo* (Cunha 2013a, 175). Cinephile magazines would also be published in Portugal from 1951 onwards: *Imagem* (edited by Ernesto de Sousa), *Filme* (headed by Luís de Pina), and *Celuloide*. Finally, the repercussions of the cinema club movement (movimento cineclubista), which would eventually be suppressed by the regime, should not be overlooked either, since it promoted a culture of the watching and debating of films. For detailed information about this cinephile movement of the end of the 1950s see: Granja 2006.

Sousa's only feature film; *Os Verdes Anos*, Paulo Rocha's disruptive debut in 1963; and *Belarmino*, from 1964, the first work by Fernando Lopes. While *Dom Roberto*, with its depiction of extreme poverty, broken dreams, and fatal hunger, is usually considered a fusion of a neo-realist¹²⁰ take on society with modern French style, *Os Verdes Anos* and *Belarmino* presented major visual elements and hallmarks of the French New Wave, such as: small, intricate teams headed by an author; jump-cuts; ellipses; narrative experimentation; long and contemplative shots; carefully arranged photography; and a certain depletion of verism.

In addition to the policies promoted by the state, the role of producer and director António da Cunha Telles was pivotal in the writing of a new chapter in the history of Portuguese cinema. Along with the impulses given by other, less influential producers such as Francisco de Castro, Manuel Queiroz and Ricardo Malheiro (Grilo 2006, 18), António da Cunha Telles founded 'Produções Cunha Telles' and became one of the main protagonists of this cinematic transition. Back in Lisbon after graduating from the IDHEC, Cunha Telles was called to share the experience he had acquired. He conducted the I Curso de Cinema (Cinema Course I), promoted by SNI, which was a great success, with over 200 students – among whom were some future directors and technicians of the 'Cinema Novo português', including Acácio de Almeida, Fernando and João Matos Silva, and Alfredo Tropa (Grilo 2006, 18). However, it would be through his company that the producer would manage to accomplish in a few years what the state had not achieved in two decades. His decisive and committed initiative created the opportunity to successfully realise the potential of filmmakers and teams that were waiting to make their debuts in feature films (Cunha 2013a, 180).¹²¹

This heterogeneous (Sales 2011, 129) ensemble of filmmakers around Cunha Telles, that shared an artistic tendency and three main goals – to disturb the status quo, to adopt a style that was perceived as avant-garde and intellectual, and to attain the means to do so – was dubbed the 'Cinema Novo' (New Cinema) group. Eduardo

¹²⁰ *Dom Roberto* was inclusively selected to the official competition of the 1963 Cannes Film Festival. However, director Ernesto de Sousa was not able to attend the festival. The political critique and Marxist approach to Portuguese society in *Dom Roberto* led to his arrest by PIDE, the Estado Novo political police.

¹²¹ Major examples of directors supported by Cunha Telles are Paulo Rocha (*Verdes Anos*, 1963, and *Mudar de Vida*, 1967), Fernando Lopes (*Belarmino*, 1964), Faria de Almeida (*Catembe*, 1964), and António de Macedo (*Domingo à Tarde*, 1965, and *Sete Balas para Selma*, 1967). Notably, he also produced Manuel de Guimarães's *O Crime da Aldeia Velha*, in 1964, and *O Trigo e o Joio*, in the following year.

Geda, a film historian and also a member of this movement, recalls the way this term came into being. Paraphrasing this author: in Portugal, as abroad, the designation of ‘new cinema’ began as a journalistic formula, with the main intent of promoting the so-called auteur cinema against the economic and ideological dominance of the industrial cinema controlled by Hollywood; at the beginning of the 1960s, author cinema, produced mainly in Europe, became New Cinema, following in the footsteps of the French New Wave (Geda 1977, 62).

According to Paulo Cunha, the expression New Portuguese Cinema developed during the 1960s and spread until it became commonplace through the writings of Luís de Pina and João Bénard da Costa – both of whom would become directors of the Portuguese Cinemateque (Luís de Pina from 1982 to 1991, and Bénard da Costa from 1992 to 2009). In effect, they pioneered the study of this period of Portuguese cinema. Subsequently, throughout their lives and careers in the Cinemateque, they underlined and circulated the idea that the 1960s’ group was the Portuguese version of the French new wave. Pina and Bénard da Costa were therefore responsible not only for the predominance of the term ‘Cinema Novo’ to designate the 1960s’ filmmakers, but also for the institutional canonisation of that cinema (Cunha 2015, 28).

Despite their many personal differences, the filmmakers of this New Cinema understood that this category, even if in some way artificially created, represented a sense of unity that could prove beneficial. Similarly to what had happened earlier to their French counterparts (Marie 2003, 14), Portuguese directors realised that they could create more impact and increase their lobbying power if they were regarded and articulated as an organised cell or movement. As Filipe Monteiro pointed out, the ‘Cinema Novo’ directors boasted ‘uma extraordinária capacidade simultâneamente artística e organizativa’ [an extraordinary capacity, simultaneously artistic and organisational] (Monteiro 2001, 306).

As we shall see, the influence that this group achieved when the members converged to fight for a common goal helps to explain in great part their ability to thrive and survive, overcoming barriers and difficulties of all sorts. Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects about this renewal was the fact that this group managed to gain terrain very rapidly, coming to dominate the whole Portuguese cinematic scene by the end of the 1960s. In a way, more than an anti-industry stance, the identity of this group was defined by its corporatist network.

2.2.3 – The twofold paradox: the affirmation of the ‘Cinema Novo’ movement during Salazar and Caetano’s regime and the decrease of Portuguese cinema spectators in this period

One of the keys to interpret the destiny of Portuguese cinema from the late 1950s until 2010 was proposed by Paulo Filipe Monteiro, in 2001, in an essay entitled ‘A Margin at the Centre’ [Uma Margem no Centro]. The author’s reasoning leads to the conclusion that even before the revolution, the so-called new cinema could reach and control all or almost all of the crucial places concerning the cinematic activity, having had in its hands the power to produce, teach and criticise, despite its political alignment with the left wing (Monteiro 2001, 327). In a way, not only did this generation manage to assert itself, but also, unlike their counterparts in cinema history, its members did not become a counterculture – especially as that would have been forbidden in the context of a fascist regime. This renewal, operated by a marginal group, became the central, state-supported practice.

According to Monteiro, there are two main reasons, complemented by a third one, that explain this paradox. First, although some of the members of this new wave of directors supported the left wing, their films did not at the time show an overt political commitment to those ideals. Due to the struggle to be modern and the above-mentioned policies, Portuguese new cinema was heavily influenced by the two movements that were more in vogue internationally: Italian Neo-realism and, especially, the French New Wave (Reia-Baptista and Moeda 2013, 29). Therefore, Portuguese ‘Cinema Novo’ was based on the premise of a concept of cinema as a higher form of art, created through a process led by the figure of the *auteur*.

By the end of the 60s, a schism was clear within the group of new filmmakers: a line of authorial cinema, of Bazinian inspiration, and influenced by the Cahiers du Cinéma; and a realist cinema, in which the social or political component determines the themes and the forms (Monteiro 2001, 326). However, according to Filipe Monteiro, it was the first of these factions that dominated the process of the taking of the citadel of Portuguese cinema. It was this faction that was called to direct the first college of cinema in Portugal, in 1971 (Monteiro 2001, 327). This circumstance, for instance, would be crucial for the apprenticeship for filmmakers from generations to come, and the college thus became a vantage point from which

to channel perspectives about cinema and production methods. As Cunha pointed out:

Durante as décadas em que foi a única escola de cinema em Portugal, a Escola Superior de Cinema foi uma instituição fundamental para consagrar e promover uma ideia de cinema que marcou gerações de cineastas e técnicos cinematográficos. Ao longo de décadas, os mais internacionalmente premiados e reconhecidos realizadores do cinema português passaram pela Escola Superior de Cinema [...] tendo recebido uma formação técnica e estética que reflete muito dos valores do Novo cinema português, nomeadamente a intransigência estética, o acentuado carácter autoral e uma filiação nos princípios do cinema de arte moderno. [During the decades when it was the only film school in Portugal, the Escola Superior de Cinema was a fundamental institution to canonise and promote an idea of cinema that marked generations of directors and technicians alike. For decades, the most internationally recognised and awarded directors of Portuguese cinema attended the Escola Superior de Cinema [...] having received a technical and aesthetic tuition that mirrors many of the values of the 'Portuguese New Cinema', namely aesthetic inflexibility, the accentuated authorial mark, and an affiliation with the principles of modern cinema.] (Cunha 2015, 445-446)

Monteiro's argument continues, suggesting that the apparent contradictions in the relation between 'Cinema Novo' and the state can only be explained by the fact that contrarily to cine-clubist and Neo-realist movements, Portuguese New Cinema developed more aesthetic concerns than political ones (Monteiro 2001, 329). This was not seen by the group as a limitation, but as a virtue. Ultimately, they tried to overcome a Neo-realist sort of activism with another kind of resistance that was possible to develop during the Estado Novo: a resistance to the idea of resistance itself (Monteiro 2001, 331). Making a clear distinction between social and aesthetic progressivism, the regime before 25 April accepted these filmmakers, convinced that they did not have enough influence to mobilise vast audiences and, even if they did, that such mobilisation would not be centered around politics (Monteiro 2001, 338).

With regard to the second reason, as has already been brought out to some degree, 'Cinema Novo' managed to gain ground because it filled the void generated by the disappearance of the brief Neo-realist attempt, as well as by the decline of the old cinema, which by the end of the 1960s was defunct. Paulo Cunha explains that this was more of an escalation than a sudden transition. According to Cunha, in the 1960s the number of films by the 'Cinema Novo' filmmakers and other progressive figures such as Manoel de Oliveira and the Neo-realists E. Sousa and M. Guimarães

was still a minority (about 10), when compared to the almost 30 made by directors aligned with the old paradigm (Cunha 2013, 182). However, there was a reversal in this trend by the end of the decade: from the ‘old’ cinema, only six films would premiere whereas the ‘new’ filmmakers would make, before 25 April 1974, eleven feature films (Cunha 2013, 182).

As for the short-lived filmic expression of Neo-realism in Portugal, as Paulo Filipe Monteiro mentions, it was destined to disappear. Not only did Neo-realism fail to find fertile ground in fascist Portugal, due to an overtly political tone, it was also a movement that, by the mid-1960s, was becoming outdated in its own birthplaces: Italy and France. This was why it became possible for the alternative proposed by the ‘Cinema Novo’ group to win the favour of the Portuguese state.

In effect, this support signalled the institutional acknowledgement of this structural change. According to Fausto Cruchinho, the directors of the New Cinema were the main recipients of funds to produce cinema during the Marcellist Spring (Cruchinho 2001a, 344). As director Fernando Lopes stated: ‘No cinema, nós éramos, de facto, o verdadeiro poder.’ [In cinema, we were, indeed, the true power] (Lopes 1985, 68). This ‘we’, used by Lopes in the quote, leads to the third, complementary reason that allowed the establishment of the ‘Cinema Novo’ group: the ability to create a network and to claim power (Costa 1991, 140). The most notorious political achievements by the ‘Cinema Novo’ group, and perfect examples of their strategic synchronicity and influence, were the creation of the Centro Português de Cinema, funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and, finally, the 7/71 law.

Alongside the state, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has played a decisive role in many sectors of Portugal’s cultural life since its inception in 1953. For instance, it was also responsible for the creation of grants to study abroad, and it co-operated actively in the promotion of Portuguese cinema both inside and outside Portugal. Indeed, the Gulbenkian Foundation has had a strong history of supporting the arts in many ways, mainly those trends they considered more daring and avant-garde – the role of the institution was particularly important at critical moments when governments were reluctant to prioritise the cultural sector of the economy.

By the end of 1967, after the financial collapse of Cunha Telles’ productions – since the new ventures did not generate sustainable revenues – the filmmakers gathered at the Oporto cinema club to discuss the situation of Portuguese cinema.

The result of that meeting was the collective writing of a document entitled '*O ofício do cinema em Portugal*' [The craft of cinema in Portugal], which contained detailed and persuasive information about the state of affairs of all quadrants related to cinema in Portugal (audiences, filmmakers' intentions, future projects, and cinephilia) (Costa 1991, 139). This document, which in essence constituted a petition for financial and institutional support, would be presented, in the following year, to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, regarded as the most plausible alternative to the state. The answer was positive.

The Foundation agreed to supervise and subsidise for a trial period of three years a cooperative of filmmakers that, in 1971, would become a reality under the name of Centro Português de Cinema (Portuguese Cinema Centre). Creating this centre was fundamental not only to demonstrate the unity around a common goal, but also to create a space to grow and integrate new individuals into that project.¹²² Hence, this step definitively asserted the position of the 'Cinema Novo' group and laid the basis for the discussion of new legislation to supervise cinematographic activity in the country. The culmination of this road would be the creation, in 1971, after much debate, of the 7/71 law that founded the Instituto Português de Cinema [Portuguese Cinema Institute] (to replace the Centro Português de Cinema) and enshrined the advance of artistic cinema.¹²³ Although the 7/71 law centralised and put cinema under the total aegis of the state, it met a great part of filmmakers' goals and expectations.

Parallel to this *per aspera ad astra* narrative of struggle and achievement of institutional relevance, lies the rather less positive history of the economic consequences of the public reception of the films – which proved to be problematic – for this new chapter in Portuguese cinema. In fact, although the production momentum was remarkable and crucial to the affirmation of a new wave of directors, it was financially stalled by a lack of interest on the part of distributors (who at this time were mainly interested in American films) and of the public in general. After the initial handful of ground-breaking prospects António Cunha Telles closed down his production company. Combined with the shutdown of Manuel Queiroz's Cinedex (founded in 1962) that had produced ten feature films, Portuguese cinema was on

¹²² Namely, Alfredo Tropa, Alberto Seixas Santos, António Pedro Vasconcelos, Manuel Costa e Silva, Acácio de Almeida, Elso Roque, José Fonseca e Costa, and Manuel Faria de Almeida (Costa 1991, 139-140). These names trod their first steps in the Centro Português de Cinema but would only gain protagonism in the following two decades.

¹²³ For thorough analysis of the 7/71 law, see pages 205–209.

the verge in 1967 of disappearing due to poor box-office revenues. Bénard da Costa's words summarise this point succinctly: 'Despite the historic and artistic relevance of these productions, none of them managed to achieve commercial success, and in spite of their low cost, all of them lost money' (Costa 1991, 134).

As mentioned above, this crisis inspired the filmmakers to get together and find an alternative that would save their cinematic practice from the market system, an environment they despised and in which they knew they would not survive. It is important to stress that, like other new waves throughout the world, a great part of the identity of Portuguese New Cinema was built around the repudiation of the dominant paradigm of American cinema. Portuguese filmmakers were, therefore, operating in a marginal space. Many of the most renowned directors, including Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, Paulo Rocha, and later João Botelho and Pedro Costa, trod very individualistic paths, in line with the commandment of the *politique des auteurs*. This is why the 'Cinema Novo' group soon lost any commercial illusions they might have had and favoured a solution involving their sheltering under the auspices of the state and other philanthropic institutions.

Three problems were at the core of the situation described. The first, as mentioned by João Bénard da Costa, lies in the possibility that at this time the average spectator was not able to differentiate the new from the old cinema, and the overall poor reputation of Portuguese cinema during the 1950s which jeopardised the 'Cinema Novo' films (Costa 1991, 134). Second, as Bénard da Costa also suggested (Costa 1991, 134) and Monteiro reiterated (Monteiro 1995, 669), the country was not prepared to accept and assimilate the filmic language that the new group intended to use and develop.

Very few productions showing the huge mutation of the cinema during the time of the new fashions and 'new cinemas' reached Portugal. The 'bourgeois elite' that could understand them was too suspicious of the Portuguese cinema to even see its productions. The traditional spectator regarded those productions as rather hermetic and elitist. (Costa 1991, 134).

As point 2.1 explained, 'Cinema Novo' was born out of a very specific context, characterised by the convergence of creative individuals with a strong internationalist and progressive mind-set, willing to make the most of the existing intellectual capital in Portugal. Unlike the rest of the country, this minority kept abreast of the latest novelties in the world of film which were arriving from central Europe. Without the

basis having been laid for the appropriate reception of works such as *Os Verdes Anos* or *Domingo à Tarde*, the films of the Portuguese New Wave were not found to be particularly appealing by a wider audience which, by then, was developing a taste for popular, imported productions.

The third problem concerned distribution. As Chapters III and IV will show in more detail, the absence of strict control over distribution and exhibition handicapped the circulation of Portuguese cinema. From 1946 to 1960 the number of screens in the country increased by 20% and admissions by 45%, as a result of the increase in the number of screenings. However, contrary to what had happened during the 1940s, when the majority of big hits were Portuguese, the 1950s marked the beginning of a trend of estrangement of Portuguese audiences from national films – both in the big cities of Oporto and Lisbon and the interior – that would be aggravated in subsequent years. In addition, as Cunha stressed, there was a decrease in the production of national feature films combined with a flood of foreign productions. The direct consequence of this situation was the loss of screenings and exhibition time for Portuguese film (Cunha 2015, 85). It is clear that distribution companies did benefit from the general expansion of screening venues and widening of demand, but not necessarily through the exhibition of Portuguese cinema.

Ultimately, unable to generate sufficient returns, Portuguese New Cinema proved not as successful in recovering its investment through the box office as it was in changing the aesthetic paradigm. A symptom of this is the fact that the commercial unpopularity of the first ‘Cinema Novo’ films provoked discussion around another central topic: what was their actual purpose? It was also around this time of the ‘Cinema Novo’ starting to reveal economic weaknesses that one of the main traits of Portuguese New Cinema began to take shape: its international vocation. According to Granja, the 1960s were a sensitive period in the coexistence and discussion of two apparently antagonistic agendas and ambitions: on the one hand, cinema as a universal art form, backed by cinephilia as a manifestation of mass culture; on the other, cinema as an expression based on tendentially exclusive aesthetic criteria, i.e. cinema as a cultural practice of the elite (Granja 2006, 363). This latter would also imply a cinematic practice of thinking beyond national borders and the masses, seeking the pursuit of artistic prestige and intellectual legitimation in a dissemination circuit underpinned by film festivals and screenings in exclusive cultural settings.

2.2.4 – The post-revolutionary period and the ‘Portuguese School’ controversy

The previous section has shown that the revolution carried out by ‘Cinema Novo’ had managed to establish itself even before the political revolution that would end the dictatorial regime in Portugal. However, after 25 April, during the revolutionary biennium, Portugal went through a turbulent period that, for cinema, represented one of the most remarkable periods of imbalance in its history. Although filmmakers enjoyed a relatively prosperous period during the ‘Marcellist spring’, the revolution meant not just a suspension in the course of their work, but also, to many, a complete interruption.¹²⁴

Leonor Areal is cautious when assessing this period. Paraphrasing Areal, after 1974 the history of Portuguese cinema ceases to resemble a tenuous and chronological line (consisting of a handful of films per year), in that there is a quantitative explosion that displays multiple aesthetic directions, and experimental derivations (Areal 2011, 19). In addition to the spree of documentaries that occurred right after the coup,¹²⁵ a contextualisation for this reality can be found in Bénard da Costa’s words: ‘like all other Portuguese, the cinematographers were divided between several different factions and parties, and the apparent unity of the “new cinema” was broken’ (Costa 1991, 155-156). The consequence was the fragmentation of the Centro Português de Cinema into smaller cells, such as Cinequipa, Cinequanon, Viver, Grupo Zero, and Paz dos Reis (Reia-Baptista and Moeda 2013, 33) In a way, the division was not only ideological in the strict political sense, but also with regard to aesthetic options. Continuing this sociological reading, Areal goes so far as to suggest that films from this period may be seen merely as testimonies and remnants of a ‘complexo jogo de interesses e convicções. Os actores sociais circulavam entre ideologias opostas, como num jogo de conveniência e sobrevivência social’ [complex game of interests and convictions. The social actors circulated between opposed ideologies as in a game of convenience and social survival] (Areal 2011, 23-27).

In political terms, the intellectual and even aesthetic and cinephile qualities of Portuguese New Cinema were regarded as unable to communicate with the masses

¹²⁴ For a synthesis of this period with regard to cinema and the apolitical stance of many filmmakers, refer to: Graça and Dias 2014.

¹²⁵ The major example of this spontaneous moment that brought together almost every single filmmaker in the country is a unique collective documentary entitled *O Povo e as Armas*.

and articulate revolutionary doctrine. In 1975 Vasco Gonçalves' government, realising that the authors were not keen to forgo the autonomy they had previously attained, decided to support populist filmmakers that even the old regime had left behind – such as the veteran Arthur Duarte, Constantino Esteves and Teixeira da Fonseca (Areal 2011, 23-27). The result of this choice, made in order to advance revolutionary ideals, was the 1975 film-funding plan: apart from Fernando Lopes, Manoel de Oliveira, and Fernando Matos Silva, it gave priority to the faction that was politically closer to those in power (Costa 1991, 159), thereby leading to the majority of the New Cinema authors losing their social influence.

To some extent April's revolution and the ensuing post-revolutionary period, as contradictory as it may seem, eventually compromised the conclusion and the exhibition of many films (Reia-Baptista and Moeda 2013, 32). This situation shows that, even though the Portuguese cinema milieu would never be the same after the revolution, the directors who thrived on their independence had to wait for the aftermath of the counter-revolution to continue working in terms similar to those that prevailed before 25 April (Graça and Dias 2014, 8). In fact some stability would only come with the advent of the moderate counter-revolution, the suppression of left wing radicalism on 25 November 1975, and, finally, with the writing of the new Constitution in the following year. However, projects left on standby or delayed beyond practical recovery, as well as internal wars among directors, left traces that would partially reconfigure the topography of Portuguese cinema. The normalisation brought about by the transition to the democratic period that ensued meant in practical terms the restitution of power to those who had lost it temporarily. This meant that the filmmakers from the 'Cinema Novo', as well as their younger followers, could continue a cinematic practice based on relatively similar premises.

The term 'Portuguese School' (*Escola Portuguesa*) is perhaps even more controversial than 'Cinema Novo'. Periphrastically speaking, it describes the heterogeneous group of filmmakers that continued to make authorial cinema or followed in the footsteps of references from the previous decade. The use of the term after its inception by Paulo Rocha in the 1960s (Areal 2011, 268) can be regarded as a semantic solution, a generic construct for this putative phenomenon of the continuation of the 'cinema novo' movement. Referring to a tendency in Portuguese cinema that was rekindled at some point in the mid-1970s (after the revolutionary period) and spread into the 1980s, the Portuguese school, as Paulo

Filipe Monteiro argued, consisted of an attempt to legitimate the ‘Cinema Novo’ movement by projecting it as the source of a tradition (Monteiro 2004, 31).

However if, on the one hand, it is recognised that the utility of this expression was to convey the above-mentioned idea, on the other, academics such as Areal (Areal 2011, 268-269), Monteiro (Monteiro 2004, 31), and Cunha (Cunha 2015, 448) point out that it possesses the flaw of reducing a plethora of personal expressions into a single category – as convenient as it might have been, for instance, as a marketing label. In this context Areal wrote about this phenomenon of influence, proposing the ‘theory of contagion’ to explain this exchange between artists that kept intact the broad-strokes that had governed Portuguese cinema since the 1960s. According to Areal, the Portuguese cinema milieu has been a rather small circle, where everyone knows everyone and ends up working together, therefore generating intrinsic praxes, ethics and aesthetics. This proximity might explain a certain unity in the creative processes that characterised Portuguese films from this era, despite numerous differences and parallel evolutions. (Areal 2011, 275).

Less of a group expression than was the ‘Cinema Novo’ group, the Portuguese school stood for a way of understanding cinema, i.e. as a personal, artistic expression. Moreover, just like Cunha above, Areal emphasised the word ‘school’ and its important connection to an actual educational institution:

[...] o epíteto de escola portuguesa ajusta-se a uma certa estética e ética do cinema que se desenvolve na fase do cinema livre e prossegue ainda pelos anos 80 e 90 adentro, absorvendo novos autores como João Mário Grilo, João Botelho, José Álvaro de Morais. Entretanto, em 1972 fora criada a Escola de Cinema do Conservatório Nacional, onde deram aulas Paulo Rocha, António Reis E Alberto Seixas Santos. Daqui surgira uma terceira geração de que fazem parte Joaquim Pinto, Teresa Villaverde, Pedro Costa, Manuel Mozos, entre outros. É aqui que a acepção de escola ganha sentido próprio [...]. [...] the designation Portuguese school fits a certain aesthetics and ethics of cinema that develops during the period of the free cinema and proceeds into the 80s and 90s, assimilating new authors such as João Mário Grilo, João Botelho, José Álvaro de Morais. In the meantime, the Film School of the National Conservatoire had been created in 1972, where Paulo Rocha, António Reis, and Alberto Seixas Santos lectured. This will lead to the emergence of a third generation to which belonged Joaquim Pinto, Teresa Villaverde, Pedro Costa, Manuel Mozos, among others. It is here that the meaning of school gains its full potential [...]. (Areal 2011, 276)

What seems clear from the reasoning developed thus far is that there was a greater dispersion during the 1980s than in the 1960s (the earlier organisation would never be equalled in terms of strength and unity). Yet, filmmakers were connected by a series of links related to their mode of production. Indeed, it is necessary to understand what is at stake when one talks about unity. Alongside this bank of influences, the policies and material conditions available came to shape the whole of Portuguese cinema.

Chiming with what was presented in the point 2.1 with regard to the lyricist approach of Portuguese filmmakers, João Maria Mendes sheds light on this point of the Portuguese school and its international outlook, and asserts that cinema in Portugal maintained an intense relation with literature – especially with the non-novelistic, non-narrative sections of literature, i.e. with its poetic, theatrical, operatic part. The affirmation of a poetic matrix at the basis of Portuguese New Cinema (or a part of it), created, among the international critical reception, a philo-Portuguese faction interested in acknowledging and making acknowledged that matrix as idiosyncratic and, ultimately, the founder of a *school* (Mendes 2013, 91). In addition to this aesthetic facet, a certain model of institutional support can also explain the continuity between the premises of the ‘Cinema Novo’ and the subsequent generations. This organisational culture of Portuguese cinema conditioned and perpetuated a low-cost – and precarious – cinematic practice dependent on public funding and ever-changing requirements, and determined by periodic regulation¹²⁶ (Mendes 2013, 96-100).

2.2.5 – The 1980s: a colourful decade with fluctuations in audience figures

The democratic stability achieved by the end of the 1970s, the experimentation in full swing in all creative fields, and the heterogeneous nature of the Portuguese school announced the 1980s as a colourful decade: a metaphor not just for the exuberant, incandescent tones that marked the decade, but also for a certain diversity in Portuguese cinema. Even though the decade consolidates the predominance of a

¹²⁶ As Chapter IV makes clear, a cinematic practice based on state support possesses the characteristic of being vulnerable to the legal system that underpins the said support. This means that parts of the process can be subjected to formatting by regulations and bureaucracies (e.g. the requirement to have a registered production company associated with the filmic project in order to apply for funding, introduced with the bill 85/83, or the obligation to hand in a detailed script, even prior to pre-production, to be evaluated by a committee).

cinema based on the previously mentioned aesthetic and ethical premises, it is also true that the 1980s represented a divergence of paths, as a consequence of the maturity of an established authorial system.

From documentaries about the essence of Portugal (namely, the groundbreaking works of António Reis and Margarida Cardoso), to Arthur Semedo's satirical comedies, João César Monteiro's irreverent and provocative approach to cinema, or António Pedro Vasconcelos and Fonseca and Costas' allusions to the detective film genre, the 1980s were prolific in works that experimented with different trends and cross-overs.¹²⁷ It was also during these years that the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema managed to reach a higher level and attempts were made to reach beyond the cinephile audience.

After the conclusion of projects that had begun in the previous decade (22 out of 29), before 1984 film production entered a period of confrontation between two different and, at the time, incompatible ways of conceiving cinema: on the one hand, those who wanted Portuguese films to be accessible and popular again; and, on the other, the 'resistant' filmmakers who wanted to carry on with their aesthetic agenda within a frame of references that was alien to the majority of the viewers. This dichotomy would come to be known by the expression 'films for Bragança and films for Paris', uttered by Francisco Lucas Pires (minister of culture from 1982 to 1983) (Cunha 2013b, 224). This metaphoric *boutade* epitomises the continuation of a controversy that had also been inherited from the past: the division between films that tried to interpret and fit Portuguese audiovisual culture but could not hope for more than domestic circulation, and those that aimed at being screened in Paris to an elite despite the indifference of a broader Portuguese audience.

Throughout the 1980s both sides of the barricade managed to play their trump cards to leverage their arguments and make their cases in order to pressure political forces. For the popular cinema faction, the 1980s meant a return to the possibility of making big hits at the domestic box office (in fact, their films did not resonate beyond the frontiers of Portugal), with a handful of films that got more than 100,000 viewers. Filmmakers such as António de Macedo, António Pedro Vasconcelos, and José Fonseca e Costa tried to bring their personal expression closer to what they thought were the wishes of the broader Portuguese public. Meshing

¹²⁷ For a thorough analysis of the diversity of filmic experimentations during the 80s, see Areal 2011.

nicely with the atmosphere of transition epitomised by the 1980s, this justified some experimentation with formulae they considered could be made more successful. Thus arose those phenomena that led to the hybridisation and incorporation of genres in Portuguese cinema. Without relinquishing their authorial status, and sharing similar conditions with their hard-core counterparts, these directors marked the return of Portuguese films to narrative cinema, one in which mise-en-scène served plot progression.

For the auteurs, the decade represented an advance in their international ambitions, mainly on the festival circuit, despite modest numbers of viewers and obstacles to circulation. Manoel de Oliveira, the fatherly figure of the Portuguese school, won the honorary Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1985. This award, the most prestigious ever given to a Portuguese filmmaker up to that point, was the culmination of a path of internationalisation in the director's career, in great part fuelled by the partnership with producer Paulo Branco,¹²⁸ since 1979. In addition, works by João Botelho (*Conversa Acabada*, 1981, and *Um Adeus Português*, 1985), João Mário Grilo (*A Estrangeira*, 1982), and Paulo Rocha (*Ilha dos Amores*, 1982), among others, would premiere, compete or receive awards at film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Locarno. The decade would end with what has been

¹²⁸ The producer and entrepreneur Paulo Branco has been one of the main economic players concerning the fostering and spread of Portuguese art cinema in Portugal and abroad. Beginning as an exhibitor and programmer in Paris in the 1970s, during this time, Branco managed to export works by Portuguese directors to the Parisian context (especially *Trás-os-Montes*, by António Reis and Margarida Cardoso, and Manoel de Oliveira's *Amor de Perdição*). Throughout his career he founded (as well as filed for bankruptcy) several exhibition, distribution, and production companies dedicated to art cinema in both France and Portugal. He came to play a major role in the promotion of many Portuguese directors since the 1970s and, therefore, in the exposure of Portuguese cinema in France and in the international film circuit. In 1979, after being publicly praised by António da Cunha Telles, Branco joined forces with António Pedro Vasconcelos to found the production company V.O. Filmes, which would produce continuously during its first three years: *Oxalá* (1981, António Pedro Vasconcelos), *O Território* (1981, Raul Ruiz), *Conversa Acabada* (1981, João Botelho), *Silvestre* (1981, João César Monteiro), *Francisca* (1981, Manoel de Oliveira), *Fim de Estação* (1982, Jaime Silva), *A Estrangeira* (1982, João Mário Grilo), and *Die Stadt der Dinge* (1982, Wim Wenders) (Cunha 2015, 436). It was during the 1980s that Branco consolidated his position as a film producer.

He is also known for having a very developed network, as well as for his continuous investments in art-cinema directors from all over the world that generated award-winning projects. With time, his prestige and experience rendered him capable of predicting trends in the international film market and even of influencing it to some extent – e.g. on many occasions he managed to attract funding for Portuguese directors or even projects to Portugal as a place for shooting films. As Cunha highlighted, one of his major accomplishments was the creation and successful establishment of the 'Manoel de Oliveira' brand (Cunha 2015, 437). Branco was not only responsible for the rehabilitation of *Amor de Perdição* after its terrible reception in Portugal, but was also pivotal in negotiations with the French ambassador concerning the funding for the film that brought Manoel de Oliveira into the spotlight at Venice – *Le Soulier de Satin*.

considered another apex: the Venice Film Festival Silver Lion being awarded to João César Monteiro, in 1989, for his *Recordações da Casa Amarela*.

In a way, the overall development of Portuguese cinema and situations such as those mentioned was only possible because the 1980s was also a time of transition with regard to the model of production. As João Mário Grilo (Grilo 2006, 27-31) and Paulo Cunha emphasised (Cunha 2013b, 236), Portuguese cinema shifts from an organisational base of co-operatives of filmmakers (therefore without dedicated producers) and collective work, to a model supported by co-productions and the creation of partnerships with producers (both domestic and foreign) modelled on the paradigm of the French producers of art cinema. This structural modification, enshrined in the bill nº 85/83, meant that the participation of a producer – who was presumed to assume responsibility over the budget and deadlines – was a *sine qua non* of obtaining state funding and qualified this figure as the head of any cinematic project. Received with some mistrust at first, due to suspicions that the producer could be more financially driven than the director and could potentially threaten his/her authority, this change nevertheless propelled Portuguese cinema into a new era, where it could come closer to keeping up with mercantile practices and shifts in the international film market. Despite the occasional tensions and quarrels between directors and producers, the new regime based on synergies would ultimately prove fruitful and, in time, enhance the characteristics already present in each type of filmmaking.

For the sake of contextualisation, it is also relevant to mention that, despite all the achievements of the 1980s referred to so far, two main problems also defined the decade for Portuguese cinema: the decrease in cinema-going, and distribution problems. After a peak during the late 1970s, attendances fell sharply. This situation was, in great part, the result of the migration of viewers to television – which in its turn would consolidate a certain visual culture in Portugal, as point 2.3 will clarify. Regarding distribution, although the lack of interest in Portuguese cinema from major companies and exhibitors was a chronic issue, it suddenly became more pressing. The main reason for this call to attention was that, as Chapter III will address in more detail, a high percentage of the filmic production (around 40%) did not have a commercial release.

2.2.6 – Continuities and disruptions in the late 1980s and early 1990s: the dilution of the ‘Portuguese School’

A great deal of these ‘forgotten’ films belonged to a younger generation of authors who were coming out of film school and struggling to find their space. Despite all the problems concerning distribution and number of viewers, several directors from this background would become pivotal during the next decade. Cunha mentions that, because of all the problems mentioned above and some instability in the cinema milieu in Portugal, this very heterogeneous group of students became known as the ‘forgotten generation’, due to the high number of drop-outs, aborted projects, and academic films that did not find their way into any kind of market (Cunha 2013b, 228-232). Cunha also stated: ‘ao contrário dos cineastas que os precederam e os formaram, esta geração teve de lutar contra muitos obstáculos pelo reconhecimento e nunca controlaram a instituição cinema português’ [in contrast to the filmmakers who preceded and supervised them, this generation had to fight against many obstacles for recognition and never controlled the Portuguese cinema institution] (Cunha 2013b, 229). Cunha’s view on this matter is tenable only up to a certain point. Some filmmakers did not succeed in building a career, particularly as the country did not have the conditions to absorb them and allow them to thrive. However, it was from the core of this group that the main protagonists of Portuguese cinema from the 1990s and early 2000s would emerge.

Names such as Pedro Costa, Manuel Mozos, Teresa Villaverde, Joaquim Pinto, Edgar Pêra and João Canijo, although not organised in the same way as the ‘Cinema Novo’ group, would nevertheless come to share the forefront of Portuguese vanguard cinema alongside veterans such as Paulo Rocha, Fernando Lopes, João Botelho and Manoel de Oliveira. In many ways, the careers of these new directors would have many points of convergence with the course of the former – i.e. the desire for international legitimation, problems with market insertion and funding – and support for the same type of aesthetics and ethics that had governed Portuguese cinema since the 1960s. Cunha wrote that ‘a sua suposta orfandade em relação à história e estética do novo cinema português ficou como uma das principais características estéticas e éticas desta geração’ [the putative orphanhood concerning the history and aesthetics of Portuguese New Cinema remained one of the main aesthetic and ethical characteristics of this generation] (Cunha 2013b, 231). I would

like to argue that, if this is true for the likes of Joaquim Leitão and some other filmmakers who in the 1990s would team up with private TV channels to produce popular cinema, the key word in Cunha's quote is 'putative'. The main issue with the history of this generation is that, given its temporal proximity, it has been built around the discourses of the people directly involved.¹²⁹ And although that is a legitimate way to understand events and write historiographical narratives, it is important to frame these testimonies and make sense of contradictions arising from time to time. Moreover, it needs to be taken into account that, by the end of the 1990s, these filmmakers needed to divulge a discourse whereby they could distance themselves from the previous generation (even if artificially) in order to affirm their practices. Effectively, Cunha would reformulate his position in a later work, where he added the following comment:

Não foi, portanto, por mero acaso que, em Fevereiro de 2012, Miguel Gomes e João Salaviza, nos seus discursos de aceitação dos importantes prémios conquistados na Berlinale, tivessem reconhecido e agradecido a importância do contributo de autores como Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, Pedro Costa, Fernando Lopes ou Paulo Rocha [...] Do mesmo modo, as diversas declarações de vários jovens cineastas portugueses por ocasião dos recentes falecimentos de Fernando Lopes e Paulo Rocha (2012) reforçam essa ideia de continuidade e de filiação entre autores na história do cinema português. [It was not, therefore, by mere chance that, in February 2012, Miguel Gomes and João Salaviza, in the discourses of acceptance of the important awards they received at the Berlinale, acknowledged and thanked the importance and contribution of authors such as Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, Pedro Costa, Fernando Lopes or Paulo Rocha [...] By the same token, the different reactions from young filmmakers occasioned by the passing of Fernando Lopes and Paulo Rocha (2012) reinforce this idea of continuity and affiliation among authors in the history of Portuguese cinema.] (Cunha 2015, 449)

To a certain extent, it is believed that the school's ambience during the 1980s reflected the tensions between an aesthetically intransigent cinema and a cinematic practice adapted to popular taste that was operating successfully. A logical consequence would be that the school assimilated students who tended towards both sides, thereby promoting a dialogue between aesthetic, ideological and commercial

¹²⁹ For instance, Cunha's and Ribas's accounts revolve in great part around testimonies from a couple of filmmakers. Also, the book *Novas & Velhas Tendências no Cinema Português Contemporâneo*, edited by João Maria Mendes and one of the first works dedicated specifically to Portuguese contemporary cinema, is one third composed of interviews with directors from the 1980s/1990s generation.

sensibilities. More or less radical examples of this change in mentality became a reality during the 90s, when the new conditions provided by the increased budget and TV co-productions allowed filmmakers who were more industrially led and wanted to break with authorial tradition to direct and give some visibility to their work. However, some of the major problems persisted for those who did not have a publicity machine and private TV channel labels backing their films. Even those who were in a grey area were affected by the lack of interest on the part of both distributors and audiences, unless the message to the audiences was very clear and channelled by popular TV.

To explain this situation, I would like to add a hypothesis related to the perception of Portuguese cinema. To some extent it may have suffered during the late 1980s and 1990s from the same problem as at the end of the 1960s. In other words, because Portuguese cinema was, in general, displaying broad brushstrokes such as were mentioned in point 2.1.3, and was operating at an artisanal level, it is possible that it became difficult for audiences who were not familiar with Portuguese cinema or the changes that were going on internally to recognise the differences between films that continued the tradition of authorial cinema and those that intended to reach a broader audience. One final possibility, far more difficult to prove, is that this preoccupation with spectators, expressed in words far more than in filmic acts – particularly by Manuel Mozos, Teresa Villaverde and some other ‘resistant’ authors (Mendes 2013) – could have been either a rhetorical coup or been articulated without a realistic knowledge concerning the taste of the masses. In theory, this preoccupation existed, but in practice it paid small dividends. Due to problems with distribution and the opportunity gap between Portuguese and American cinema, it might never be possible to fully ascertain the true practical reach of a theoretical wish.

2.2.7 – Diversity and new paths for the new millennium: old protagonists, new experiments; young directors, old problems

While the 1980s was a decade of transition from the old paradigm and the revolutionary ambience to contemporary European Portugal, the 1990s was a time of diversification of the premises laid by the preceding years. In this context of amplification/reproduction/consolidation, the 1990s were marked by an

intensification of the dichotomy between popular and auteur cinema (Ribas 2014: 140), with both sides gaining new breadth and reach for different reasons.

First, the end of the TV monopoly held by the state broadcaster Rádio e Televisão de Portugal (RTP), as section 2.3 will analyse, introduced new players onto the field and changed forever the audiovisual situation in Portugal. All kinds of cinema benefited from this, yet this circumstance allowed for an unprecedented experimentation in the realm of popular film. Second, European integration and the new dynamics and relationship with the European market increased the flexibility of co-productions, diversified funding channels and, last but not least, the activities related to the circulation of art cinema multiplied.¹³⁰ This context allowed the 1990s to be the decade that brought more growth and stability to Portuguese cinema.

Given that it was strong institutional support that allowed the continuation of Portuguese cinema, Carolin Overhoff Ferreira makes a valid point when she writes that the integration of Portugal in the European project and democratic stability brought about the chance to progressively raise the amount of funding allocated to cinema:

O governo aumentou diversas vezes o orçamento destinado à instituição responsável: em 1996, quando a direcção do IPACA tomou posse, foi anunciado o reforço de meio milhão de contos do orçamento para o mesmo ano; em 1997, quando se anunciou a verba para a produção, foi previsto um aumento de 77%; e em 1998, quando foi divulgada a disponibilização de um milhão e 600 mil contos para o setor. [The government increased several times the budget destined to the responsible institution: in 1996, when the direction of IPACA took office, a reinforcement of half a million contos for that year's budget was announced; in 1997, when the amount available for production was announced, a 77% increase was predicted; and in 1998, when the provision of a million and 600 thousand contos to the sector became known.] (Ferreira 2013, 242)

This increment in financial incentives, alongside the reformulation of the 7/71 legislation to fit the new European context, translated into the diversification of support – specifically, the promotion of short films and first works, but also of

¹³⁰ This relates to the proliferation of new, professional film festivals (Valck 2007, 18-19), as well as to initiatives of the sort in Portugal that contributed to a timid development of cinephilia. For instance: Festival Internacional da Figueira da Foz (from 1972 to 2002, with its heyday in the 1990s), Festival de Curtas de Vila do Conde (since 1993, pivotal and pioneer in the exhibition and celebration of short films in the country), Fantasporto (since 1981, dedicated to fantasy films), and later DocLisboa (since 2002, revolving around documentaries) and IndieLisboa (since 2003, devoted to indie films). Also, occasional major events such as Lisbon – European Capital of Culture, in 1994, and the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition integrated Portuguese cinema exhibition.

documentaries and animated films. Effectively, this policy would be crucial in supporting the previously mentioned new generation of directors and technicians that were graduating from film school. In addition, the turn of the decade was when Portuguese partnerships and co-production agreements acquired a more global character: in addition to the European partnerships (especially with France, mediated in great part by Paulo Branco's efforts), bilateral contracts were signed with Brazil, as well as with the Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP) countries, resulting in 46 co-productions during the space of about 30 years (Ribas 2014, 143) (Ferreira 2012, 151).

The major sea change, however, was provided by the dramatic changes in the TV sector, dubbed by the 1990s as the audiovisual – a term favoured mainly by European bureaucrats who aimed at fusing resources and styles between television and cinema (Jäckel 2003, 67-68). The idea of a connection between cinema and television in Portugal is initially suggested by the fact that there was a general increase in the production of films in Portugal during the 90s and early 00s. As Carolin Overhoff Ferreira mentioned, and this thesis would like to stress, the increase in the revenues from the tax on advertising (which was the main source of income to support film) provoked by the appearance of two new TV channels, as well as Socialist Party's policies, proved to be very propitious for Portuguese cinema (Ferreira 2013, 241).

In order to accommodate this new category, the government created, in 1990, the Secretariado Nacional do Audiovisual, headed by António Pedro Vasconcelos (Grilo 2006, 31), one of the very few directors who actually shifted from his beginnings as an 'intransigent' filmmaker to assume a more popular stance. According to Lemière, this office in charge of implementing audiovisual normalisation¹³¹ was viewed with great suspicion by the auteurs branch of the 'Cinema Novo' generation because it meant a threat to the survival of their idea of cinema (Lemière 2006, 752) (Ribas 2014, 139).

The major event of the implementation of these European-led audiovisual principles was the introduction of two new private channels in open broadcasting signal. In their turn, as will be addressed later, these channels, along with renewed cooperation from state television (mainly during Fernando Lopes's tenure as head of

¹³¹ This secretariat would later be incorporated into the highest institution in charge of supervising cinematic activity, provoking a change in designation, from IPACA (Instituto Português da Arte Cinematográfica e do Audiovisual) to ICAM (Instituto do Cinema, Audiovisual e Multimédia).

the co-productions office, from 1979 until 1993) were responsible for the boom in the production of national cinema – especially with regard to more commercial prospects. In fact, the filmic production fostered by TV, through co-productions or television films, was able to reveal filmmakers who did not identify with authorial practices, as well as absorb new and old directors,¹³² providing them with new job opportunities and professional qualifications¹³³ (Graça 2016a, 535-547).

In its turn, the expansion of the available portfolio of TV channels fuelled other creative areas, such as advertising and video clips, thereby increasing the demand throughout Portugal for audiovisual content that did not fit the classic formats of cinema or television. According to Ribas: ‘a subida de qualidade e quantidade da produção publicitária anda de mãos dadas com o crescimento das televisões privadas e com a garantia que ambas trazem para um tecido produtivo carente de trabalho’ [the rise of the quality and quantity of publicity production goes hand in hand with the growth of private TV channels and with the guarantee that both channels brought to a production structure that was in need of work] (Ribas 2014, 142). Furthermore, these conditions also required the full-time employment of script-writers, photographers and other technicians, who managed to make a better living than their predecessors.

All the above-mentioned measures were instrumental in creating a small, well-oiled machinery that would allow the laying of the foundations for the professionalisation of production, without the dramatic breaks of the previous decades. In 2013 Ribas assessed the result of this period in the following way: ‘Mesmo que os cineastas prefiram os modos de fazer ‘artesaniais’, o cinema português atingirá, na primeira metade do século XXI, uma razoável maturidade dos modos de produção. [Even if filmmakers prefer ‘artisanal’ conditions, Portuguese cinema will achieve, during the first decade of the XXIst century, a reasonable maturity concerning production modes] (Ribas 2013, 270).

¹³² That was the case with, for instance, the debutants Jorge Cramez (who initiated an unfinished project for SIC), Tiago Guedes and Frederico Serra (*Alta Fidelidade*, 2000, and *Cavaleiros de Água Doce*, 2001), and Carlos Coelho da Silva (TV director since 1989). The veterans Ruy Guerra (*Monsanto*, 2000), José Medeiros (*Gente Feliz com Lágrimas*, 2002), João Mário Grilo *451 Forte*, 2002), Rita Nunes (*Contas do Morto*, 2002), and José Nascimento (*A Hora da Morte*, 2002) would also be included in the roll of filmmakers that contributed to the practice of television films in Portugal.

¹³³ It should be mentioned that, due to the increase in demand, many practical and technical film courses were opened and schools founded. This broke the monopoly of almost 30 years of the only Film School of the Conservatoire, in Lisbon.

Finally in this context, the relevance of the rise of the digital cameras should be mentioned. Scholars and critics are unanimous (Seabra 2000a, 14) (Baptista 2009, 321) (Ribas 2014, 146) in considering the impact of the advent of new, cheaper to operate, technologies in Portugal (one of the last places in Europe to adopt the digital format due to its connections with TV) as shaping a new chapter in the production mode of Portuguese cinema. It was due to these new technologies (including the internet and YouTube) that a demi-amateur type of cinema became possible. Made with very rudimentary resources and in a light-hearted, playful spirit, these films resist categorisation and their success or lack thereof seemed to be just a byproduct of the hobby of a few friends.¹³⁴

In parallel to the film directors who were closer to the TV milieu, the increase in the volume of production of art-house feature films was another positive fact. Some of the most preeminent authors from the late 1980s/early 1990s' and even mid-1990s' generation, who took their first steps in short films and gained a following in the festival circuit,¹³⁵ would be able to advance their careers by making their first feature films¹³⁶ – in great part due to policies promoting first works and their agility to find funding in the broader European context. As Ribas underlines, this circumstance brought to Portuguese cinema a new *corpus* of films that, although still a branch of the 'Cinema Novo', will produce an impact that it will only be possible to ascertain in a few years from now (Ribas 2014, 148). Moreover, the numbers were also optimistic with regard to more experienced authors: Manoel de Oliveira (a notable exception in every way, this most prestigious Portuguese director was able to make a subsidised film every single year during the 1990s) (Ferreira 2013, 245-246); João Botelho (four films); Fernando Lopes, Eduardo Gueda, Alberto

¹³⁴ Examples of this expression are: the *Balas e Bolinhos* trilogy (Luís Ismael, 2001, 2004, 2012), *O Ninja da Caldas* (Hugo Guerra, 2002), *100 Volta* (Daniel Sousa, 2009), and *O Estrondo I and II* (2012, 2013). These films also pioneered Internet release and circulation, sometimes amounting to hundreds of thousands of views, which in turn raised the interest of theatrical distributors.

¹³⁵ This generation was famously called by influential critic Augusto M. Seabra 'geração curtas' [shorts generation] (Seabra 1999), precisely because most of these filmmakers had in common the fact that they had started their careers with short films – which, in turn, was a result of the current policies.

¹³⁶ Major examples of filmmakers who achieved this feat are João Pedro Rodrigues (*O Fantasma*, 2000; *Odete*, 2005; and *Morrer Como um Homem*, 2009); Miguel Gomes (*A Cara que Mereces*, 2004; *Aquele Querido Mês de Agosto*, 2008; and *Tabu* (2012)); Marco Martins (*Alice*, 2005; *Como Desenhar um Círculo Perfeito*, 2009); Tiago Guedes/Frederico Serra (*Coisa Ruim*, 2006; *Entre os Dedos*, 2008); Sandro Aguilar (*A Zona*, 2008); Margarida Cardoso (*A Costa dos Murmúrios*, 2004), Catarina Ruivo (*André Valente*, 2004; *Daqui P'rá Frente*, 2007), Jorge Cramez (*O Capacete Dourado*, 2007); and António Ferreira (*Esquece Tudo o Que Te Disse*, 2002; *Embargo*, 2010) (Ribas 2014, 148).

Seixas Santos and António da Cunha Telles (each made one); João Mário Grilo (three films); Paulo Rocha and Fernando Matos Silva (both made two); and João César Monteiro (five films) (Ferreira 2013, 247). The possibility of both masters and disciples making cinema at the turn of the millennium confirms the central place given to art cinema (or reclaimed by it), despite all the policies around the audiovisual that seemed so threatening but eventually managed to help consolidate a parallel (numerically smaller) production of popular cinema while allowing author cinema to continue its path. In a way, the old directors were able to continue experimenting within a new technological and material environment, while new filmmakers – apart from a few, who were trying to establish a new dialogue with TV language – had to struggle on equal terms with their predecessors over recurrent problems with distribution and a lack of engagement on the part of viewers.

2.2.8 – A ‘dissident’ cinema

Although there was a rise in the number of viewers (the number of screens almost doubled from 1996 to 1999) (Ferreira 2013, 248) and increased success in film production (six films released during the 1990s are among the top ten Portuguese films in terms of viewers), this was still not enough to fully overcome divisions and persistent problems. Many issues concerning the degree of professionalisation of the sector were mitigated, and authorial cinema continued to influence policies and lobby for its survival, as well as fight against the rise of a cinematic model (i.e. the popular) they repudiated and perceived as threatening. The simple existence of author cinema in Portugal is a testament to a disciplined determination to carry on with this type of filmic practice.

It is precisely at this point where divergences sharpen that it is important to underline a fundamental aspect of Portuguese cinema since the 1960s: its ‘dissidence’ with regard to Hollywood. This has always been more or less explicit. However, it was during those junctures when Portuguese cinema started to become dissident inside its own dissidence – i.e. when Portuguese filmmakers experimented with a more formulaic style or overtly declared their commercial ambitions – that this discourse tended to reappear and be reiterated. Indeed, one of the main threads that runs throughout Portuguese cinema and unites filmmakers from different

generations is a strong, sometimes even radical, ideological aversion towards the Hollywood model.

The duality of Hollywood versus auteur cinema is old and complex, and was crucial for the construction of the identity of many national cinemas – and the Portuguese case was no exception. Appearing as a response to the commercial hegemony of the big American studios in Europe after World War I, national cinemas developed as alternatives and many sought protection under the aegis of states. Working as a significant other, as Thomas Elsaesser suggested (Elsaesser 2005, 491), Hollywood is the nemesis that emphasises the meaning of its supposed contrary – author cinema. Despite the public impact of a handful of films, what continued mainly to characterise the image of Portuguese cinema throughout the time was the kind of author cinema with the majority of the stylistic idiosyncrasies developed since the 1960s.

Heavily influenced by the new waves, the ‘Cinema Novo’ group intended to inscribe Portuguese cinema in the sphere of high culture. The main goal was the creation of a cinematic *corpus* qualitatively equivalent to the most celebrated and traditional artistic expressions. As Dudley Andrew stated: ‘art is exigent in the demands it makes on makers and viewers. Art cinema is “ambitious”, the word with which François Truffaut characterised filmmakers he championed, the filmmaker he wanted to become.’ (Andrew 2010, v). Thus, due to this demanding dimension, Portuguese films belonging to this authorial practice positioned themselves in what António Pinho Vargas eloquently dubbed the ‘margens ilustres da actividade cultural’ [illustrious margins of cultural activity] (Vargas 2010, 499).

Defining itself negatively against the commercially successful North American cinema (which was an enemy that became hyper-real), Portuguese cinema ‘reconhece apenas uma única e decisiva fronteira: entre o cinema de autor e o que não é de autor’ [acknowledges only one, decisive frontier: between author cinema and what is not author cinema] (Monteiro 1995, 809). Therefore, a part of the DNA of Portuguese cinema is based on the premise of eschewing any sort of idea and mode of production related to Hollywood (Ribas 2014, 131-132).

João Mário Grilo and João Botelho, in a recorded dialogue, went even further and agreed to use the adjective ‘dissident’ to describe Portuguese authorial cinema, based on the assumption that it has been endangered and refuses ‘a linguagem falada pelo cinema americano’ [the language spoken by American cinema] (Grilo 2006, 37-

38), a putatively non-artistic idiom – or, at least, outside of what would be considered as the characteristics that could make cinema artistic (Graça 2013, 159). In this sense, Portuguese cinema was, in Grilo’s view, a site of resistance to Hollywood’s supposed visual ‘empire’. This also implies the idea that American cinema is noxious and a sworn enemy of Portuguese cinema. Grilo’s opinion, although biased, is accurate at its core: ‘o cinema português optou por desenvolver, ao longo dos últimos 30 anos, uma estratégia de combate pela afirmação da sua dissidência em relação ao modelo americano de colonização imaginária do planeta’ [Portuguese cinema opted to develop a combat to affirm its dissidence about the American model of visual colonisation of the planet] (Grilo 2006, 33).

In tandem with the conceptual premise of Portuguese cinema, which stands opposed to ideas of commerce and monetary value (just like other New Waves), is another major element that shaped Portuguese cinema: its international vocation. The desire to create an ‘ambassadorial’ cinema in Portugal – according to the motto ‘films for Bragança and films for Paris’, as Chapter III will develop in greater detail – goes back to António Ferro’s mandate in the 1930s-40s, and became a priority once the ‘Cinema Novo’ group took the lead in Portuguese cinema. The importance of reaping artistic prestige abroad, within a specific cinephile circuit, became the main goal of Portuguese cinema, as well as the measure of its success to those inside the milieu. Paulo Cunha, at the conclusion of his doctoral thesis, argued that it is necessary to acknowledge and underline that it was the 1960s’ generation that created the conditions that still exist today for the production of cinema in Portugal. It was the hard core of that generation that controlled the ‘cinema institution’ in its entirety, and deliberately and strategically opted to ‘nationalise’ Portuguese cinema, placing it under the state’s protection so that it could be recognised as a cultural and artistic good, thus alienating it from market laws and any potential commercial ambitions] (Cunha 2015, 447-448). Cunha also adds:

Nos anos 80, quando foi necessário optar, no seio do IPC, por uma política cinematográfica que privilegiaria os ‘filmes para Bragança’ ou os ‘filmes para Paris’, o Estado português optou definitivamente por um cinema de ‘vitalidade cultural’ que trazia a Portugal a tão valorizada ‘projeção internacional’, ou seja, pelo caminho da internacionalização que tinha sido iniciado em meados dos anos 60. [In the 1980s, when it was necessary to opt, inside the IPC, for a cinematographic policy that would privilege the ‘films for Bragança’ or the ‘films for Paris’, the Portuguese state ultimately opted for a cinema of ‘cultural vitality’ that would bring to Portugal

the so highly valued ‘international projection’, i.e., opted for the path of internationalisation that had been started in the mid-1960s] (Cunha 2015, 448).

Interestingly, Paulo Filipe Monteiro raises the question of an aesthetic interference concerning this international inclination: ‘Talvez justamente o facto de em grande medida ter sido um cinema criado em função dessa aceitação no estrangeiro tenha vindo a reforçar algumas características que lá fora mais foram valorizadas’ [Maybe the fact that it was in large part a cinema designed to curry favour abroad reinforced some characteristics that were more valued over there] (Monteiro 2004, 33). This is a very important hypothesis that will be explored further in this thesis in the next chapter but needs to be mentioned here: that Portuguese cinema’s aesthetics may have been shaped to better fit the criteria of film festivals – or by the filmmaker’s interpretation of those criteria. As Filipe Monteiro pithily puts it: ‘Uma das ironias maiores [...] é que este cinema que tanto reflecte sobre a identidade portuguesa é um cinema que se funda na rejeição do cinema português anterior e na importação de modelos franceses e americanos’ [One of the biggest ironies [...] is that this cinema that focuses so much on Portuguese identity is a cinema based on the rejection of previous Portuguese cinema and on the importing of French and American models] (Monteiro 2004, 32).¹³⁷

2.2.9 – Conclusions on the orientation and purpose of the majority of Portuguese films: author cinema as a symptom of cultural subalternity

The previous quotation by Monteiro highlights the real ‘dissidence’ at stake in Portuguese cinema. Even though it retains its meaning as a practice that does not align with Hollywood, this thesis argues that the term ‘dissidence’ is, in its broader sense, misleading. What follows is an attempt to turn this question upside-down and to read Portuguese New Cinema as a situation of the instrumentalisation of the precepts of the auteur and a self-inflicted cultural colonisation, rather than solely a case of groundbreaking artistic and aesthetic audacity. António Pinho Vargas’s application of post-colonial theories to the Portuguese context is a valid theoretical framework that will lead the way. The aim here is to shed light on why it was that

¹³⁷ The exploration of this conundrum is already present in an article I wrote in 2016 (Graça, 2016), entitled *O Cinema Português como ‘Cinema Nacional’*. The results of this research project will be presented and developed in the following section.

auteur cinema was implemented in Portugal in a way that lead to such an intransigent cinematic practice.

According to Jacques Lemière, one of the key aspects of Portuguese contemporary cinema is its inscription in modernity, through both its formal features and its international vocation (Lemière 2006, 738). As suggested in this thesis, several filmmakers chose to live and study abroad, in order to ‘modernise’ their tastes and mind-sets at a time when Portuguese cinema was becoming redundant and considered to be in decline. As Pinho Vargas has argued, the transition towards the modern ‘outside’ from the ‘backwards inside’ has been a constant in Portuguese culture, and has usually been a one-way street, itself a direct consequence of the peripheral positionality of Portuguese culture (Vargas 2010, 250-253). Drawing on the work of the renowned sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Santos 1993, 133), Vargas has suggested that Portugal was historically a centre (of its empire), at the same time as being itself peripheral. Portugal was regarded by Central European countries through the same vertical lens it used to view its own colonised subjects:

A partir do século XVII, [os portugueses foram] o único povo europeu que, ao mesmo tempo que observava e considerava os povos das suas colónias como primitivos ou selvagens, era, ele próprio, observado e considerado, por viajantes e estudiosos dos países centrais da Europa do Norte como primitivo e selvagem [From the XVIIIth century onwards (the Portuguese were) the only European people who observed and considered the peoples from its colonies as primitive or savage, while itself being simultaneously observed and considered by travellers and scholars from central Europe as primitive and savage] (Vargas 2010, 248).

Inspired by Eduardo Lourenço, Vargas uses the binomial ‘fascination and resentment’ (Vargas 2010, 253) to describe Portuguese identity within Europe. Paris and its cultural paradigm had led the European universe since the mid-nineteenth century, and it was with France that Portugal established an umbilical relationship (Vargas 2010, 262-263). A fascination with the structures and institutions of the Parisian centre emerges at first, only to give way to a resentment provoked by the verification of their non-existence in Portugal. Indeed, as this thesis argues, a cultural inferiority complex, motivated by the perception that Portugal was not encompassing the discourses, aesthetics and happenings that emanated from that ‘place of utterance’ that France represented for Portugal, could have been the motivation behind the adoption of a cinematic paradigm that was as foreign to the Portuguese as

Hollywood was. In this sense, author cinema was an import from the centre by the periphery, in an attempt to modernize.¹³⁸ It was an act of cultural subalternity.

It is arguable that *la politique des auteurs* and the *Nouvelle Vague*, due to its wide dissemination, became a presence almost as pervasive as the model it tried to oppose, i.e. Hollywood. Consequently, Portuguese cinema, since it was devoid of radical creativity, was unable to create a ‘third way’ (like Hong Kong cinema or Bollywood) and had to compete against and protect itself in economic terms not only from Hollywood, but also from the other European, Asian and Latin-American powers.

In 2016, António-Pedro Vasconcelos vividly describes the ebullience he felt during the years of ‘Cinema Novo’ in the following way: ‘Eu ia ser o Rossellini, o César Monteiro ia ser o Fellini, o Seixas Santos ia ser o Orson Welles, o Fernando Lopes ia ser o Kubrick, o Paulo Rocha, o Mizoguchi, e por aí fora.’ [I was going to be Rossellini, César Monteiro was going to be Fellini, Seixas Santos was going to be Orson Welles, Fernando Lopes was going to be Kubrick, Paulo Rocha, Mizoguchi, and so on] (Letria 2016, 98). These images evoked by Vasconcelos demonstrate the extent to which Portuguese filmmakers from the ‘Cinema Novo’ movement and the Portuguese School were prone to copy pre-existing models, already set and dominated by other filmmakers in countries seen to be at the centre of cultural life. Mimicry¹³⁹ is, indeed, the hallmark of an ‘unequal’ cultural exchange, and is by default devalued in a context where the original is privileged.

Another important point is that the stylistic change was carried out by filmmakers who first studied abroad and then returned to Portugal with the intention of putting into practice what they had learnt. This behaviour was reminiscent of the ‘Estrangeirados’, the seventeenth-century Portuguese scholars who sought to introduce in Portugal ideas from the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment, after spending a period of time abroad. They had contact with more ‘advanced’ cultures, diagnosed backwardness in Portugal, and proposed measures to overcome that situation. Vargas believes that in addressing the Other as an absolute and a

¹³⁸ According to Vargas, many aspects of Portuguese cultural, industrial, and political lives have been characterised by a cycle consisting of: perception of backwardness and misalignment with countries abroad, followed by attempts of modernisation based on the import of foreign models which invariably end after not much time in the perception of backwardness and misalignment again (Vargas 2010, 495-496).

¹³⁹ The concept of mimicry was introduced and explored by Homi K Bhabha in his ground-breaking book *The Location of Culture*. It was used to refer to the power the metropolis exerts over the behaviour and cultural experience of immigrants, who strip themselves from their former cultural axioms to integrate characteristics from the centre of power (Bhabha 1994, 121-132)

model, Portuguese cultural elites throughout the contemporary period have alternated between an oscillating identification with the inside and with the outside: they see themselves as cosmopolitan and their biggest fear is parochialism (Vargas 2010, 266).

The popularity and assimilation of author cinema in Portugal by the cinematic milieu could also have been influenced by the fact that the *politique des auteurs* and the events in France led by the protagonists of the New Wave, as history showed,¹⁴⁰ had very practical goals that proved effective: to dismantle existing cinema, substitute the previous generation and transfer power to the new one. In a context in which cinema is subsidised by limited funds (which are mostly distributed by a central institution), this hypothesis holds water. Moreover, the Portuguese Cinemateque canonised this imported cinematic practice and, indeed, from 1971 the state sponsored it through the 7/71 law. According to Pinho Vargas, this should not come as a surprise, given that this type of institutional behaviour is common in Portugal: ‘a presença hegemónica dos valores culturais do centro europeu no país foi interiorizada pelos agentes culturais, na sua quase totalidade, numa perspectiva de subalternidade e não de troca ou diálogo cultural enriquecedor [the hegemonic presence of the cultural values of the centre in the country was interiorised by cultural actors, almost entirely, from a perspective of subalternity and not through a culturally enriching exchange or dialogue] (Vargas 2010, 260). In short, if on the one hand Portuguese authorial/festival cinema (which is itself almost a tautology) positioned itself against Hollywood, on the other hand it managed to do so with a solution that was adapted rather than created. This hypothesis calls into question the idea of ‘dissidence’: dissidence against Hollywood, granted; but not dissidence with regard to another, equally alien and hegemonic cinematic practice.

Section 2.2 has provided a bird’s-eye view of the essence of what Portuguese cinema was from the beginning of the 1960s (although it can, in fact, be traced back to the 1950s) until the early years of the new millennium. Faced with the failure of the commercial potential of their films in Portugal and the lack of interest from mainstream distributors, auteurs turned their attention to other partners and focused on different goals, namely, the distribution through alternative, highly specialised channels, and the achievement of artistic prestige. The advent of filmmakers who rebelled against this authorial model along with the overwhelming flood of American

¹⁴⁰ For a developed and accessible study concerning this matter see Marie 2003, 70-95.

cinema, along with severe distribution problems led the Portuguese film industry to join forces in order to solve a common crisis. This led at times to both radicalisation and experimentation with alternatives that were, mostly, frowned upon by the auteurs – in that sense the ‘margin’, indeed, became the ‘centre’. There are numerous reasons, as this thesis will demonstrate, why author cinema survived in Portugal as its main cinematic mode of production, despite disinterest in popular circles. Although there were periods of great diversification and even attempts to carry out hybridisations, the geography of Portuguese cinema has been, since the 1960s, composed mainly of films with authorial characteristics, operating on a non-industrial level and not oriented towards the making of profit.

2.3 – Mass Culture in Portugal

2.3.1 – What was the public consuming?

In this thesis, the separation of the history of Portuguese cinema (in 2.2) and that of spectatorship has been no accident. As the numbers provided in Chapter I demonstrate and this point will clarify, the history of the common spectator and the history of Portuguese cinema are, intriguingly enough, two independent, different stories that developed in parallel. Although there were moments of brief intersection, the stark reality is that, for the majority of the public, Portuguese cinema had no influence over their cultural identity, taste, or sensibility.¹⁴¹ Such a modest consumption ratio meant that some people never went to a cinema to watch a Portuguese film.¹⁴² Conversely, a niche group of cinephiles has certainly watched Portuguese cinema throughout their entire lives. It is important at this juncture to briefly address the question of the curious disymmetry between the amount of attention that a niche practice has received and the lack of equally detailed and insightful studies about other cultural goods that enjoyed more popularity and reached the masses.

¹⁴¹ It should perhaps be useful to remind that a survey based on focus groups has shown that there was a rather high percentage of Portuguese who never watched a Portuguese film (7.6%), never went to theatres to see one (24.2%), or bought a DVD containing a Portuguese film (87.7%) (Damásio 2006, 39-47).

¹⁴² There are far more complex reasons for this phenomenon than a simple matter of taste or the voluntary will to watch a Portuguese film, as the chapters on finance and distribution will explain.

Intellectual circles enshrined the history of Portuguese New Cinema (as well as its later manifestations) in academic studies, even though it was not of general interest. This seemed, indeed, to be a qualitative choice – thus subjective, because it was dependent on volatile criteria; that might change in the future, according to predominant ideologies – rather than a quantitative option. The norm was to write a history of what was regarded as being worth keeping for generations to come. This may have been due not only to the fact that arthouse cinema garnered attention on its own merits, but also to the perception that these high-culture expressions were so marginal and self-contained that they needed to be studied for posterity's sake. Paradoxically, the endeavour to recuperate high culture produced, the opposite effect over time: discussions in academia have become circular, they did not reach the masses and had negligible impact on them.

To a certain extent, most of the cultural history of the last few decades in Portugal may have been written at the expense of other cultural memories. Academia has been so keen on highlighting the margins that, by placing them at the very centre, only a specific side of history has been recorded – perhaps distorting its dimensions. The result, which is empirically verifiable, is that it is much easier to access consistent and adequate information on Portuguese cinema than it is to find systematised studies on mass culture¹⁴³ in Portugal. The Italian historian Enzo Traverso has proposed that there exists two kinds of historic memories, 'weak' and 'strong', corresponding to the weight they possess in mainstream discourses and in historiography. Indeed, Traverso believes that the visibility and the acknowledgement of a memory depend also on the influence of whoever holds it (Traverso 2012, 71-72). According to this line of thought, the dominant discourses on the memory (and, it should be noted, a 'certain' memory¹⁴⁴) of the aesthetic course of Portuguese cinema represent nowadays the 'strong memory', in the sense that they are more pervasive than their counterparts – the history of the audiences and their consumption habits.

A good metaphor for the dichotomy between public and art cinema in Portugal during this period is the idea of two similar trains, on parallel tracks, going

¹⁴³ This thesis uses the term mass culture, *lato sensu* (hence not strictly in a Gramscian way), to refer to the cultural offer that has proved to be massively acclaimed and well received, therefore becoming very popular.

¹⁴⁴ Paulo Cunha has – most pertinently – raised the question about the construction of the history of Portuguese cinema over many decades through the voices of people who belonged to the milieu and who were not impartial witnesses. That is why Cunha carried out a critical revision of the history of Portuguese cinema. For further discussion of this issue see Cunha 2016.

at different speeds. The following debate will provide a characterisation of what was happening as far as the audience was concerned during the late 70s, 80s and 90s, with special emphasis on Portuguese visual culture and literacy. Because it is based on contrasts and comparisons, it will address the curious cases of the ‘telenovela’ *Gabriela* and Oliveira’s *Amor de Perdição*. After completing an overview of popular taste, this thesis will turn its attention to test-cases of Portuguese films that were very popular and attained good box office results and will link these results to the broader, stylistic and material context. This part (2.3) will also reprise some points and pave the way for the comparison between Portuguese cinema and mainstream cinema. Finally, in line with the comparative approach structuring this subsection, this thesis will analyse views regarding the dynamics of the often problematic relationship between Portuguese films and their potential domestic spectators.

2.3.2 – The importance and cultural tendency of television in Portugal

From its creation in the mid-1950s, to the beginning of the 1990s, the state broadcaster RTP (Rádio Televisão Portuguesa) possessed the monopoly of television in Portugal. After the revolutionary biennium, the country entered a complex stage of transition to democracy, a post-colonial reality and an ever-growing European project. According to the statistics gathered by Isabel Ferin Cunha, an expert on Portuguese television, in 1977 there were approximately 150 television screens for every 1,000 people. Near the end of the following decade, in 1989, TV equipment was present in 90 per cent of homes (I. Cunha 2003, 6-8). In contrast with this steep increase, Pordata statistics reveal that cinema showed the opposite trend: there was a fall of 30,761 million admissions in 1980 to 11,909 million in 1989, corresponding to a 60 per cent decrease. Moreover, the occupancy rate of cinemas suffered a 30 per cent reduction.

Cinema would not lose any of its cultural and social relevance during this period, but it had plunged into an unprecedented box-office crisis and had to vie for attention with a powerful, emerging medium: the television. This was not simply a matter of chance, and there are numerous studies that prove the causal relationship between the figures and attribute the historical decline in cinema-going to the development of television at that time – indeed, these facts, and a circumstance similar to the Portuguese case, were common throughout Europe by the same time,

in more or less the same way as had happened in North America at the end of the 1950s.

It is, therefore, crucial to understand television culture in Portugal from the mid-1970s onwards in greater detail, as well as examining what kind of products television brought into people's homes. To paraphrase Luís Trindade, television is not only a passive mirror of reality, it is also a decisive historical actor in its own right through its ability to mediate the perception of reality and therefore influence it (Trindade 2016, 193). As this thesis argues, in harmony with the point made by Trindade, television in particular possesses the ability to shape the viewer's audiovisual literacy – and this will be the main line of argument pursued by this thesis in the present subchapter.

In both cinema and television the first years of the 1980s, for all their idiosyncrasies, echoed the events of previous years. The 1977-78 biennium was seminal in various ways and, to a certain extent, can be seen as the inception of many future problems. After the revolution, opinions about the mission of television were polarised (Sena 2011, 113). As a result, its didactic model, specifically in terms of its content, was called into question. Similarly to what was happening in the rest of Europe, the public TV service in Portugal was based on the theoretical premises of pluralism, diversity, quality, and cultural vocation (Blumer 1992, 7-14). In addition, according to Nilza de Sena, three main goals governed broadcasting criteria, in the following order: to inform, to educate and to entertain (Sena 2009, 128). There is in these presuppositions an inherent commitment to both didacticism and public service.

2.3.2.1 – The 'telenovela'¹⁴⁵

In Portugal, 1977 was the year of a sea change in the role of television that led to almost an inversion of the goals referred to above. It was the year of what the critics dubbed 'the start of the TV country', an expression used to refer to a nation glued to the screen and united around common images, due to the premieres of the Brazilian

¹⁴⁵ Although it is widely accepted to translate 'telenovela' as 'soap opera', this thesis believes that this expression does not fully grasp the unique features of the Brazilian model of TV series, which produced an enormous impact in Portugal. In the English-speaking world, when 'soap operas' appeared, they were slightly different from the Brazilian model, which eventually became the industry gold standard. Although Brazilian telenovelas are translated as 'soap operas', they are nevertheless not exactly the same thing as the original soap operas. For this reason, it shall not be referred to here as soap opera, therefore conserving its original designation.

telenovela *Gabriela, Cravo e Canela* and the talk-show *A Visita da Cornélia* (I. Cunha 2003, 7). The integration in the line-up of two shows of this kind, which proved at the time to be very popular, corresponds to a configuration regarded as extremely successful. For this reason, it was a trend that would be milled endlessly for many years. Despite the positive reception of some shows with a cultural emphasis (such as Alberto Pimenta's TV series *A Arte de Ser Português*), the appearances of an unpretentious António Victorino d'Almeida, and several other documentaries, no other initiative managed to achieve the popularity of the telenovela nor, indeed, to establish itself in the roll of TV listings – and irregularities in the broadcast and shifting cultural programmes to late hours helped to make this situation even worse (Moreira 1980, 84).

It is important to underscore João Bénard da Costa's point that the impact of the telenovela should not be overlooked. This research project goes even further in suggesting the pivotal role of the intrinsic traits of the telenovela format in popular taste, such as the speed of the narrative and the naturalistic acting (Costa 1991, 171). It should be noted, as Isabel Cunha mentioned, that between 1980 and 1989, 37 Brazilian telenovelas premiered on RTP's two channels (I. Cunha 2010, 93). Portugal took its first steps in the genre, in 1982, with the production of the successful *Vila Faia*. After this experience, by the end of the 80s RTP had produced four more telenovelas. All in all, state television broadcast 42 telenovelas in a single decade.

2.3.2.2 – The case of *Amor de Perdição*

In stark contrast with the success of *Gabriela* in the previous year, the end of 1978 brought with it one of the most problematic episodes in the history of Portuguese cinema. The airing of the adaptation of Camilo Castelo Branco's canonical novel *Amor de Perdição* (Love of Perdition), by Manoel de Oliveira, provoked unprecedented turmoil, which was fuelled by the media. The reception of this six-episode series, filmed in colour but broadcast in black and white due to technical limitations, drew the attention of Fausto Cruchinho, who analysed the furore aroused by Oliveira's work. According to Cruchinho, the fact that the production of the series was at the time the most expensive ever to have been carried out with public funding, together with high expectations concerning the narrative model that it would present,

prevented the possibility of a realistic perception of Oliveira's work (Cruchinho 2001b, 6-20).

In the context of a society marked by a television that in the previous year had become synonymous with telenovela, it is not surprising that adjectives and expressions such as 'somniferous', 'an enormous nuisance' and 'out-of-fashion' were used to describe the strangeness caused by the slow pacing and artificial acting evident in *Amor de Perdição* (Cruchinho 2001b, 21-22). Thus, the 'telenovela effect' does not seem to have been alien in the outcome and, to a certain extent, epitomises an influence that would spread throughout the decades. Paraphrasing Bourdieu, in a world ruled by the fear of being boring and anxiety about being amusing at all costs, everything that does not move at a frantic pace seems tedious (Bourdieu 2011, 2).

As a result of an untimely coincidence, 1978 turned out to be the year that witnessed the ascension of the telenovela and the resounding fall from grace of the audiences of Manoel de Oliveira and the broader universe of Portuguese cinema. This single experience made the general public feel entitled to judge and label Portuguese cinema. In addition, from that point onwards, telenovela enjoyed a specially engineered arranged support set up by magazines and newspaper columns dedicated to 'emotional matters' (I. Cunha 2003, 11). In its turn, Portuguese cinema did not cultivate this type of self-promotion until a very late stage – and even then, only a strand opted to use media for promotional purposes. From 1978 onwards, there was a relentless march in favour of entertainment above all else, which in turn explains the popularity of television. According to Nilza de Sena, documentaries and educational quizzes belonging to the prime-time slots were progressively downplayed to make way for the triad telenovela-newscast-telenovela (Sena, 2008: 2518). Indeed, this option was being pursued throughout the whole of Europe (Sena 2011, 165) and RTP progressively shifted towards an European model of management and planning directed towards the middle-classes (Trindade 2016, 198).

The popularity of telenovelas among audiences brings yet another pertinent question about the reception and acceptance of a new, decontextualised product, perhaps equally challenging to audiences (although in a very different way) as artistic and cultural initiatives. Studies by Ferin Cunha and Moreira (Moreira 1980, 45), for example, maintain that, rather than being repudiated because it portrayed a society somewhat different from the Portuguese, the Brazilian telenovela was embraced by the general audience not only because of the simple and direct treatment it gave to

universal themes (I. Cunha 2010, 106) and the fact that there was no language barrier, but also because it was able to ‘apresentar novos comportamentos, nomeadamente as imagens do viver das altas burguesias e um conjunto de valores da modernidade, como o consumo e o sucesso’ [present new values, namely images of the life of the *haute bourgeoisie* and a number of values of modernity, such as consumption and success] (I. Cunha 2010, 108). As Luís Trindade argued, Portuguese television in post-revolutionary years conveyed an image very close to the mentality of the aspiring classes; it was characterised by its conformity to new values, based on consumerism and gradual depoliticisation (Trindade 2016, 205). In many ways, this side of television culture was totally at odds with Portuguese art cinema, which disregarded emergent mass culture in Portugal in the 80s (Dias 2016, 75) and criticised the political and intellectual emptiness of consumption – especially since it led to a progressive social alienation from the pressing realities of the underprivileged. Thus, instead of being windows onto the outside in a country that always felt small, many ideals channelled by the telenovelas were in harmony with the spirit of the Portuguese 1980s and the new political and social discourses¹⁴⁶.

At the time, probably inspired by Adorno’s views on mass culture (Adorno 2003, 57-97), Moreira recovered the idea that the problem of popular culture was that it did not belong to the masses, being instead created for them to assimilate (Moreira 1980, 50-54). However, there is a counter-argument that is equally valid: this thesis has presented examples of products that were put to the test. Through a selection process, some of them were acclaimed and others not. To some extent, although the masses do not produce their own products, they nevertheless have the ability to choose whichever ones they want to cherish and with which they identify, and to discard others.

¹⁴⁶ Mass consumption (an economic freedom denied to many people during the Estado Novo regime) was one of the ways found by the country to accelerate progress, or expedite the perception of it. However, there is still some historiographical uncertainty concerning the true cultural atmosphere of the Portuguese 80s. According to Sandra Dias, two macro-theses have been used to characterise the *zeitgeist*: the ‘mourning’, as described by Paulo Varela Gomes, relating to a state of disillusion following the failed socialist revolution in the preceding decade; and the ‘celebration’ of the new possibilities that democracy and the end of a conservative regime had brought about, as defended by Jorge Figueira (Baía, Gomes, and Figueira 2012). In some points these theses are incompatible while also being complementary to each other on various other occasions. For a thorough investigation of this matter, see Dias 2016, 71-79

2.3.3 – The increase of American cinema, the predominance of entertainment on TV, and the apex of the telenovela

With regard to TV programming in the 1980s, it should be mentioned that this was the time of the airing of many TV series from abroad (of mixed quality), directed towards the adult audience (sitcoms, such as the soap opera *Dallas*, or American, British or Italian dramatic series such as *The Dukes of Hazzard*, *Miami Vice*, *La Piovra*, *Knight Rider*, and *Hill Street Blues*) and the young (cartoons from Eastern and Central Europe, as well as from the Soviet Union, brought by the TV personality Vasco Granja). Indeed, the convenience of these contents resided in the fact that they were ready-made from broadcast media¹⁴⁷ and, on a short-term basis, represented a cost-effective alternative to national production – which managed to release only a couple of series, documentaries and shows shot on set. As Ferin Cunha reminds us, the artistic milieu in Portugal was still unprepared, in terms of both technology and human resources, for the challenge of production and even competition with foreign programmes (I. Cunha 2003, 19). This ‘amateurism’ would only contribute to further accentuate the stigma attached to national production. This issue would only be surpassed a decade and a half later, when national products would eventually become preferred (Sena 2011, 115).

The 80s are also the decade of the consolidation in TV’s inclusion of other programmes, such as musicals, sports news, talk-shows, and many other humorous and entertaining initiatives of popular taste (this was the decade of the famous comedian Herman José and his group, but also of the airing of *Flying Circus*, by the British group Monty Python). The integration of all these novelties in TV programming led to increased screening time and guaranteed the loyalty of an audience that, by 1990, was consuming an average of four hours of television per day (I. Cunha 2003, 12). However, given the fact that the increase of air-time did not correspond to an increase in diversity (the types of programmes remained essentially the same and entertainment became dominant) (Sena 2011, 94), the lack of balance in such choices was prone to attack, especially by the critical fringes of society. Thus, some informed spectators and intellectuals regarded television with suspicion and

¹⁴⁷ Due to a number of reasons, most of them economic, unlike countries such as Italy, Germany or Spain, the vast majority of films and TV series in Portugal have been subtitled, rather than dubbed by voice actors. This made it possible not only to cut costs, but also to speed up the process of making visual products ready for the country’s audiences.

reproduced many of the anxieties about the passivity of the viewer present in Frankfurt-School inspired critiques, such as those by Bourdieu (Bourdieu 2011) or Fredric Jameson (Jameson 1991).

In 1988 the above-mentioned João Paulo Moreira warned about the ‘ameaça de imbecilização e aculturação’ [imbecilisation and acculturation threat] (Moreira 1988, 5) latently posed by television. Predicting that television would work one day according to the ‘menor denominador cultural comum’ [lowest common cultural denominator] (Moreira 1988, 13), Moreira accused RTP of having an incoherent strategy. Answering Carlos Pinto Coelho’s statement that RTP was ‘uma das televisões melhores do mundo’ [one of the best televisions in the world], Moreira asserted that Portugal had the best RTP in the world (Moreira 1988, 8). Adopting an opposite stance, Felisbela Lopes expressed a different opinion: ‘Nem tudo o que entretém aliena. Pelo contrário [...] é nas emissões que pretendem propiciar momentos de descontração que se constroem mais facilmente imaginários sociais e identidades culturais.’ [Not all that entertains alienates. On the contrary [...] it is during the broadcasts that set out to provide moments of relaxation that social imaginaries and cultural identities are more easily built] (Lopes 2005, 99). What seems most worthwhile to retain from these controversies is that there was a predictable supremacy, in terms of air-time, of winning formulae over other formats. Despite being considered culturally elevated, some types of programme became less and less of an alternative due to their diminishing presence and the widening of the space between high and low culture in Portugal.

In 1990, according to Nilza de Sena, 56 per cent of air-time was devoted to entertainment – she also remarked that entertainment is not naturally TV-like, but rather naturally mercantile (Sena 2011, 94-95). As the same author pointed out: ‘Gorados os esforços de uma programação paternalista feita por uma elite letrada que defendia a cultura e a informação acima de tudo, hoje a recreação é o que essencialmente preenche o pequeno ecrã’ [Efforts having been frustrated to create a patronising line-up, devised by an educated elite that defended culture and information above all else, today entertainment is what essentially fills the small screen] (Sena 2005, 130).

With regard to cinema, it is paramount to underline that the 80s and 90s were the time of the boom in American cinema. Despite the decrease in the total number of admissions, Pordata statistics show that the presence of American cinema in

Portugal recorded a progressive growth: from 37 per cent of film premieres in 1980 to 67 per cent in 1989. This trend was in line with what was happening throughout Europe during those years. In 1996 American films accounted for 70.2 per cent of the market share of the European Union (Miller, Govil, et.al. 2005, 13). As Graph 2 from Chapter I shows (page 45), there is a rise in the number of American film screenings throughout the 80s and 90s, with a sharp increase in the late 90s that culminated in a peak in 2001.^{148 149} As Paulo Cunha recalls, it was during the 80s that sci-fi blockbusters were screened and that the craze around them began. According to Cunha, the successes of these hits contributed significantly to defining the new taste and filmic references of the majority of film-goers during those years (Cunha 2013b, 221).

At the beginning of the 1990s, the plot thickened as a result of the liberalisation of the air waves and the appearance of the privately held, open-signal television channels: Sociedade Independente de Comunicação (SIC) and Televisão Independente (TVI). The competition that these two new contenders triggered, as well as their fresh approach to what television should be, stirred up the calm situation in which RTP found itself. According to Nelson Traquina, there was a natural rise in the production of audiovisual programmes of fiction immediately after the start-up of the private channels, as demand also increased (Traquina 1997, 15-16). As far as entertainment was concerned, hostilities began when SIC signed a contract with Brazilian channel Globo¹⁵⁰ (a concession that had previously belonged to RTP), the major producer of telenovelas in the world, thereby establishing a partnership and guaranteeing exclusive rights over the airing of Globo's products in Portugal. The direct result was a massive migration of spectators from RTP to SIC (Ferreira 2010, 4). In fact SIC became a case-study due to its skyrocketing ascension in terms of audience share. After only three years of existence, in 1995, SIC surpassed RTP1.¹⁵¹ SIC would consolidate its position and maintain the lead until 2005, when it was overtaken by TVI (Ferreira 2010, 3). As Raquel Ferreira has

¹⁴⁸ It is worth mentioning that many American films were made available for domestic consumption (i.e. on Betamax or VHS formats), a situation that accentuated even more the presence of Hollywood in Portuguese homes.

¹⁴⁹ As Carolin Overhoff reminds us, the number of screens in the country almost doubled between 1996 and 1999, from 339 to 584 (Ferreira 2013, 178). This explains in great part the dramatic increase in the number of screenings – and not just the demand.

¹⁵⁰ It should be noted that, since the very early days, Globo held 15% of SIC's joint-stock (Ferreira, 2010: 9).

¹⁵¹ State television RTP1 was surpassed by SIC in 1995, and by TVI in 1999 (Ferreira 2010, 2).

highlighted, both phenomena have been related to the same factor, the telenovelas. These changes were in great part related to aggressive line-up strategies, in which telenovelas were pivotal – the telenovela genre was at the centre of the major transformations in the Portuguese television market (Ferreira 2010, 4).

During the 1990s the popularity of Brazilian telenovelas was still on the rise and SIC's strategy partially explains why it never invested as much in national production as, for instance, TVI did. In fact, during the 90s, SIC did not produce a single telenovela (their first one, *Ganância*, went on air in 2001), and TVI made only two incursions into the genre. These channels were still relying on imported products,¹⁵² and other, less expensive, forms of entertainment such as sitcoms and TV series. It would only be with the advent of the new millennium, and under the leadership of José Eduardo Moniz, that TVI would revolutionise the game and start taking a serious interest in the production of telenovelas. During its early years, TVI was affected by a series of bad decisions, and, for almost a decade, lagged behind SIC in almost every respect. The turning point came when TVI was bought by the Spanish holding, Promotora de Informaciones, S.A (PRISA), via the Media Capital group. Another crucial move was the purchasing of the rights to produce and broadcast *Big Brother*, the first proper reality show in the history of Portuguese television. This programme, which would put ordinary people at the centre of the stage, was successful beyond all expectations (I. Cunha 2010, 97). The fact that it was a relatively low-budget product meant that it quickly generated a profit. Hence, capitalising on the viewers captivated by this show, TVI carried on the task of changing its image and decided to invest consistently in a long-term enterprise, against the odds at the time, in the production of fiction – mainly telenovelas, as well as the creation of a supporting *star system* (I. Cunha 2010, 97).

The results of these strategic options cannot yet be fully understood, as the events are still unfolding in the present. However, it can certainly be said that the continuous production and airing of Portuguese telenovelas proved to be fruitful in their own way. Portuguese telenovelas¹⁵³ surpassed Brazilian counterparts in terms of preference after some years and eventually created and consolidated a professional

¹⁵² During the 90s SIC aired 59 Brazilian telenovelas and 1 Venezuelan show of the same kind; TVI aired 11 Brazilian telenovelas, as well 12 Venezuelan and 5 Mexican equivalent shows.

¹⁵³ With regard to formal features the Portuguese telenovela is modelled on the Brazilian formula. As part of the cooperation between Globo and SIC, the Brazilian channel sent technical teams to Portugal with the specific task of transmitting their know-how. This period of transition was crucial to the life and success of Portuguese-made TV. Today, Globo still honours this protocol by providing specialised input into the scripts and plots of SIC's telenovelas (Torres 2015, 20-26).

industry where previously there had been only isolated manifestations. Between 1977 and 2010, for example, TVI aired 34 Portuguese telenovelas; SIC aired 13; and RTP, the oldest of the three channels, aired 24.¹⁵⁴ This adds up to 71 Portuguese telenovelas broadcast among many other Latin American products of the same kind and countless 'long TV series', occupying a very significant portion of broadcasting time.¹⁵⁵ Considering this situation, where the telenovela plays a pivotal role in the daily televisive life of the Portuguese, it is important to provide a clearer image of the massive importance of this entertainment genre and provide some quantitative data.

Eduardo Cintra Torres estimates that, every year, 16 telenovelas premiere on open-signal channels. The same author also states that, from 1993 to 2012, 323 telenovelas were broadcast in Portugal (Torres 2015, 107) and the genre occupied, on average, seven hours per day on open-channel TV, i.e. roughly one third of air-time (24 hours) was filled with a single type of programme (Torres 2015, 14). In 2015, Torres's research findings led him to reaffirm (Torres 2015, 15) what Traquina had noted almost two decades before, namely, that the whole structure of TV channels in Portugal was underpinned by telenovelas and their planning revolved around them, throughout the entire year (Traquina 1997, 87). In an interview conducted by Torres, Gabriela Sobral, SIC's director of content and production, encapsulates the neuralgic place occupied by the telenovela in the following words: 'Estrutura a grelha, é o grande catalisador de audiências nos horários mais importantes, o prime time [...] A nossa programação está ancorada nestas duas horas de ficção nacional.' [It gives structure to the line-up, it is the great catalyst of audiences in the most relevant time slots, such as prime time [...] All of our line-up is anchored in these two hours of national fiction] (Torres 2015, 15). Torres goes so far as to state that, although RTP, SIC and TVI contribute to the stability of a small audiovisual industry, they 'smother' other types of entertainment with their obsession with telenovelas (Torres 2015, 15).

¹⁵⁴ As Raquel Ferreira made clear in her doctoral thesis, this sudden rise of investment in Portuguese production was not only the result of a spontaneous desire to support local resources, but also derived from social pressure and governmental/European recommendations (Ferreira 2010, 10-15). Invoking an official report from the European Commission, in 1990/2000, Ferreira mentions that Portugal was the only member state in which open-signal channels incorporated less than 50% of national production in their listings (Ferreira 2010, 13). Then again, this situation could never prove beneficial to Portuguese cinema, given that entertainment consisted mainly of foreign shows that presented different realities and emphasised the idea that Portuguese production was still at an incipient stage. However, this problem would be circumvented during the early 2000s, mainly due to the increase in the number of telenovelas produced in Portugal.

¹⁵⁵ In addition, the repositioning of telenovelas some years after their premières on prime time is still a common practice, suggesting that there has been even more scope for the accumulation of time dedicated to telenovelas.

Having established the omnipresence of the telenovela and the impressive durability of its continuous appeal to Portuguese audiences, this thesis will now analyse the formal characteristics of the genre. As mentioned above, telenovelas share common features that distinguish them from other TV series or even soap operas. In their turn, these traits represent to a great extent a different audio-visual idiom from that of cinema. Furthermore, in almost every respect, the concept presiding over telenovelas is completely at odds with the premises of art, anti-Hollywood cinema. The first major voice to acknowledge this was João Bénard da Costa, who wrote:

Brazilian soap-operas became very popular in Portugal, and reached the highest spectator indices ever achieved by any television programme [...] Many people proposed that this formula should be followed by the Portuguese cinema producers, with comparisons being made between the 'naturalness' of the Brazilian actors in these soap-operas and the 'affectation' of the Portuguese actors (Costa 1991, 171).

Costa is obviously referring to one of the most conspicuous features of the telenovela: the tradition of naturalistic acting. As Torres describes: 'Os actores das telenovelas trabalham essa naturalidade, como treinariam outra forma de representar, no teatro, no cinema ou noutros géneros de ficção televisiva. É uma naturalidade artificiosa, que convém à novela' [Telenovela actors work that naturalism, as they would in other acting contexts, like theatre, film, or other genres of television fiction. It is an artificial naturalism that especially suits the telenovela] (Torres 2015, 74). This allows viewers to identify with characters, in a process whereby they try to live these scripted identities vicariously. Moreover, the task of making this process of identification easier is amplified by the broader concept of the telenovela, which is very close to the style and spontaneity of live scenes, as if the spectator were watching the events live (Torres 2015, 58).

With regard to shooting and editing, as Torres found out during his anthropological quest to better understand the mechanics of the telenovela, the *praxis* of the average telenovela is rather formulaic, repetitive and obvious to the producers of this type of audiovisual merchandise. The bulk of the telenovela is shot inside studios, on set, for economic reasons. As editor Inês Gomes explained to Torres, a telenovela episode is composed of a series of successive dialogues, usually ending with cliff-hangers, occurring in different narrative cells. Usually two to three cameras

are used to shoot a scene, which is fully recorded by them in real time. Then, shots are assembled in a continuum, without suture or interruptions. Indeed, flashforwards, flashbacks, jump-cuts or any other kinds of time-manipulation are alien to the telenovela formula. All this adds to the impression of naturalism, for it creates the illusion that diegetic time is coincident with real-life time, like an event happening before your eyes (Torres 2015, 47-49).

Concerning scripts, the writing is essentially formulaic as well. Plots are essentially based on a relatively small range of premises that are permanently rearranged and refreshed with new sets, characters, actors and contexts. Love, hate, betrayal, the desire for social advancement at all costs and moral downfall, along with 'black-or-white' type-characters such as evil, wealthy people or the ambitious poor are part of this very old and straightforward formula upon which a number of other, more superficial, layers of the telenovela are built. The plot, then, revolves around an enigma or mystery that is established in the first episodes. It is the anticipation of its resolution and the consequent suspense generated by the storyline that are expected to hook the audiences.

Everything within the telenovela format is made to fit a pre-determined formula and is monitored by a committee in charge of making sure that the final result is true to its original premises. This therefore prevents any artistic manifestation by directors (in telenovelas there is usually a team of them), photographers or editors. Indeed, unlike cinema (especially art cinema), the telenovela is an almost 'authorless' work, in the sense that its production is industrial and the identity of its creator is not relevant to audiences for all the reasons mentioned above. However, if there is one figure who stands out from the production team, it is the main scriptwriter, and not the director.

By the same token, telenovelas were completely at odds with Portuguese cinema with regard to the type of experience they could provide to spectators. Jacques Lemièrè suggested a similar approach: 'este tipo de programas televisivos contribuiu para afastar ainda mais os espectadores portugueses do tipo de cinema português dominante (o cinema dos 'autores-realizadores') [this kind of TV show widened the gap between Portuguese audiences and the kind of dominant Portuguese cinema (the cinema of the 'authors-filmmakers')] (Lemièrè 2006, 751). Even though films of different kinds were produced in Portugal, the artistry and dark tone of Portuguese art films were found to be challenging to audiences. They invited

the spectator to make sense of them, to decipher their language and their ambiguous meanings; to enjoy the stillness of the moment, and, at times, to contemplate conflictive realities. In short: loyal to the tradition of art cinema in which it was inserted, a great part of Portuguese cinema compelled the viewer to extract an intellectual pleasure. In contrast, the telenovela achieves its goals through other methods.

No one seems to be entirely sure as to why the telenovela has been so successful and how long the format will attract the good graces of spectators. Raquel Ferreira, for example, dedicated the last part of her doctoral thesis to investigating the reasons for the enduring popularity of the telenovela. Her methodology reflects a cognitive-behavioural approach to reception studies, and therefore possesses the limitations of any speculative interpretation made according to a specific framework within the vast academic area of psychology. Yet, her conclusions are worth mentioning. According to the author, telenovelas are easily processed and expose people to psychologically rewarding experiences on various levels. On an Aristotelian level, as Ferreira suggests in line with Torres, spectators face in a positive way the continuous little thrills with which they are presented, as well as uncertainties regarding the plot's development. Hence, the disentanglement of situations of suspense, the tension followed by relaxation of tension of the occasional 'crisis' in which telenovelas live, generate an eager reaction from viewers (Ferreira 2010, 254-267).¹⁵⁶ In addition, the way telenovelas integrate social lessons into their format is another factor to bear in mind. Although this point is not immediately obvious, Ferreira argues that telenovelas allow the viewers to fantasise and experience other lives (some of them rather appealing), and thus learn new ways of seeing the world and dealing with mundane issues that they may never have thought of in the past – as also happens with literature, for instance (Ferreira 2010, 273-279). Finally, because telenovelas are popular and thrilling, they provide real-life opportunities for connection between people (Ferreira 2010, 274-275). They are often good conversation starters and topics. To a certain extent, much of the above applies also to many other TV series, regardless of artistic positioning or cultural elevation. The main question here, however, is why telenovelas have occupied prime-time space and the 'lion's share' of entertainment on Portuguese television for so long.

¹⁵⁶ Unlike in most TV series, telenovelas episodes are not self-contained. Another difference is the length: while TV series have been divided into seasons with a relatively small number of episodes, a telenovela can be on air from six months to almost a year and a half.

Another crucial factor that may have had a great impact in the reception of Portuguese cinema concerns the quantity and quality of its presence on television. In a study carried out during the 1990s, Nelson Traquina analysed TV listings of the four open-signal channels over a period of three months, and concluded that the presence of Portuguese cinema on television was residual: only about 1.5 per cent (Traquina 1997, 30). Although there were moments when Portuguese cinema enjoyed more visibility than this modest 1.5 per cent (such as weeks dedicated to specific authors/retrospectives on RTP2, or the broadcast of television films), television channels other than RTP2 did not counter the mainstream trend and aired mainly American cinema. Furthermore, as João Bénard da Costa has pointed out, the creation of a certain mythology by RTP in the 1980s around the Portuguese comedies of the 1940s did not exactly contribute to the positive public perception of the conceptual work of the dominant wing of Portuguese cinema. These comedies, which ran out of interest in the 50s, were not only institutionally recovered during the 80s, but also proved to be quite popular with the viewing public. According to the late director of the Portuguese Cinemateque:

By the end of the 70s, and mainly in the early 80s, television started frequently to show the Portuguese comedies of the 30s and 40s,¹⁵⁷ which obtained amazing audience levels. The belief was created in many circles, which did not appreciate the introversion of the cinema of the 70s, that this kind of cinema was undoubtedly superior to the current one and that it was the only and genuine Portuguese cinema (Costa 1991, 171).

At this point, three main elements may be underlined: (i) the flood of American cinema after 1974; (ii) the staggering presence of the telenovela format and its impact on the audience's audiovisual culture; and (iii) the lack of interest on the part of TV for Portuguese art cinema. In this thesis I argue that these three elements are at the core of the answer to the question of why there has been such a big gap between Portuguese cinema and its potential audiences within the country. Effectively, none of these factors created an adequate environment for the growth of interest in the kind of films that most filmmakers in Portugal were making.

¹⁵⁷ This trend continued during the 90s and into the early 2000s. However, the frequency reduced over the years.

2.3.4 – Television and cinema co-productions: the case of popular Portuguese films

Serving as a counterpoint to what was mentioned in the paragraph above, if it is true that open-signal (as well as pay-per-view) channels did not broadcast Portuguese films on a regular basis, it is also true that they were responsible for major changes on various levels of the universe of Portuguese cinema. Therefore, this thesis proposes to look in some detail at this intersection between cinema and television, in order to better understand their relationship and the ways in which they interfaced.

Following the hype of the telenovelas and capitalising on the division that occurred inside the Portuguese cinema milieu during the 1980s (between those who wanted to make art cinema and the others who demonstrated commercial intentions), TV channels (mainly TVI and SIC) invested in experimenting with transposing the telenovela formula into film. It was in this context that some of the highest-grossing films in the history of Portuguese cinema came into existence, as it was also from this strategy that some of the major flops were born.¹⁵⁸

Effectively, during the 1990s a group of filmmakers were struggling because their projects and ambitions did not seem to fit within the scope of art cinema. For this reason they saw the creation of new channels as offering a window of opportunity for working on projects that, while not meeting the requirements of ‘quality’ as conceived by the Instituto do Cinema Audiovisual e Multimédia, could be of interest to the new channels. Determined to disrupt the status quo and present alternative proposals of popular and formulaic cinema in Portuguese, they managed to find a safe haven first in SIC¹⁵⁹ and, some years later, in TVI.^{160 161} Perhaps not

¹⁵⁸ Indeed, some films that aimed specifically to please the audience and make profits were complete failures – *Arte de Roubar* (29,361 viewers), *O Bairro* (18,755), *Teia de Gelo* (5,085) and *RPG* (22,855) are good examples – (ICA 2017). These films had equivalent, when not fewer, admissions than a normal art film. Yet, it has been still more common for a popular film to achieve more commercial success (as well as have better distribution deals) inside the country than art films. The point is that the equation is not as simple as a ‘TV’ film equals commercial success.

¹⁵⁹ Producers such as Tino Navarro and Joaquim Leitão and directors such as António Pedro Vasconcelos and Leonel Vieira, and, later, Carlos Coelho da Silva and Vicente Alves do Ó.

¹⁶⁰ The initiative ‘Filmes TVI’, in which famous actor, producer and director Nicolau Breyner and his production company, NBP (Nicolau Breyner Produções), had a pivotal role.

¹⁶¹ These two channels also produced and aired a considerable number of television films, a practice that did not have much tradition in Portugal before. These films were directed by a mixture of new talents and old, respected authors (mainly Ruy Guerra, João Mário Grilo, and José Nascimento). From the group of young filmmakers, some would try their luck in author cinema (such as Jorge Cramez or the duo Tiago Guedes and Frederico Serra), while others would follow the path of popular cinema (Vicente Alves do Ó, Joaquim Leitão, Carlos Coelho da Silva, and Leonel Vieira). However, television film initiatives did not have the necessary continuity to create

surprisingly, they tended to favour scripts that in some crucial respects resembled the ‘image’ of the private channels. In other words, there was an investment made in films that were subordinate to the eternal battle for audiences, and thus were aiming to make as much profit as possible. Unlike the state channels, private TV channels were interested in generating revenue. This brings us to another very important question: the marketing of films.

One of the most decisive and interesting points about the joint ventures between cinema and private channels lay in the publicity machine that the channels already possessed and placed at the service of cinema. These channels that offered their label to cinematic works were just cogs in a much more sophisticated gearing of media groups (TVI belongs to Media Capital, which in turn is fuelled by Spanish money from the multinational PRISA, while SIC belongs to the holding Impresa, which also owns many magazines and newspapers). Hence, SIC and TVI were able to produce and underwrite their films through exclusive partnerships (for example, the contract between SIC and the major distributor Lusomundo) based on budgets which would normally be out of RTP’s reach. To a large extent, much of the success of films such as *Adão e Eva*, *Tentação*, *Jaime*, *O Crime do Padre Amaro*, *Call Girl* or *Amália* was due to the great buzz and marketing built around them. Indeed, they benefited not just from the channel label (which was then a ‘guarantee’ that the film would not comply entirely with Portuguese art cinema standards), but also from a pre-existing structure that was set up to promote mainly the telenovelas, since that was the channels’ primary investment. When asked by Menezes about the reasons for the success of *Tentação*, the actor, Joaquim de Almeida, stated:

Hoje em Portugal, os filmes já têm por trás todo um ‘marketing’ – as pessoas já sabem que os filmes se vão estrear, vão ao cinema não só por causa dos actores, mas porque sabem do que se trata e isso é importante – e há anos isso não se fazia. O filme estreava-se e as pessoas nem se davam conta. [Today in Portugal films already have a marketing strategy in the background – people already know which films will premiere, they go and watch them not only because of the actors, but also because they know what the films are about, and that is important – years ago that would not have happened. The film would premiere and people would not even notice it.] (Menezes 2002)

their own space in TV line-ups or the leverage to boost their importance as entertainment products worthy of further investment.

The reaction of film critics to films sponsored by private TV channels and to the migration of television directors to the world of cinema was not surprising either. The growing concern about a putative ‘televisification’ of Portuguese cinema, at a time when state funding for art cinema was in decline, led some of these films (some of which were very popular) being panned by the more intransigent sectors of film criticism – which were less flexible with regard to the categories they employed to judge cinema. In place of being hailed as a triumph of intermediality, this connection represented, instead, a menace. The film director and scholar, João Mário Grilo, posited that TV channels and audiovisual policies were the harbingers of the end of the era of the director, which would one day give way to the era of the producers (Grilo 2006, 30-33). This meant a shift in the driving forces behind filmmaking, from authorial expression to financial interest. A number of concrete examples of critiques around this topic will be provided in the next section (pages 141-143).

In effect, art cinema – especially produced by the ‘hard-core’ directors such as Pedro Costa, Teresa Villaverde, Raquel Freire, and many others – kept itself and was kept on the periphery of television. As if it were in a parallel dimension, there is an important wing of Portuguese cinema that never saw any interest in television. In its turn television showed very little interest in that section of Portuguese cinema, which survived in two or three specific cultural ‘sub-fields’, populated by recurring figures who had no interest in opening up a two-way dialogue with other expressions of the moving image in Portugal.

Ultimately, despite the fact that television remained distant from art cinema – which is the cinematic practice that is usually associated with Portuguese cinema – it has contributed significantly to challenging the establishment inside the cultural scene, thereby creating the foundations and space for a popular and *middlebrow* cinema, and in effect contributing to the plurality of cinema made in Portugal. In terms of aesthetics, on the one hand television channels (mainly RTP) were canonising the comedies of the 30s and 40s, and, on the other, promoting a kind of cinema guided by middle-class standards with ties to the telenovela apparatus.

2.3.5 – Analysis of the type of films that achieved relative success

The thesis will now focus on the analysis of the films that were most successful in their decade: *O Lugar do Morto*, from 1984, by António Pedro Vasconcelos (271,845

admissions¹⁶²); *Tentação*, from 1997, by Joaquim Leitão (361,312 admissions); and *O Crime do Padre Amaro*, from 2005, by Carlos Coelho da Silva (380,671 admissions). The goal of this exercise is to understand some of the specificities that allowed these films to stand out from their peers. Other films that achieved relative success and share features with these three will also receive some attention in this thesis.

O Lugar do Morto was the first big Portuguese hit after many years and appeared in the context of the building up of a momentum. It was an apex. According to Leonor Areal:

Alguns realizadores do núcleo original apostarão numa ‘reconciliação’ com o público nacional. Opunham-se então ‘os que continuavam a pugnar por um cinema de autor’ e os que defendiam um ‘cinema comum para espectadores comuns’. Assim se afirma uma espécie de contra-corrente de que surgem alguns filmes que efectivamente conseguirão ser sucessos de bilheteira. [Some directors from the original core will invest in the ‘reconciliation’ with the national public. At the time ‘those who still strived for an authorial cinema’ and those who believed in a ‘common cinema for common spectators’ were opposed. Thus, there is the rise of a kind of counter-current that will produce films that will become box-office successes.] (Areal 2011, 273-274)

In terms of audiences, the beginning of the 1980s seemed relatively auspicious for Portuguese cinema. After his debut in 1972 with *Perdido por Cem*, António Pedro Vasconcelos directed, in 1981, *Oxalá*, which received some quite positive 89,484 views at the box office. 1981 was also the year of José Fonseca e Costa’s comedy *Kilas, o mau da fita*, which was the second most commercially successful Portuguese film of the 1980s (121,269 admissions). Fonseca e Costa would still be able to repeat a similar achievement in the following year, with the film *Sem Sombra de Pecado* (92,080). Likewise António de Macedo’s rather extravagant sci-fi space-opera *Os Abismos da Meia Noite* achieved a total of 100,408 admissions on its release in 1983. It is in this context of reconciliation and positive responses from audiences that *O Lugar do Morto* was received.

The film revolves around the life of Álvaro (Pedro Oliveira), a journalist who finds himself in a complicated marital and emotional situation, and who ends up meeting Ana Mónica (Ana Zanatti), a silent and mysteriously seductive woman, moments before the man she is with commits suicide. In the midst of a police

¹⁶² This and all the following numbers of viewers in this chapter are the official statistics and were kindly provided to me, upon request, by the Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual. They can be consulted in Appendices 1 and 2.

investigation, Álvaro is drawn to the *femme fatale* and gets entangled in a thrilling history of unrequited love and deadly frustration. In many ways, *O Lugar do Morto* comprised one of the first attempts to bring Portuguese cinematography closer to more successful formulae, without disregarding an authorial role. It shares common features with *film noir*, Hitchcockian thrillers, and even with the *mise-en-scène* of Godard's *À bout de souffle*. Although the film is linear in a narrative sense, the suspense is carefully managed, and the mystery is never fully unveiled, but only suggested. However, despite its *noirish* influences, there is nothing properly *noir* in its visual cinematography. It was shot in colour and most scenes happen during daytime. This neutral atmosphere serves as a counterbalance to the general mood of the film, preventing it from becoming too stark. Thus, it is neither light-hearted nor too serious. Another important feature of this film is, as Jorge Leitão Ramos highlighted, its narrative agility and its technical achievement: unlike many other Portuguese productions of the same years, the editing, photography and sound are impeccable (Ramos 1989, 232-233).

In its turn, the reception context of *Tentação* is also crucial for understanding its success. In the same way that Vasconcelos' films benefited from the success of previous works by the author, *Tentação* capitalised on the success of *Adão e Eva*. This co-production between Portugal, Spain and France featured the partnership between the LA-based actor Joaquim de Almeida and the director Joaquim Leitão, and was one of the first Portuguese films to have an orchestrated marketing machine behind it – which included advertisements on TV, trailers in all Lusomundo theatres, and street advertising. According to Ribas, *Adão e Eva* became the 'gold standard' for the production and marketing of commercial fiction, for almost 15 years (Ribas 2014, 140). Unlike *O Lugar do Morto*, *Adão e Eva* achieved the feat of being the first hit (254,925 views at the box office) in almost a decade. After the box-office successes of the beginning of the 1980s, culminating in *O Lugar do Morto*, no other Portuguese film before *Adão e Eva* managed to go beyond the 100,000 tickets sold milestone.¹⁶³ Joaquim de Almeida admits that much of the success of *Tentação* was due to *Adão e Eva* (which also had the bonus of having been converted into a three-episode short series for television):

¹⁶³ The obvious exception is Bille August's *A Casa dos Espíritos* (1993), which is a German-Danish-Portuguese co-production with international stars such as Winona Ryder, Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons. It was partially shot in Portugal and in the official statistics it counts as a Portuguese film. However, it does not fall within the scope of the present discussion.

Eu e o Joaquim [Leitão] já tínhamos tido bastante bilheteira com ‘Adão e Eva’ (1995) e as pessoas perceberam que havia uma dupla que fazia filmes que estavam a ser bem aceites. Portanto, o êxito foi produto do trabalho feito anteriormente. Isso e o facto de o tema ser muito interessante. [Joaquim and I had already had good box-office results with ‘Adão e Eva’ (1995), so audiences realised that there was this duo making films that were having a good reception. Therefore, the success was the result of the work that had been done before. That and the fact that the idea was an interesting one] (Menezes 2002).

Moreover, *Tentação* was co-produced by SIC. This meant that it enjoyed good distribution and abundant media coverage and marketing. The film’s soundtrack also featured another novelty: a song by a major Portuguese group, in this case the very famous *Xutos e Pontapés*. In its turn, the song would be played on radios and call attention to the film in question.

Tentação tells the story of Father António (Joaquim de Almeida), a priest in a community in a small town in the north of the country, who gets involved with Lena (Cristina Câmara), a drug addict and ex-convict in a turbulent search for spiritual absolution and redemption. Even though it had a bigger budget and was produced with SIC funds, the film was not as radically different from other Portuguese productions as one might think. João Leitão Ramos acknowledges this and has the following to say about this apparent paradox:

Tentação é um filme sem a envolvimento imediata que se espera de um caçador de espectadores. Não cede ao que seria óbvio [...] Este filme de Joaquim Leitão não tenta seduzir, joga crueza. Não emociona, perturba. Seco como palhas, vai a direito, pelo escuro dentro, e nós atrás. A aposta é, comercialmente, arriscada, só de má-fé se podendo sustentar que o caminho deste cineasta avança a golpes para fazer tilintar as caixas das bilheteiras. [Tentação is a film without the immediate appeal that is expected from an audience hunter. It does not give in to the obvious [...] This film by Joaquim Leitão does not try to seduce, it displays crudity. It does not move, it disturbs. Dry as bones, it follows in a straight line, inside the darkness, with us on its tail. The investment is commercially risky and only in bad faith could it be argued that this filmmaker is making his way to making box-office hits.] (Ramos 2005, 594)

Leitão Ramos also points to formal aspects that give away the film’s TV credentials, such as the simplicity of the plot or the lack of complexity in the images. The author also criticises the profuse use of close-ups on faces, as if the width of cinema was

replaced by the narrowness of television, and the idea of plastic composition was overcome by the flow of the telenovela (Ramos 2005, 594).

It is also interesting to note that António Pedro Vasconcelos' film *Jaime* (1999) and Leonel Vieira's *Zona J* (1998), that were also box-office hits (246,073 and 220,925 viewers, respectively), trod similar paths: they were both co-produced by SIC; were directed by filmmakers who had been tried and tested by the public (*Zona J*, like *Adão e Eva* and *Tentação* was also produced by Tino Navarro); benefited from marketing campaigns on TV, radio and newspapers;¹⁶⁴ and had a strong song in the soundtrack played by a well-known name of Portuguese pop music (by Miguel Ângelo in *Zona J*, and Rui Veloso in *Jaime*). Both films also have in common the trope of adolescents in marginal situations, a characteristic much appreciated by Portuguese art cinema as well, but here the treatment is filled with hope and the will to face challenges.

Concerning *Zona J*, Leitão Ramos writes:

Depois de *Ossos* e *Os Mutantes*, de novo o recente cinema português se aproxima de jovens nas margens. [...] Mas se chamamos aqui à colação os nomes de Pedro Costa e de Teresa Villaverde é apenas por razões de tema. A estética de *Zona J* não podia estar mais nos antípodas. [...] Há um olhar de superfície e uma fórmula de telenovela sem verdadeira densidade dramática. [After *Ossos* and *Os Mutantes*¹⁶⁵ Portuguese contemporary cinema turns once more to youths in the margins of society [...] But we invoke the names of Pedro Costa and Teresa Villaverde only because of thematic affinities. *Zona J*'s aesthetics could not be more opposite [...] There is there but a superficial vision and the telenovela format without true dramatic density.] (Ramos 2005, 652)

In his statement, Ramos interprets some of the formal characteristics of a film as signs that it is somehow contaminated by the telenovela format. In this case, those characteristics are the shallow characters (resembling the 'black-and-white' stereotypes abundant in telenovelas) and the pacing that does not allow for the film to 'breathe' and build up the type of drama that Portuguese cinema is accustomed to.

Although it is important to assess the degree of complexity of a film in order to determine whether it would be more or less likely to generate a positive response from broader audiences, the problem here is that the telenovela phenomenon seems to directly or indirectly influence a film's reception. It seems almost as if there were

¹⁶⁴ A good example of this is *Jaime*'s film poster, where media partners such as *Jornal de Notícias*, *Diário de Notícias* TSF radio and SIC are made explicit.

¹⁶⁵ *Ossos*: 19,982 admissions. *Os Mutantes*: 27,000 admissions.

the pre-established idea that weight should be connoted with art cinema's approach to topics, and lightness associated with the telenovela treatment of the same issues; in a way, there is a continuing anxiety around telenovela's potential to distort the putative 'nature' of cinema and create a hybrid product of lesser quality, somewhere between cinema and television.

This blurring of boundaries between cinema and the audiovisual world (i.e. television), that was palpable in production and marketing mechanisms, was attributed to a broader European frame of policies. Based on positive experiences that had occurred in France (with Canal +), Italy (RAI) and Britain (BBC), recommendations entailed the involvement of TV channels in cinematic activities,¹⁶⁶ in order to promote mutual growth and diversify sources of funding. These premises would find expression in the Law-Decree 350/93 that came to replace the previous Portuguese cinema law (7/71) and introduce institutional updates required by European homogenisation (Ribas 2014, 137). This new dynamic of production was thought to be threatening for the *status quo* of Portuguese cinema and its loyalty to European and art-oriented ways of conceiving the moving image. For this reason, these policies were received with a great deal of suspicion and criticism – especially from the traditional supporters of 'dissident' cinema. The critic Augusto M. Seabra, on the occasion of the première of the first television film, raised a series of semi-rhetorical questions expressing anxieties around this matter:

Haverá efectivamente capacidades de imaginários - isto é, de escrita de argumentos e sua realização - de acordo com os modelos de gosto público que a SIC impôs? Terá o projecto viabilidade depois dos 10 primeiros telefilmes, com produção executiva da Animatógrafo II? Quais as suas conseqüências para a produção de cinema em Portugal? [Will be there any possibilities of creativity – i.e. of scriptwriting and filmmaking – in accordance with SIC's moulds of taste? Will the project still retain sustainability after the first 10 television films, produced by Animatógrafo II? What will be the consequences of this for the production of cinema in Portugal?] (Seabra 2000).

Alongside Seabra, João Lopes, another critic, accused the telenovela of watering down cinematic aesthetics and standards: 'parece óbvio que a sua mediocridade (estética, ética e simbólica) não vai deixar de continuar a massacrar as

¹⁶⁶ The pinnacle of this desired intersection between TV and cinema were the television films with theatrical release, produced mainly by SIC. This group of 32 films included a number of works that were primarily meant to be aired on television but also had a theatrical release, a decision that contributed to the blurring of the boundaries between both formats (Graça 2016, 545).

alternativas da ficção portuguesa' [it seems obvious that its (aesthetic, ethical and symbolic) mediocrity will not cease massacring the alternatives to Portuguese fiction (Lopes 2007, 35). Clearly, Lopes and Seabra believed there to be a clear conflict between popular and art cinema. In other words: a struggle for a certain public space; a simple, binary opposition. Thus, any practice which deviated from the dominant paradigm – which is, nevertheless, conscious of its fragilities, since it does not possess popular acclaim – would, by default, be seen as an 'outsider' that would eventually smother art cinema. Instead of being seen as a player capable of creating its own space, popular Portuguese cinema (which, as is implied by Lopes, is not even 'Portuguese') is also an enemy – like Hollywood – against which art cinema defines itself. Despite these attacks, film discourse rarely turned into a genuine dialogue, for it was unusual for similar reactions to be elicited from the other side¹⁶⁷. Although the Portuguese art cinema milieu has many internal fractures, as described in point 2.2, it has always shown itself capable of taking up the gauntlet of challenging something perceived as a common enemy.

O Crime do Padre Amaro, released in 2005, held the record as the most commercially successful Portuguese film for about a decade (380,671 viewers), until it was overtaken by Leonel Vieira's remake of *O Pátio das Cantigas* in 2015. Loosely based on the novel of the same name by the nineteenth-century Portuguese author Eça de Queiroz, *O Crime do Padre Amaro* represents a new level of association between SIC and cinema (the film would become a short TV series, and Carlos Coelho da Silva was a television director, not a 'traditional' filmmaker) and shares many similarities with *Tentação*. Both films had an original script, both feature a priest who is tempted by a woman, and in both cases fashion models were cast to play the woman's role: Cristina Câmara in *Tentação*, and Soraia Chaves in *O Crime do Padre Amaro*. The main difference is that, while in *Tentação* the connection between the clergyman and the woman was spiritually complex and sex scenes were left out of the final cut, everything in *O Crime do Padre Amaro* revolved around sex, portraying mainly pure sexual attraction – which was made clear in the high number of soft-porn scenes. These scenes were allegedly used as bait to attract audiences, a strategy that is widely perceived as un-artistic and a below-the-belt strategy. The film's emphasis on sex and the consequent perversion of the intentions and artistic prestige

¹⁶⁷ One interesting example of this stance, assumed by the most intransigent filmmakers, is the conclusion agreed by Grilo, Botelho and Costa that they speak very little and only with whom they want, in filmic terms (Grilo 2006, 39).

of Eça de Queiroz' canonical work led Coelho's film to receive very harsh criticism from the film establishment,¹⁶⁸ even though it was a massive hit. Ultimately, in many ways, *O Crime do Padre Amaro* expressed the progressive sophistication of a scheme that had begun ten years earlier with *Adão e Eva*. This was a combination of intra-cinematic elements (approach to themes, soundtrack, casting, editing, linear narratives and the possibility of a progressive approximation to TV techniques) with no less important extra-cinematic synergies (budget size, marketing campaigns and spin-offs, and distribution contracts).

The films mentioned up to this point are usually perceived as the opposite of art cinema, since they represent the closest Portuguese film production has ever been to an industrial model such as Hollywood – the nemesis of Portuguese dissident filmmakers. Being only a small portion of the total, they do differ from the majority of Portuguese films in terms of approach and budget: the actors and technicians involved, the method of pre-production, and even the visual language is indeed different – which made some of these films resemble two-hour, self-contained episodes of a telenovela or TV show.¹⁶⁹ Yet, interestingly enough, these films do not simply discard the darkness and the 'margins' that are usually associated with Portuguese art cinema. As Lupi Bello stated: 'Mesmo aqueles que desejam explicitamente afastar-se de qualquer traço de cinema de 'arte' ou de 'autor', apostando tudo na conquista do público e do lucro, evidenciam, nas suas intrigas de *bas-fond*, sexo, droga, escândalo e 'faca na liga' ' [Even those who clearly wanted to distance themselves from any sort of 'art' or 'author' cinema, investing everything in the conquest of audiences and profit, present, in their *bas fond* plots, sex, drugs, scandal and over-the-top drama] (Bello 2010, 26). As has been seen, similarly to their artistic counterparts, most of these popular films are set in suburbia and borrow from art cinema characters in precarious situations. What is different, however, is that these films explore similar environments from a different angle.

¹⁶⁸ For instance, see Jorge Mourinha's critic in *Público* (25/10/2005):

<https://www.publico.pt/culturaipsilon/noticia/padre-amaro-nao-sabe-nadar-yo-1653296>

¹⁶⁹ This is not merely a conclusion. The practice actually occurred. Some series had a continuation in theatres, a sort of a second life, after the exhaustion of their utility on television. The most obvious cases were *Morangos com Açúcar* (Hugo de Sousa, 2012), adapted from the homonymous telenovela, *Filme da Treta* (José Sacramento, 2006), a longer version of an episode of the popular TV series *Conversa da Treta*, and *Uma Aventura na Casa Assombrada* (Carlos Coelho da Silva, 2009), also an extended episode of the TV series *Uma Aventura*. These were also among the most watched films in Portuguese history.

Call Girl (António Pedro Vasconcelos, 2007) deals with escorting and high-class prostitution. In tandem with *O Crime do Padre Amaro* it is usually regarded as a mere attempt to lure audiences with the promise of torrid sex scenes (Soraia Chaves was once again the protagonist). However, in the opinion of this thesis, there is more to these films than just that superficial layer. What seems more interesting is noting that, for some reason, *O Crime do Padre Amaro* was transposed to a suburban setting in contemporary Portugal. *Call Girl* also tried to portray the worrying reality of corruption schemes in the country, the oppressive power of the wealthiest over the more vulnerable, all the while questioning the nature of true power: the seductive and romantic power that Maria exerts over Carlos, the old mayor played by Nicolau Breyner, or his political power.

It would be easy to argue that these films experimented with new ways of captivating audiences, and, in so doing, paved their own path. Yet, during that process some directors were paying attention to the trends and developments going on in the parallel world of Portuguese art cinema. It is worth remembering that these films are the result of a context that promoted attempts to fuse together cinema and television. The capacity to mix elements from both worlds was a goal and this could be seen as a path of hybridisation (although it was not total nor fully complete). This factor might shed some light on why some filmmakers even chose to bring their projects closer to their rival practice, even if they did so on their own special terms.

This lack of a clear distinction between worlds that were separated before being brought together (and many insist they still are) also raises an important question: given that popular films were targeting mainly domestic audiences and art films were keen on achieving success abroad, could this mean that, in assuming an intermediate stance, popular films were trying to also find their space outside Portugal without jeopardising their domestic audiences? Even if the true intentions of filmmakers must remain unknown, it is nevertheless relevant to provide an account of this borrowing which occurred between popular and art cinema. Finally, in order to fully understand why popular films were regarded by critics as the reverse of Portuguese art cinema (at times even the inversion of Portuguese cinema), one needs to look not just to the formal features, but also to the way these films were produced and presented to audiences. To some extent, it was their production conditions and the marketing around them that determined their outlook as 'products' and not as 'works'. These films presented themselves with a different

attitude: they targeted mass, not niche, audiences, and overtly declared their interest in being watched by as many people as possible. Popular films, true to their name as relating to the ‘popular’, are seen as superficial, industrial and lowbrow, and thus not sufficiently demanding to deserve any kind of critical attention or acclaim. Perhaps the association with TV channels also prevented a more impartial reception of these films and automatically triggered the preconception that they were long telenovela episodes. However, beneath that noise and that formal surface, some of these popular, middlebrow films also lent themselves to a more refined reading, provided the viewer was willing to undertake it.

2.3.6 – Differences between Portuguese cinema and mainstream cinema

After the study of Portuguese television and popular films (which were numerically inferior to authorial films), this thesis now turns to the study of mass-consumed cinema to ascertain the main differences and similarities between Portuguese films and their American counterparts that were being screened throughout the whole country. This comparison between Portuguese and American films would otherwise be a little uncommon, but in this case it is necessary to understand audience expectations. Hence, the main goal of making this contrast is to highlight the points where, in formal and aesthetic terms, Portuguese cinema was at odds with foreign mainstream films that were enjoying better distribution deals. This exercise will have three axes: technology, aesthetics, and themes.

2.3.6.1 – Technological: artisanal versus big studios

As points 2.1 and 2.2 made clear, most Portuguese filmmakers were practising a type of art cinema that was not in any way ‘spectacular’, i.e. where technology is a primordial element of filmic composition. Moreover, as Paulo Cunha explained at various points throughout his thesis on the production methods of Portuguese cinema, the economic constraints that have always conditioned Portuguese cinema were also made manifest in both technological and technical terms (the former represented by the resources and type of equipment used, and the latter by the amount of human resource working on a film) (Cunha 2015). However, American productions, with astronomical budgets, were going in the opposite direction. They

could afford to have access to the latest inventions in the world of film technology (and even, in some cases, contribute directly to their development, as was the case with George Lucas and THX sound and image processing).

According to Cunha, in 1978, British engineer Paul Reed went to Tobis studios (the only cinema studio in Portugal at the time) with the task of writing a report on the condition of its equipment. His conclusion was that almost everything was highly obsolete and that a technological update, in accordance with the needs of the studio, should be carried out as soon as possible (Cunha 2015, 478). Despite all the updates throughout the years, state-subsidised studios could not match the increasing and, indeed, relentless speed at which new technologies were being released into the market.

The history of cinema, especially where entertainment is concerned, has overlapped with technological development since the very beginning. Consequently, generic progress and modernity in cinema is sometimes perceived by general audiences as the introduction of new technologies that enable films to present more possibilities and experiences than before – and not so much as the introduction of new aesthetics and ways of conceiving the moving image, regardless of material. Thus, it was not surprising that any image with a tired look, and therefore unable to correspond to the pristine audiovisual standard presented by American cinema, was understood as outdated and the symptom of a precarious production.

In Portugal, this production characterised by a chronic lack of resources is usually referred to as ‘artisanal’ and finds in the term ‘industrial’ its antonym. Indeed, the former term has already appeared in this thesis, in a few quotes from filmmakers. Although it is not possible to trace back who initially coined the term artisanal, Paulo Filipe Monteiro was one of the first academics to use it as an adjective to express the material conditions in which Portuguese ‘Cinema Novo’ thrived (Monteiro 1995, 680). Monteiro’s assertion also highlights the non-industrial – even anti-industrial – intentions of this new wave of filmmakers. Realising that they could never compete with American productions, some Portuguese filmmakers from the 1960s onwards made a virtue of necessity and turned this otherwise obstacle in their favour by assimilating these material circumstances as unique features. Weaknesses were turned into strengths. Instead of a negative connotation, ‘artisanal’ has since then

increasingly become part of the institutional discourse around Portuguese cinema.¹⁷⁰ Not only does this term immediately relate to a tradition of authorial cinema with its roots in the heroic moments of the 1960s, but also to a practice that affirms itself as alternative and stripped down to the fundamentals. The ‘artisanal’ tells a story and a *praxis*, a way of life, that finds its epitome in the works of Pedro Costa¹⁷¹ and the minimalist resources he employs to film. Artistic perseverance and limitations developed from being determinants to becoming aesthetic options that conveyed an ethical message concerning filmmaking that reinforced a certain way of grasping the world. Moreover, the lack of industrial noise served as guarantee of the total freedom of the director. The lighter the mechanical apparatus, the more ‘human’ the work would in theory become.

Gregory Zinman, the author of a PhD thesis on handmade cinema,¹⁷² states that: ‘The handmade cinema has links [...] to craft, or the way of making things. Furthermore, the word “craft” connotes a qualitative valence, a level of skill with respect to the tools and materials at hand – the “well-made-ness” of an object’ (Zinman 2012, 7-8). In a way, artisanal underlines the figure of its protagonist, the artisan or craftsman, which in this case is the director – and the small teams that put all their effort into cinematic labour. It is a convenient term because it preserves the image of the authors while also giving hints about their aesthetic stance and material conditions. Therefore, artisanal seems, effectively, to define much of what the most significant strand of Portuguese cinema has been since even before the 1960s. Ribas,

¹⁷⁰ In February 2016, the influential producer Luís Urbano went so far as to suggest that the critical acclaim of some Portuguese films was due to this ‘artisanal’ characteristic, something that had disappeared in other countries but persisted in Portugal:

<https://www.publico.pt/culturaipilon/noticia/a-conquista-de-berlim-1721983>. The existence or re-emergence of this discourse in 2016, to a certain extent, contradicts Ribas’ assertion that this ‘artisanal’ praxis had slowly faded away during the 90s (Ribas 2014, 140). Even conceding that, in practical terms, this evanescence might have actually happened due to the structural transformations brought about by the audiovisual policies. The discourse around the artisanal, however, was kept alive – a circumstance that might have provoked a revival of that spirit, some years later.

¹⁷¹ It is interesting to note the profuse usage, by several authors, of the word ‘artisanal’ to describe this filmmaker’s work. The collection of essays entitled *Cem Mil Cigarros*, gathering contributions from scholars from the four corners of the world, is a good example where the term is ever-recurring.

¹⁷² Zinman’s idea of ‘handmade cinema’ is only partially compatible with ‘artisanal’. For the author, handmade is primarily related to avant-garde cinema, i.e. direct plastic interventions on film (such as in the work of Stan Brakhage) or the shooting of handmade objects that, together, are meaningful for the moving image (e.g. the abstract animated works of Oskar Fischinger). Despite this, there can be established a few conceptual connections between Zinman’s subject and the Portuguese artisanal practice – especially in what concerns the idea of craft and a close relation between the filmmaker, the resources/materials and production methods utilised (Zinman 2012).

who explored this question previously, summarises this issue in two excerpts from his thesis:

O cinema português é um cinema que se encontra numa zona periférica do cinema mundial, limitado por uma língua no espaço europeu e por outras questões culturais nos países que também falam português. Desenvolveu, portanto, um sistema produtivo específico, porque os seus filmes não possuem um mercado interno que possa sustentar uma produção industrial. [Portuguese cinema is a cinema that finds itself in a peripheral zone of world cinema, it is limited by a language in the European space and by other cultural features in other Portuguese-speaking countries. Therefore, it developed a specific productive system, because its films do not maintain a domestic market that is able to sustain an industrial production] (Ribas 2014, 132).

Por outro lado, e não menos importante, o cinema nacional pode ser uma defesa contra o cinema internacional que se implanta em território nacional (por via da distribuição cinematográfica estrangeira) [...]Essa visão produtiva resultou numa posição política de recusa da indústria cinematográfica, em favor de um cinema artesanal [...]E se, na verdade, a condicionante económica resultou em métodos de produção mais artesanais, também foi construído, da parte dos cineastas, um discurso de proteção em defesa deste cinema. [On the other hand, and no less important, national cinema can be a defence against international cinema that has established itself in a national territory (through foreign cinema distribution channels) [...] This productive vision resulted in a political stance of refusal of the cinematographic industry, much in favour of an artisanal cinema [...] And if, in truth, economic conditions resulted in more artisanal production methods, there was also built, by filmmakers, a discourse of protection in defence of this cinema] (Ribas 2014, 132-133).

These quotations encapsulate the two main ideas that run through the notion of the artisanal: first, that the artisanal approach was the fruit of the broader Portuguese situation in the international context and thus was not solely an aesthetic goal or achievement; second, that material circumstances were matched by ideology, as occurred in other European countries, and so artisanal was embraced and maintained as a practice of choice and resistance. Artisanal, in its anti-industrial sense, became the format of art cinema, almost with the force of a requirement – which in turn suggests the existence of a link between the conditions of the production of a filmic work and its reception/categorisation in the artistic hierarchy.

This artisanal thread has remained vibrant until the present day for two main reasons: firstly, the filmmakers' aesthetic filiations; secondly, the stagnation (or slow march) of the situation concerning equipment. As João Maria Mendes, teacher at the

Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema, has clarified to *Público*: 'João Salaviza diz que o desenvolvimento dos projectos (na ESTC) mantém um perfil clássico, que há experiências ligadas a novos equipamentos e equipas técnicas que é preciso actualizar. Tem razão, e isso faz parte da complexidade da vida das instituições' [João Salaviza says that the development of projects (at ESTC) keeps a classic profile, that there are experiences about new equipment and technical teams that need to be updated. He is right, and that is part of the complexity of the life of institutions] (Valente 2013). As far as ESTC is concerned, it is still worth mentioning once more the preponderant influence exerted on the 90s' generation of filmmakers by the New Cinema group in general, but also by António Reis in particular (Moutinho e Lobo 1997, 52-77), a self-taught filmmaker and, arguably, one of the most conspicuous representatives of artisanal cinema. The co-author of *Trás-os-Montes* had many followers who have reproduced features of his style and was as respected and inspirational inside the milieu as Manoel de Oliveira. Chief among his disciples is Pedro Costa, who became the latest major reference-point in Portuguese contemporary art cinema and the recipient of considerable artistic prestige.

2.3.6.2 – Aesthetics

In line with the intellectual affiliation of Portuguese cinema described in 2.1 and the filmic influence of the French New Wave – as well as other avant-garde movements, particularly Italian Neo-realism – the aesthetics of Portuguese cinema, although diverse, possessed premises in common. Portuguese films, traditionally under the aegis of the state, were also moulded by state policies and by funding criteria.¹⁷³ In addition, as addressed in the previous section of this thesis (2.3.6.1), material issues were not simply details but also marked the final presentation of films. Even though there were several attempts to produce a cinema that was more complex than a traditional opposition to Hollywood, it is undeniable that most Portuguese films conveyed very different messages and used formal techniques that differed from American cinema. Moreover, Portuguese cinema also demonstrated a certain triumph of form over content, or, more accurately, explored form as content. In other words, a more lyrical and sensorial approach was privileged in most instances to the detriment of a naturalist representation and presentation that had become

¹⁷³ For detailed information regarding this problem, see Chapter IV.

prevalent in classical Hollywood cinema.¹⁷⁴ Whereas ‘Hollywood film strives to conceal its artifice through techniques of “invisible” storytelling’ (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1991, 3), Portuguese cinema deviated from this paradigm.

To a certain degree, this set of problems concerning the distinction between Portuguese cinema and the kind of American cinema that was being massively imported into Portugal refers to the broader and older dichotomy between European and American productions. The perception of this fundamental difference of approach to what cinema should and could be was clear not only to filmmakers, but also to audiences, who generally assimilated and regarded both formulas in relatively simplistic binary oppositions, such as: big production on the one hand and low budget on the other; quick, ‘classical Hollywood’ editing versus stillness and slow-paced camera movements; linear narratives as opposed to experimental storytelling (if narrative at all); upbeat stories contrasted with reflexive and intellectually demanding concepts; shallow, *tête-à-tête* TV drama with literary and reflective drama; technologically based cinema counterpointed by artisanal filmmaking; or even the announcement of new cinematic eras opposed by the questioning of that precise standard of progress. Although this inventory is by no means exhaustive, it is ultimately intended to be illustrative of the assumption underlying the reception of filmic works.

2.3.6.3 – Thematics

Portuguese cinema differs thematically from mainstream Hollywood cinema for a number of reasons. The array of possibilities has always been limited by economic constraints. Films that require substantial costs or a big production budget to work well (such as science fiction, or historical films – despite Manoel de Oliveira’s attempts) have usually been out of the reach of Portuguese directors. Furthermore,

¹⁷⁴ For a very detailed study on the establishment, continuity and changes in the aesthetics and style of Hollywood films since 1917 see the seminal work by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, entitled *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. In this book, the authors dissect the reasons that made films produced by Hollywood studios so pervasive and, in a way, similar, by associating a cinematic practice with a mode of production that was common to the majority of them. It should also be noted that, despite the acknowledged changes that this system underwent, Bordwell suggested the continuity and the persistence of this model when he stated that ‘since the 1960s, there have been several modifications in the US film industry, but most of them have had only minor effects on the mode of production [...] Just as the Hollywood mode of production continues, the classical style remains the dominant model for feature films’ (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson 1991, 368-370).

as explored in section 2.1.3 and worthy of being highlighted at this point, the majority of Portuguese films revolved around a series of ‘obsessions’, i.e. topics usually linked to the reality of Portugal and what it meant to be Portuguese and/or to the expression of the intimate desires of the author – while featuring at times a ‘dark’ tone.

Whereas American cinema became ‘universal’, either because of its hegemonic presence or the nature of the themes it addressed, Portuguese cinema became progressively closed in its own *shibboleths* and idiosyncrasies which, paradoxically, were presented via a format that was also imported. Though similar to American cinema, the telenovela ultimately confirmed the fact that Portuguese audiences were willing to be exposed to foreign realities, provided that the theme and its treatment were to their liking. Another major problem, which will be tackled in the chapter on distribution, is that audiences never managed to get in touch with the true diversity of Portuguese cinema. In a way, not even the singularity of so many films or the uniqueness of filmmakers such as Manoel de Oliveira or João César Monteiro managed to speak favourably to Portuguese audiences.

Final Remarks: A Chronic Problem

Chapter I sought to understanding the origins and history of the aesthetic course of Portuguese cinema, alongside a complementary journey through the main cultural habits and trends of the average Portuguese, while investigating in particular the main reasons that led to the divorce between audiences and cinema. As Paulo Cunha and Leonor Areal stated (see pages 102 and 137), it is since the 1980s that directors of Portuguese art cinema began to consider the lack of an audience as a problem with which they had to contend. António Pedro Vasconcelos, Paulo Rocha, Seixas Santos and Fernando Lopes were some of the major figures that showed the most concern with regard to this matter.¹⁷⁵ As mentioned in sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, the precursors of Portuguese New Cinema were out of phase with the rest of the country and, by placing their expectations in a small elite section of society, their wishful thinking led them to believe that this group could be taken for granted (Monteiro 2001, 334-335).

¹⁷⁵ See page 50.

With regard to the themes and tones that have run through an important part of Portuguese art cinema, Lupi Bello suggests:

vale a pena pôr a hipótese de que o público português não acompanhe os seus realizadores no persistente desejo de auto-reflexão e auto-crítica que o nosso cinema tão vincadamente transmite (...) esta tendência é porventura sentida como sufocante e ‘intelectualizante’ pelo público ‘comum’, desejoso de encontrar no cinema português outros focos de interesse pessoal – quer devido a um (eventualmente censurável) instinto alienante, quer a uma (eventualmente saudável) vivacidade cultural, apreciadora de outros mundos, outros universos, outras histórias [it is worth raising the hypothesis that Portuguese audiences do not follow their filmmakers in their continuing wishes for self-reflection and self-criticism that our cinema so markedly transmits [...]] This trend is perhaps felt as smothering and ‘intellectualising’ by the ‘common’ audience, eager to find in Portuguese cinema other points of personal interest – either because of a (perhaps censurable) escapist instinct, or a (perhaps healthy) cultural liveliness, keen on other worlds, other universes, other stories] (Bello 2010, 25).

Echoing Lupi Bello’s argument, when questioned about the idea that Portuguese cinema turned its back on spectators, Paulo Rocha stated that he believed there were two explanations for this divorce: ‘O público português não quer conhecer Portugal [...] O público não está habituado a ver-se a si próprio. Quando se vê e se ouve, é um choque [...] Do lado dos realizadores, há um problema de inexperiência. Nós ainda não sabemos bem quais as “teclas” que se podem tocar para o público português.’ [The Portuguese public does not want to know Portugal [...] The public is not used to seeing itself. When it sees and hears itself it is a shock [...] On the filmmaker’s side, there is a problem of lack of experience. We still do not know which ‘keys’ are right for the Portuguese public] (Melo 1996, 73).

Manuel José Damásio, the author of one of the very few studies on Portuguese spectatorship of national cinema to have used task groups and questionnaires, arrived at similar conclusions to this thesis, although via a completely different method. According to him, the low level of audiences in Portugal for locally produced films is based on two factors: first, there is a general lack of trust regarding the cultural object. Portuguese films are not regarded as high quality films; and second, Portuguese cultural products are regarded as something directed towards an elite, therefore not produced according to the wishes and expectations of the majority of the people (Damásio 2006, 15).

Damásio develops this line of arguments, adding:

Razões porque não vê cinema português: o cinema português é relacionado com temas tristes, à margem, focado em temas urbanos e decadentes [...] com uma dinâmica pouco apelativa [...] onde se denota a escassez de recursos materiais e económicos, mas onde também os argumentos são vistos como podres [...] os filmes ainda são considerados muitos artesanais [...] De forma geral, o público refere uma falta de identificação com o cinema português, ou seja, as histórias retratadas não são vistas como compatíveis com o nosso imaginário português, a nossa sociedade ou com as nossas expectativas. [The reasons why Portuguese cinema is not watched: Portuguese cinema is related to sad, marginal themes, focused on urban and decadent topics [...] with little appealing dynamic [...] where the lack of economic and material resources is evident, but also where the poverty of the script is also made manifest [...] Films are still considered very artisanal [...] Broadly speaking, audiences refer to a lack of identification with Portuguese cinema, that is, the stories portrayed are not seen as compatible with the Portuguese imaginary, our society or our expectations] (Damásio 2006, 74).

Damásio, furthermore, highlights that questionnaires also mentioned other features, such as: over-acting; the artificiality of and in dialogue; problems with the sound and the clear perception of speech; poor audio post-production (lack of synchronisation, artificial editing); and dark and lacklustre photography – no doubt a direct or indirect consequence of the modest resources available to Portuguese filmmakers. Of course, some of these apparent defects are actually aesthetic choices – such as intentional artificiality in speech and editing (Damásio 2006, 74-76). Nevertheless, they are perceived by the general public as flaws; as an interruption of the natural flow of cinematic naturalism of American films or telenovelas.

As this chapter has shown, the problematic division between Portuguese films and the major part of the Portuguese people has become more and more evident throughout the years. In a country with a high index of illiteracy before the revolution and the stability brought about by the Constitution in 1976, filmmakers' endeavours proved to be far beyond the reality and interest of the average Portuguese. As João César Monteiro famously wrote about Manoel de Oliveira: 'O problema é só este: o país tem (inexplicavelmente) um cineasta demasiado grande para o tamanho que tem. E, portanto, das duas uma: ou alargam o território ou encurtam o cineasta.' [The problem is just one problem: the country has (inexplicably) a filmmaker far too big for its size. And so, we have two options: either we extend the territory, or we shorten the filmmaker] (Monteiro 1972, 25). While filmmakers were sitting in Café Vá-Vá discussing how they were going to initiate a

new wave in Portugal while remaining faithful to their own intellectual tradition, the audiences were going in the opposite direction. A signal of this is the promotional poster for *Os Verdes Anos*, on which we read: ‘Sonhava com um filme português que tivesse a qualidade e a actualidade alguns dos melhores filmes franceses ou italianos? Então não deixe de ver Os Verdes Anos. Mas se gosta do tipo corrente dos filmes portugueses é preferível que não vá ver Os Verdes Anos.’ [Have you been dreaming of a Portuguese film with the quality and actuality of some of the best French or Italian films? Then do not miss Os Verdes Anos. But if you like current Portuguese films, then it is better if you do not watch Os Verdes Anos.] That same poster ends in the following fashion: ‘Os Verdes Anos, que se destina fundamentalmente ao público esclarecido.’ [Os Verdes Anos, a film made specially for the educated audience] (Melo 1996, 54). More than a rebellious act, these sentences seem to encapsulate rather well the spirit of the time.

To some extent, Portuguese cinema (if not all, at least an important group of filmmakers) refused to mimic and reproduce with meagre means what big studios were doing. Thus, Portuguese cinema came to choose its target audience and reveal its international ambitions in the festival circuit. And while Portuguese cinema was channelling its energies towards this goal, the general public was sticking to formats that thrived on their own merits but had hardly any chance of dovetailing with the ‘resistance’ of Portuguese cinema. Interestingly, telenovelas proved that it was possible for a Portuguese-made product to become over time, accepted by the public. However, as far as cinema was concerned, this would probably have to come with the condition that Portuguese cinema would cease to be what it has been for quite a long time.

Chapter III – Visibility, Artistic Prestige, and Circulation

3.1 – Film Festivals, Artistic Prestige and Criteria

Along with the number of spectators, the national and international visibility of a cinematic practice is one important indicator in ascertaining its impact and overall perceived prestige. After an analysis of the field of spectatorship, it is important to address the relationship that Portuguese cinema maintained with the film festival circuit (i.e. the non-officially organised but nonetheless cooperative network of film festivals across the world) and vice versa. This is particularly relevant for three reasons: first, the artistic *cachet* endowed by festivals is both a means to understand the place and value of some directors and, by extension, their nations in the film market and a significant factor for distribution and further circulation; second, as will be seen, festivals have been places where games of geopolitical power come into play – a broader situation that should also be considered, given the core-periphery binomial already mentioned in this thesis; and finally because Portuguese filmmakers, since at least the 1960s, have directed their practice towards a cinephile context of reception, in which festivals play a pivotal role. As Cindy Wong put it: ‘festivals and the people who create and re-create them thus shape what films we as audiences and scholars will see, what films we respect or neglect, and often, how we read such cinematic works’ (Wong 2011, 1).

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first one (3.1) focusses on visibility and film festivals, and the second (3.2) on distribution. Furthermore, the present section is thematically subdivided into two smaller points, corresponding to the broader picture and the particular case. The first one (3.1.1 to 3.1.3) will focus on understanding, from a critical standpoint, the dynamics of film festivals, i.e. the elusive dichotomy between Hollywood and the festival circuit, the role played by the different agents involved in these events, the selection criteria, and the question of artistic prestige. It is important to explore these issues because, as Paulo Filipe Monteiro suggested, they may have helped shape the whole cinematographic *praxis* in Portugal – especially the aesthetics of some Portuguese films and the cinematographic laws. The second part of this section (3.1.4 until 3.2), entitled ‘The Quest for International Recognition’, will introduce the Portuguese case and read its festival history in light of the reasoning developed during the first part. The main

goal is to understand the relation between Portuguese contemporary cinema and the mercantile context into which it is inserted, via a cross-disciplinary approach that will bring to the table concepts derived from the sociology of culture and film studies. At its core will be the analysis of the complex relation between power, market, prestige, and art. To illustrate this situation, Manoel de Oliveira's rise to prominence will be presented and explored as a case-study. The conclusion will assess the presence (or absence) of Portuguese films in the international scene and how its specificities have shaped the overall trajectory of contemporary Portuguese cinema and its visibility.

This study also aims to identify and assess the various difficulties that Portuguese films have encountered throughout the years and which have prevented Portuguese cinema from reaching a consolidated top spot alongside other national cinemas. It is true that in the last seven years Portuguese filmmakers have amassed a considerable number of awards in A-list festivals (mainly Berlin and Cannes) and have consistently been given unprecedented attention. This recent, quite positive, situation should not prevent us from studying the challenges that Portuguese cinema faced before reaching this favourable turn of fortune – which had been anticipated and eagerly desired by filmmakers for decades.

3.1.1 – What is a film festival and what is its purpose?

Emerging as a response to Hollywood's dominance after the world wars, film festivals are regarded as places of artistic celebration and as alternatives to the mainstream circulation of film. Indeed, festivals have presented themselves as opportunities to showcase films that fall outside the main distribution channels, namely films with artistic claims, produced by small studios and teams all across the world. According to Marijke de Valck's seminal research, festivals have had three historical phases. The first ran from the establishment of the first reoccurring film festival in Venice in 1932 (during Mussolini's fascist regime, with a very clear, nationalist agenda) roughly until the early 1970s, when disruptions in Cannes and Venice led to reformulations in festival organisation. The second phase, marked by the appearance of independently organised festivals and the evolution of the classic format to incorporate market features and facilitate film industries (Wong 2011, 10), ran from that turbulent period until the mid-1980s. Since then, the third phase has

been characterised by a huge increase in the number of these events,¹⁷⁶ as well as by the highly professional and institutional level they have attained (Valck 2007, 19-20).

Although usually associated with celebrities, massive media attention, an atmosphere of celebration and the sense of a certain *kairos* in the filmic universe, festivals go beyond this set of visible components, and the study of them is an expanding area within the field of film studies. Festivals have to do with audiences and cinephilia, and are also about glitter, glamour and red carpets, but their real importance often lies backstage. Books by Valck, Wong and Iordanova, among others, allow us to have a clearer sense of what these events mean and what is at stake, and to identify the participants and their intentions. Valck states: ‘the international film festival circuit has a quintessentially European connotation¹⁷⁷ while the Academy Awards represent the ultimate manifestation of Hollywood’ (Valck 2007, 15). However, she quickly goes on to acknowledge that this opposition is not quite so straightforward: ‘The network operates both with and against the hegemony of Hollywood’ (Valck 2007, 15). Although festivals strategically and conceptually distance themselves from Hollywood (after all, that distance is their *raison d’être*), they have maintained a dialogue and borrowed over time some of the characteristics of their antagonist. The adoption of a star system and the progressive accommodation of the business of cinema (in a discreet way) are two prime examples. In the words of Mark Peranson, ‘there’s a false dichotomy that exists between multiplex and the film festival world, where one is business, the other art’ (Peranson 2009, 24).

According to Richard Porton, ‘[T]he result is of course the phenomenon of the two-tiered festival: for example, large, primarily mainstream competitions at Cannes and Berlin counter-balanced by parallel events, the Director’s Fortnight and The Forum’ (Porton 2009, 5). In her analysis of film festivals, Wong concluded that there is a myriad of different groups involved in them, with different roles and expectations. Local politicians look to promote their city, programmers and staff focus their energy on making the days run as smoothly as possible, press agents want their stories, scoops and interviews with celebrities, and audiences seek to attend film

¹⁷⁶ In the 1980s there were about 170 film festivals in total. In 2003, FIAPF (International Federation of Film Producers Association) counted about 700 (Iordanova 2009, 1).

¹⁷⁷ It should be mentioned that, even though festivals were born as a European phenomenon, their format (modelled after Cannes, mainly) was soon globalised and non-European festivals began to emerge slowly throughout the world, based on similar premises and with the intention of carrying out locally the same missions of highlighting cinephilia, showcasing marginal filmmaking, promoting tourism and cities, fostering *auteur* cinema, and expressing an alternative to Hollywood.

premieres and pre-releases, hoping to witness history in the making and thereby become part of the communities that festivals create (Wong 2011, 11-12). Thus, while it is true that festivals remain loyal to their promise of defending cinema, it should also be highlighted that many other interests are represented in these events. 'Money and opportunity bring people to festivals' (Wong 2011, 9), a reality put crudely by Wong. As Wong elaborates:

Cannes has the Marché, Berlin has the European Film Market, and Hong Kong has Filmart. These film markets are trade events, bringing investors, distributors, agents, and artists together. Producers and filmmakers want to sell the distribution rights of their projects so they can finish the movie they are making or to sell this movie so they can make the next one. (Wong 2011, 9)

True to their primordially capitalist spirit, these markets, operating as they do beyond the range of the press's cameras, 'are open to anyone who can pay the fee' (Wong 2011, 25).

The importance of backstage manoeuvres, personal connections and undisclosed agreements in this world is another factor that should be underlined, for these play a vital role in this universe. Virtually every academic or insider who writes about festivals acknowledges this sort of 'shadow history' of cinema. Although historians may never be able to fully scrutinise the meanderings of this complex world, it is important to bear in mind that many choices and decisions have been made as a result of these connections. As Valck put it: '[business at Cannes] occurs just about everywhere especially in restaurants, hotels, apartments, and yachts. Companies rent locations [...] that they transform into communication centers and use as temporary offices and private settings to welcome (potential) partners and discuss deals' (Valck 2007, 114). Furthermore, according to James Quandt, *faits divers* such as critics demolishing films as a result of being tired or hungry, or jurors being informally influenced by external forces, are part of the daily life of festivals, yet 'we never talk about these issues, because to admit them is to suggest the process is very fallible' (Quandt 2009, 75). As Mark Peranson has stressed, at the centre of this speculative world is the figure of the sales agent, an essential cog in a money-driven machine with little regard for artistic merit, ready to strike obscure deals with producers (Peranson 2009, 29-33). This is possible because these sales agents 'control the art film market, often investing in the films at production stage' (Peranson 2009, 30). They are 'middlemen who identify potentially profitable films and acquire the

rights to sell them to distributors all over the world' (Wong 2011, 9). Thus, sales agents and distributors decide what films will play where (Peranson 2009, 30). Quintín (Eduardo Antín), former programmer of the BAFICI (Buenos Aires International Festival of Independent Cinema), explains that 'with the passage of time, this power [to decide about film circulation] has passed from government bureaucrats to producers and distributors, and, finally, to the agents' (Quintín 2009, 43).

For these sales agents, festivals represent not only a chance to facilitate the encounter of business partners gathered in the same space, but also the perfect opportunity to spot the next investment, due to their competitive nature. Marijke de Valck emphasises that:

Film festivals have been able to multiply because they offer opportunities [...] for films that do not (yet) have the commercial potential to be distributed while they are of special interest to the niche community of film lovers that visit festivals. For films that have already secured distribution before they are screened at festivals, the decision to participate in a specific festival is normally taken by the distributor for the territory where the festival will take place. The festival site thus becomes part of the marketing strategy laid out by a distributor. Film festivals are thus considered good marketing opportunities, [...] because participation and awards are believed to help a movies' box-office success in the art house circuit. (Valck 2007, 104)

Valck's assertion encapsulates one main idea that unfolds into a second one: not only is the dynamic of film festivals intrinsically connected with distribution, but that dynamic, involving as it does awards and the allocation of attention towards certain films and filmmakers, also provides an attractive scenario for sales agents to take the pulse of new trends and/or to make their moves, which in turn influence the course of the festival circuit.

Quintín prefers to use the metaphor of 'galaxy' in reference to the festival circuit and insists that 'although infinitely interconnected, the Galaxy is not a cooperative network' (Quintín 2009, 45). Rather, it operates in an immanent tension between competition and shared premises (Rhyne 2009, 9-11). For instance, Cannes appeared as a response to Venice, while Latin American festivals emerged as local alternatives to the European concentration of these events. In their turn, the shared format that festivals display is what allows distributors, producers and filmmakers to understand the galaxy as a circuit, despite the specificities of each 'star' – note that

one of the main traits of more contemporary festivals is often the narrowing down to specific genres and themes (such as horror or documentary) or specific communities (such as LGBTQ). Given that festivals have developed different tiers over the years, it is common for films to participate in a major competition, and then travel across sidebars in different festivals. Hence, the concept of circuit comes full circle in the following way:

Festivals are sites of passage at which ‘art cinema’, world cinema’ and ‘auteur cinema’ find audiences and through which they might attract sufficient attention for further release. Film festivals have become an alternative exhibition circuit of its own, supporting and reinforcing its own survival. Films premier at major festivals like Cannes, Berlin and Venice, and subsequently go on to appear at an entire series of medium-and-smaller-sized festivals. Meanwhile, specialized festivals may discover new talents that, subsequently, move on to the prestigious competition programmes of the A festivals. In this way, festivals produce their own material: they are in the business of cultural prestige. (Valck 2007, 106)

Thus, the main idea is that the group of film festivals around the world end up working as a circuit, but this is not because they are networked or inherently inter-organised. Rather, the circuit is a consequence of the economy of the film business and the possibilities festivals represent for producers, directors, and audiences.

Dina Iordanova develops the idea that festivals have become an alternative exhibition circuit of their own, arguing that they have ceased to be an alternative at all. For this scholar, festivals should not be regarded solely as a means to an end – i.e., as places where films gain exposure and hype and find distribution deals – but rather as final destinations. In relation to festivals being considered as an exhibition circuit rather than a distribution network, Iordanova states:

Many films which otherwise would not be seen beyond their immediate domestic environment stay solely within the festival track. In this respect, festivals are no substitute for something else. Screening the film at festivals is not a means of getting the film to real exhibition; it *is* the real exhibition. (Iordanova 2010, 25)

As will be seen, this emphasis on festivals as exhibition sites is crucial for understanding the artistic path and career of some filmmakers and indeed of certain directors, such as Manoel de Oliveira or Pedro Costa. Thomas Elsaesser wrote that festivals are ‘points of contact’ (Elsaesser 2005, 93). Arguably, this idea applies to the

auteurs who maintain a strong relationship with festivals through the regular supply of films and cinephile audiences. Ultimately, along with this contact, festivals are vital to cinema – namely art cinema – because they also create business opportunities and, through artistic prestige, create a cinematographic canon.

3.1.2 – Artistic prestige

Along with exhibition and the creation of business opportunity, the third major point of the triumvirate that governs festivals is their role as conferrers of artistic prestige. Artistic prestige is tightly linked with the image of celebration of filmic achievements that festivals like to portray, thereby becoming the main connector between the other two intercommunicating axes. Given that it has exerted so much influence over the course of film history, it deserves an analysis of its own. Marijke de Valck borrowed from anthropology the concept of the ‘rite of passage’ to describe the process of legitimation whereby films attain visibility and prestige, thereby increasing their cultural value, via festivals. They are ‘obligatory points of passage, because they are events – actors – that have become so important [...] that, without them, an entire network of practices, places, people, etc. would fall apart’ (Valck 2007, 36). Due to their competitive tradition, these events are ‘sites of passage’, in that they are the locales where the cultural positioning of films and filmmakers in the film world is asserted (Valck 2007, 37). This occurs by way of prizes, awards, distinctions and nominations, or simply by allowing films to be selected to compete or have screening time.

In fact, the internationalisation of a filmmaker or a national cinema (if considering the sum of the films originating from a specific country that has the privilege of being in the official selections) is a challenge because of the competitive DNA of festivals. Through this system of generation of value – of endowment of ‘cultural capital’, to use the term coined by Pierre Bourdieu – both works and their authors ‘rise to a higher level of cultural status in the festival network and improve chances of distribution and exhibition in the circuit of art houses and commercial theatres [i.e. also in places outside festivals]’ (Valck 2007, 38). The establishment of some preeminent directors could also be explained by the following common practice: ‘For several decades at Cannes it was observable and indisputable that those auteurs who had competed with distinction down the years - a select band – enjoyed

a more or less open return ticket to the festival competition' (Corless and Darke 2007, 199). In practical terms, everything mentioned so far with regard to the allocation of artistic prestige converges to the following point: festivals are the place where symbolic value translates into economic value, and where artistic, subjective appreciation sublimates into concrete, commercial interest.

Operating alongside specialised critique, archives, and academia as regulators of taste, major festivals and their financial players are powerful and authoritative institutions that confer prestige and opportunity on the works they choose. In this sense, they are what António Pinho Vargas calls 'canonising institutions' (Vargas 2010, 117-135). They create their own canon and help create a broader cinematic canon and set the trends. In the words of Cindy Wong, 'Canonical films emerge from a process of creation that involves both artists and finance, triangulated through festivals [...] In canon formation, the main roles associated with film festivals are to launch new cinemas [...] and to reproduce and add value to these films and their affiliates' (Wong 2011, 101).

The canonisation question carries with it one of the main problems of every canon, which deserves to be kept in mind: its exclusivity. As literary scholar and critic Harold Bloom has argued, canons by definition integrate only a few works at the expense of the exclusion of many others. Moreover, they reflect the choices and ideology of the ruling classes of each place and historical period (Bloom 2011, 30-51). As the manifestation of any given ideology is a set of criteria, which presides at the tribunal of choice that dictates what is in and out of the canon, these criteria are set, updated, applied and even bent as the decision-making powers see fit. In turn, canonical discourses are received by the periphery and can easily be taken as 'universal'. As Vargas stresses, the trap of these discourses lies in the temptation to discuss aesthetic values and judgements, and not the hegemony that has produced them (Vargas 2007, 57).

To a certain extent, especially when it comes to the attribution of artistic prestige, festivals display core/periphery behaviours and relations of power (Peranson 2009, 25). At the centre of film festival life, the 'A festivals' of Cannes, Berlin and Venice have historically been the trendsetters. As mentioned above, they served (and still serve) as models for festivals that emulate them throughout the world. Although each festival is unique, the following of a stable event model and respect for shared criteria have been essential for peripheral festivals to consolidate

their own legitimization. Consequently, even though they claim to operate on a cultural margin, festivals too have a centre, with manifest Eurocentric roots, from which the original model and set of criteria emanate to the periphery. Local festivals are thus vehicles that reproduce and perpetuate a certain ideology.

There is a group of countries that, in this system, enjoy a privileged position. These are countries that either belong to the centre (such as France, Italy, the USA, or Scandinavia), or were made privileged (such as Eastern European and Southeast Asian countries) by that centre – or, in lieu of the central powers, local ones acting according to the criteria outlined by the centre – deciding to bestow upon them artistic prestige. That is why the criteria of film festivals and their politicisation will be scrutinised next.

3.1.3. – The film festivals' criteria

The great question concerning festivals and the attribution of artistic prestige lies in the fact that the important and healthy role of competition is backed up by criteria which are themselves subjective and volatile, and permeable to ideology, exceptions and market pressures (Carroll 1996, 389-390). The word 'criterion' finds its root in the Greek word *krinein*, meaning to separate (as in separating the good from the bad). Thus, in essence, the function of criteria is to separate; to distinguish. The film festival circuit appreciation criteria are not as straightforward as they might seem and are based on two main pillars: one of them aesthetic and conceptual, and the other political and extra-cinematic. Scholars and insiders have been identifying patterns to fill this claim. According to Cindy Wong, 'widely shared patterns of film selection and evaluation have shaped festival films over time' (Wong 2011, 5). This implies that not only have there been stable (if unwritten) 'guidelines', but also that filmmakers and producers became aware of them in order to conform their practices to the environment in which they would be inserted. As Wong continues: 'the primary selections of the major festivals, through the years, have favoured a special kind of film: dark, serious, challenging, and linked to classic or emergent auteurs. Musicals and even comedies prove less welcome on critical center stages' (Wong 2011, 7).

Effectively, in systematising and explaining aesthetic criteria, Wong stresses three main points: tone; open narratives; and everydayness. Tone is connected to seriousness and minimalism:

one clear hallmark of many festival films is their serious demeanour. This is often embodied by an austerity of sight and sound as well as a sobriety of themes and actions. Pain, death, loss, and questions are the stuff of festival films. [...] As a corollary, film festivals also tend to avoid big, expensive production in favour of stark minimalism. Their films are small movies – in budget, in scale, in sets, and in special effects. (Wong 2011, 75)

A quick reading of this quote will probably reveal another description of the archetypal art-house film. Indeed, art-house films are favoured by festivals and are predominant in the East and in Europe, where they became, despite diversity, the European film genre par excellence (Jäckel 2003, 28). What is interesting about Wong's quote is that her description possesses many similarities with the explanation presented in the previous chapter of this thesis concerning the 'dissident' cinematic practice, carried out by the majority of Portuguese filmmakers. Many of the *leitmotifs* of Portuguese cinema over the decades have been synthesised by Wong in a single paragraph. Furthermore, what Damásio discovered in his empirical study to be the main complaints of Portuguese audiences concerning Portuguese cinema (for example, its stark tone and artisanal/minimalist presentation) are precisely the features privileged by film festivals. Regarding open narratives, Wong affirms that festivals 'privilege the suggestive, evocative, spare, non-linear. Coherence must be constructed, not found. [...] This opposition has to be understood in relation to the dominant mode of cinematic language as practiced by Hollywood' (Wong 2011, 79). Finally, contrasting with Hollywood's artificiality, everydayness is much prized by festivals and often conveyed by the use of non-professional actors and the focus on controversial matters (Wong 2011, 82-87).

Pointing in a similar direction, Valck underlines a tradition that still stands:

Films were not treated as mass-produced commodities, but as national accomplishments; as conveyors of cultural identity; as art and as unique artistic creations. [...] Like the avant-garde, film festivals adopted a normative approach; they operated from the intellectual belief that certain artistic creations not only have economic, but also cultural, political or social values. (Valck 2007, 24)

This perspective on cinema is somewhat dependent on one of the most widespread and enduring beliefs in film analysis and criticism: the idea that the moving image is able to reveal the *volksgeist* (spirit of the people), that is, something from a society or community; that the camera is a tool to grasp a hidden truth waiting to be revealed. Siegfried Kracauer initially proposed this idea in 1947. In *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, the author presented a psychoanalytical reading of the films from the Republic of Weimar, treating those films as social symptoms (Kracauer 1947). This conception of cinema as communication medium able to bring to the fore the innermost aspects of a nation would be strengthened afterwards with the advent of Roland Barthes's theory of the photographic *index* (Barthes 1980) and the profuse discussion around documentary cinema and its 'claims to truthfulness' (Aufderheide 2007, 2). Indeed, film festival audiences and jurors often value this idea, expecting films to be able to attain this goal in some way.¹⁷⁸

The reasoning above seems to progressively distance the focus from the purely aesthetic situation and direct it towards a more political realm – therefore leading us to the analysis of the second great pillar of the film festival criteria. Throughout the years, some geographical zones became more preponderant and present in film festivals than others. That is why the analysis of the degree of political commitment and exploitation of sensitive historical situations is key to understanding this dynamic, as well as explaining the rise of some national cinemas and the twilight or absence of others: 'Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, cinema had become entangled in critical political projects. It supported the anti-colonial struggles and revolutions in so-called Third-world countries, anti-communist attempts at liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe, and left-wing movements in the West and in Japan' (Valck 2007, 27). Mentioning the 'unspoken function of Cannes', Kieron Corless and Chris Darke affirm: 'As struggles against oppressive dictators, state censorship and colonial masters gained momentum all over the world [...] Cannes also provided a forum for some politicised national cinemas' (Corless and

¹⁷⁸ This issue, however, has not been spared some contradiction and even irony. In order to conform to this criterion and be considered part of the international festival movement, films had to offer a strong national component. This has effectively been a binomial hard to negotiate. On the one hand, in formal terms, festival films followed the guidelines of an international practice, but on the other hand, their 'ethnic flavour' would be determinant in the long run and in a broader context. In other words, the specificities and idiosyncrasies that, for instance, Italian films were able to show, that Spanish or Greek films were not, were what truly differentiated those films from the others.

Darke 2007, 7); ‘Cannes served as a place where the visions of such conflicts could be seen’ (Corless and Darke 2007, 145). According to the same authors, Cannes (and, by extension, several other festivals) demonstrated its post-war spirit of anti-oppression in the following way: ‘By the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, Cannes began to exert its power with a different emphasis, promoting human rights through the defence of film-makers working in adverse conditions’ (Corless and Darke 2007, 145).

This approach to cinema explains in great part the hype attached to various geographical zones. Wong illustrates this situation with some examples:

One notes a rise and fall in interest in Spanish film around the end of the Franco regime [...] Yet as Spain has become more European, interest in its films waned, despite the auteurial popularity of Pedro Almodóvar. [...] This presents a striking contrast to the enduring presence of Ireland and its civil wars among prize films across Europe. [...] There is a niche for countries that are somewhat less ‘European’ than the powerful European North, where the Balkans, Spain, and Ireland can be seen with a domestic interregional orientalist gaze. Looking further afield, festivals, especially the dominant Western festivals, have always been fascinated with movies coming from oppressive regimes. (Wong 2011, 88)

As Corless and Darke argued, the rise of directors from Soviet Bloc countries can be explained in similar terms:

The political-cultural factor comes into play when one considers the example of certain auteurs working in countries with repressive political regimes, such as Andrej Wajda in Poland, Yilmaz Güney in Turkey, Andrei Tarkovsky in the USSR and Lino Brocka in the Philippines [...] [The Cannes film festival] used its reach and prestige to actively pursue a policy of defending such directors, guaranteeing their work an international audience when it was banned at home. (Corless and Darke 2007, 150)

Effectively, these works were hailed as beacons of light (sometimes sublime), emerging from the shadows in which countries were plunged. ‘Festivals have helped artists, independently of films, in giving them a certain prestige that can make them untouchable afterwards’ (Corless and Darke 2007, 151). After analysing the hype around post-Ceausescu Romania, Wong concluded that: ‘Communism and totalitarianism are favoured topics and areas in film festivals; Chinese, Iranians, and

Romanians have received considerable successes at film festivals, in counterpoint to their regimes' (Wong 2011, 99).

By the same token, growing interest in the West in cinema from Asia is linked to political factors, as well as to the need for festivals to discover new works and causes to support. In the words of Mark Peranson: 'One of the niche goals that the festival circuit established a while back was to serve as a kind of conduit to East Asia' (Peranson 2009, 26). Concerning this, the preeminent festival figure Pierre Rissient proudly stated: 'I guess I can say I was the first one to go to Asia and bring films from Asia, outside of Mizoguchi and Kurosawa' (Corless and Darke 2007, 197). As Corless and Darke relate:

Pierre started scouting talent in East Asia in the early seventies. He would look for directors he could represent, and he'd say to them. 'let's work together. I'll promote you'. He was never officially part of the selection committee for Cannes, but he very frequently went to committee screenings at the Cannes office in Paris [...] If there was a question of getting something into competition, or saying the right word and having some bearing on it, Pierre was very well placed to do that. (Corless and Darke 2007, 198)

These kinds of revelation were indeed much sought after by festivals as ways of securing a leading position and captivating the interest of audiences and the media. One important aspect in the life of festivals was the competition among them to present new, exotic works. Shortly after Cannes, Berlin played its hand: 'Berlin was the first festival to go looking for in areas that Cannes was overlooking and ignoring. They would look for Vietnamese films, Indonesian films, Korean films' (Corless and Darke 2007, 208). It is pertinent that these three countries mentioned also went through wars and political turmoil during the 1970s and 1980s. The circumstance described here is ultimately a win-win situation: directors from peripheral countries manage to see their work screened and recognised, and festivals guarantee a regular supply of new films to show. The crucial role played by festivals in highlighting certain geographic zones has been analysed by Hamid Dabashi, an Iranian studies scholar, who notes that 'those who control the international film festivals at Cannes, Venice and Locarno favour aggressive exoticisation of the so-called Third world, so that these festivals become the cinematic version of *National Geographic*' (Dabashi 2001, 226). Wong's words enhance this point: 'The early wave of Chinese cinema that arrived at festivals, including Zhang Yimou's *Shogun* and Chen Kaige's *Farewell*

my Concubine were fairly exotic. While magnificent films, they fit squarely with the expectation of the West, with overtones of Orientalism in terms of cultural values and gender' (Wong 2011, 88).

All of the above suggests that interest in films and directors from certain countries was, to a great extent, motivated by extra-cinematic reasons, despite the obvious importance of the formal features of the films presented; protagonists emerged and works were canonised because Western festivals wanted to exert their central power and make a statement. As Gilles Jacob, president of the Cannes film festival from 2001 until 2014, admitted to the authors of *Cannes: Inside de World's Premiere Film Festival*:

It was felt the best films were not always selected, and that often the criteria used for selection such as personal, political, or professional connections had nothing to do with art or the intrinsic qualities of the films. Gradually, the festival added its own selections to those of the various countries as a means of compensating for certain perceived errors and injustices (Corless and Darke 2007, 149).

Via this politically driven intervention of film festivals, many national cinemas and directors managed to gain projection and artistic prestige and to guarantee their space in a system that was designed to privilege recurring protagonists. This situation implied that festivals often blurred the line between aesthetic and political choices. Arguably, the political agendas of the big Western festivals and their internal competition to gain an advantage over one another by 'announcing' the next new wave were preponderant in determining who would be in the spotlight.

Ultimately, festivals affect the overall visibility and international outlook of a director and, even, of nations. Despite many controversies about the importance of nations as categories in the context of film studies, as Ian Christie has argued, 'nations are still our primary frames of reference' (Christie 2013, 28). As points of contact and exhibition, festivals create meaning and determine who is who in the alternative distribution and cinephile circuit. Through their competitions, they bestow cultural capital, which is in turn converted into better deals and career advancements. Critically acclaimed successes, therefore, are not born: rather, they are created by a series of players from inside the film business, along with programmers, critics and other canonisation institutions. After all, taking into account the spirit and criteria of film festivals that have been analysed so far in this thesis, it is not

surprising that films from certain countries are privileged over their counterparts from other geographical zones. Drawing on these conclusions, in the following section this thesis will tackle the reasons for Portugal having been kept in a ‘grey area’ of cinematic prestige over the decades and will also investigate the importance of film festivals as far as Portugal is concerned.

3.1.4. – The quest for international recognition: Portuguese cinema, film festivals, and the international film market

The desire to showcase and internationalise Portuguese cinema goes as far back as António Ferro’s time in office as director of SNP, in the 1930s. As head of the propaganda department, Ferro was the architect of the ‘política do espírito’ [politics of the spirit] and thus of an image of ‘Portugueseness’ for Portugal and the world (Pereira 2013, 121). Ferro was also a strong supporter of cinema. Like Goebbels and Mussolini, he saw cinema as offering an opportunity to convey ideology, and attempted to spread a certain image of Portugal both inside the country and abroad. Ferro’s project, in harmony with the spirit of the time (note that the Venice Film Festival was created by the fascist regime in Italy), possessed mainly nationalist and ideological premises. According to Tiago Baptista, the analysis of Ferro’s discourses and writings suggests that the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema based on literary adaptations and other culturally elevated elements was a mid-term goal: ‘What the regime wanted, as well as many modernist cinephiles and intellectuals, were more literary adaptations and historical films that could be used to both promote film as an art, and the country as a modern nation in international film festivals’ (Baptista 2010, 7). However, this project was halted by the rise of the popularity of the Lisbon comedies¹⁷⁹ and the collapse of Ferro’s political project and the subsequent ending of his tenure as director of the SNP in 1949.

Throughout the 1950s political activity concerning the circulation of Portuguese cinema abroad was almost non-existent. ‘Até 1958, com a chegada de César Moreira Baptista à direção do SNI, não havia qualquer estratégia de circulação de filmes pelos festivais de cinema europeus.’ [Until 1958, when César Moreira Baptista became director of SNI, there was not a single strategy of circulation of

¹⁷⁹ Such as *Pátio das Cantigas* (Francisco Ribeiro, 1942), *O Leão da Estrela* (Arthur Duarte, 1947) and *Canção de Lisboa* (José Cottinelli Telmo, 1933).

films through the European film festivals] (Cunha 2012b, 189). Indeed, it was only with the advent of more proactive policies and a new wave of filmmakers that the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema occurred, in the early 1960s.

As the previous chapter made clear, at the core of the Portuguese 'Cinema Novo' movement was a strong, almost obsessive, international vocation. This was not only palpable in the paths followed by the filmmakers who studied abroad or in the adoption of an aesthetic model that was becoming increasingly popular across the world, but also in the way Portuguese filmmakers regarded their works as pieces of a broader international movement. In fact, the 'Cinema Novo' generation was the first to be aware of the importance of the film festival 'galaxy' and to live the internationalisation 'dream' with particular enthusiasm. Figures such as Paulo Rocha, António de Macedo, Fernando Lopes and António da Cunha Telles soon understood that the festival circuit was the place where Portuguese New Cinema should aspire to be since it was the bar against which it would be measured. Indeed, the affirmation of the 'cinema novo' group meant that the imperative of internationalisation would cease to have solely commercial, political or ideological reasons and would become necessary for aesthetic and cinephile reasons (Cunha 2013a, 188).

The 1960s' lack of commercial success was also a determining factor for the path taken by many Portuguese filmmakers. Since theirs was a cinematic practice that did not generate revenue, its legitimation and economic justification became pressing. The previously mentioned document 'Ofício do cinema português', from 1967, signed by all the major filmmakers from the 'Cinema Novo' generation, made the internationalist intentions of Portuguese cinema clear. According to Paulo Filipe Monteiro, this document advocated the creation of a quality cinema that guarantees, abroad, a more precise and vivid knowledge of our reality; thus, the New Cinema orients itself towards validation abroad (Monteiro 2001, 320). To some extent, in lieu of a popular validation, Portuguese filmmakers saw in the festival circuit a way to survive. Paraphrasing Paulo Cunha, Portuguese New Cinema decisively opted for the path of internationalisation. This was mainly due to excitement around the international recognition of Manoel de Oliveira and the good critical reception that several other new cinemas received in the most important international film festivals (Brazilian *cinema novo*, Polish new wave, young Yugoslavian cinema, among others). The option for this road entailed the radicalisation of proposals, and promoted a

shift of cultural and aesthetic paradigm in Portuguese cinema. (Cunha 2012b, 195-196)

As Cunha and Monteiro have already suggested, this path led many Portuguese filmmakers to focus their energy and efforts on the making of films that were directed towards a specific context of reception: the art-house circuit and film festivals. Moreover, later, from 1971 onwards, cinema laws would recognise the importance of the presence of Portuguese cinema abroad, place an emphasis on film festivals and international recognition among peers, and provide financial support for filmmakers and producers who could attain these goals. Protected by this legal context, filmmakers from the 'Cinema Novo' and the 'Portuguese School' soon realised that it would be easier, and perhaps even more akin to their creative motivations, to invest in the film festival circuit (especially in second and third-tier festivals) than to try to make popular films and face audiences whose tastes were fickle. The definition of very clear objectives in a specific context may, indeed, have led Portuguese filmmakers to tailor their practice to what they perceived as the criteria privileged by festivals. The international vocation and the festival circuit in which films were encouraged to be inserted definitively influenced and shaped the evolution of aesthetics in Portuguese cinema.

Noël Carroll's theory of the art-world is worth mentioning at this juncture to clarify the way Portuguese auteur cinema related to its counterparts. According to Carroll, 'the institutional theory of film envisions film as a society – the filmworld as one of the sprawling suburbs of the artworld' (Carroll 1996, 389). Inside this art-world, works (especially new works still searching for legitimation) relate to each other and acquire prestige according to three basic principles: repetition, amplification, or repudiation (Carroll 1996, 382). 'Individual films enter the filmworld and the artworld by three different routes, and at each point of entry they are checked to make sure that their relation to what is already in the filmworld is legitimate' (Carroll 1996, 389). In the case of Portuguese cinema, most of its works related to the broader context in terms of repetition and amplification of formulae set by the French New Wave and privileged by festivals. Chiming with Carroll's view, the forming of a relationship stems not merely from a wish to emulate trends, but is rather a gesture born out of the need for self-legitimation. In this sense, festivals and the contact/confrontation of Portuguese cinema with its counterparts have also been significant factors.

It should also be noted that auteur cinema, due to its cultural claims, is part of the same frame as many other artistic practices that were taken under the aegis of the state and were thereby released from the obligation to generate an immediate economic return. In a way, there is a sense of *trade* underlying state protection, i.e. in its belief that a film is exempted from its commercial component and the pursuit of revenue through the mitigation of the risk margin carried by every cinematic production. This mitigation is achieved through funding channels and other indirect forms of support. However, this model of protection can become a vicious cycle. To paraphrase Steve Neale, the different institutions that support cinema developed mechanisms of selection that privileged certain criteria and seemed to guarantee the desirable ‘seal of quality’ of high culture (Neale 2002, 118). Thus, from the outset a binary opposition was established between the quality of a film and its commercial competitiveness; in theory, a quality film was one that was not economically successful – or at least not designed to be. Consequently, this system, dubbed by Martin Dale the ‘subsidy trap mentality’, may have been one of the reasons for the perpetuation (through repetition and amplification) of certain features of anti-Hollywood practices (Dale 1997, 225).

3.1.5. – The case of Manoel de Oliveira

As has been mentioned, the ‘legitimation deficit’ of films from the Portuguese ‘Cinema Novo’ was due to the difficult relationship they maintained with domestic audiences and a distribution market that did not see much potential in these films. These difficulties led to attempts to over-compensate through the festival circuit. Returning to the core/periphery paradigm, according to Thomas Elsaesser, the discourse of international, A-list film festivals overrides local discourses – that is, the opinion of the centre exerts the greatest influence on the public sphere and is redirected towards the periphery in such a way as to change its initial position (Elsaesser 2005, 82-104).

The film director, Fernando Lopes, recalls that: ‘o que mais interessava à geração do novo cinema era a presença em Festivais e a reacção da crítica internacional. Julgávamos que os filmes acabariam por se impor de fora para dentro’ [what mattered most to the new cinema generation was the presence in festivals and the reception of the international press. We thought that films would end imposing

themselves [in the Portuguese market] from the outside] (Lopes 1985, 66). This circumstance was the reason why, as Paulo Filipe Monteiro stressed, the reception of Portuguese cinema abroad is far more important than in Portugal; as will happen with almost every film of the ‘Cinema Novo’ movement (Monteiro 2001, 325-326). This mentality, which consisted in searching for validation at the centre in order to use those credentials to leverage local acceptance or gain the upper hand in competitive funding, was an important driving force in the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema.

In this quest for validation, Manoel de Oliveira became a hero and an example to his colleagues. The Portuguese director, the oldest filmmaker in the world for a great part of his lifetime (a phenomenal example of vitality and devotion to cinema, Oliveira died in 2015, aged 106), he remained a prolific author, despite his old age, through his 80s and 90s. He directed his last feature film, *O Gebo e a Sombra*, the year before his death and was the first Portuguese director to attain recognition abroad.¹⁸⁰ As mentioned in point 2.2, Oliveira’s already existing prestige was cultivated and escalated to a higher level by producer Paulo Branco, in France. After several years of screenings in festivals and niche circuits, Branco and Oliveira’s strategy finally bore fruit in 1985 when Oliveira won the Golden Lion Honorary Award, at Venice. In practical terms, this honorary award would translate into the subsequent artistic and economic independence of Oliveira, who basically enjoyed an ‘open subsidy channel’ since then until his death (Cunha 2013b, 224). According to Baptista, Oliveira was hailed because his oeuvre was recognised as a paradigm of ‘a cinema made with eyes set on what was happening in foreign cinematographies, but that didn’t turn its back on the cultural reality of the nation where it departed from’ (Baptista 2010, 9) – in other words, a cinema as formally modern and authorial as it was aware of its ‘typically Portuguese’ dimension. Concerning Oliveira, the critic Augusto M. Seaba points to the paradox at the heart of the controversy: ‘resta, ineludível, a questão da sua recepção em Portugal: mesmo consagrado como uma “instituição nacional”, não deixa de ser tido como uma “imposição” do exterior’ [there is still, inescapably, the question of his reception in Portugal: even consecrated as a “national institution”, he never ceases to be considered an “imposition” from abroad] (Seabra 2012, 6). Even so, many filmmakers aspired to Oliveira’s success and

¹⁸⁰ A list concerning the awards given to Oliveira can be found on the following link powered by the French Cinematheque: <http://cinema.encyclopedie.personnalites.bifi.fr/index.php?pk=18430>

pursued a similar path. In line with what has been described about the dynamics of film festivals, Portuguese filmmakers like Manoel de Oliveira were welcomed and valued in these events not only because of their aesthetic intransigence and personalist approach to cinema, but also because they lacked a warm domestic reception, which festivals traditionally saw as a sort of censorship that ought to be counter-balanced. Indeed, with the exception of *Francisca*, the number of viewers of Oliveira's films has always been very modest.

At this point it might be useful to establish a parallel between Oliveira and, for instance, the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. Despite all the differences between the films by these two directors, both epitomised the minimalist, aesthetic practice forsaken by mainstream distributors and audiences, and the type of aesthetics that festivals exoticised and were prone to favour. Even though Oliveira's films did not amass the same number of competitive awards or attain quite the same international visibility as Kiarostami's politically compromised cinema, the two filmic practices shared some features. Kiarostami's words are such that Oliveira might have uttered them:

My kind of filmmaking wouldn't have been able to continue without a certain amount of support. My cinema is not the sort that interests the Iranian public. In my country this sort of cinema is called 'festival cinema': films *for* festivals. And it's true that, at home, they have stamped my work as being for the festival circuit. There are many conflicts of interest in the way that the government regards my work but they forget that the responsibility and the viewpoint of a festival is to protect cinema in the broadest meaning of the word. [...] That's why the place of festivals is extremely important for film-makers like me who love cinema (Corless and Darke 2007, 217).

Ultimately, Oliveira's and Kiarostami's status as festival filmmakers is somewhat paradoxical. Both managed to reach an international, specialised audience at the expense of a domestic, generic one. Yet they both presented themselves as Portuguese/Iranian directors and insisted on working in their home countries – where they were not so well regarded and appreciated, but where they managed to grasp the filmic specificity that fed the interest of their international supporters. Quintín, in this context, draws attention to how important this relationship between filmmakers and festivals was, as well as how aware directors were of the paramount importance of big festivals in their artistic lives:

For people such as Manoel de Oliveira, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lisandro Alonso, Béla Tarr or Albert Serra, survival in the motion-picture industry depends (or did very strongly at a given moment in their careers) on Cannes, on the reception of their films there, and on the contacts and agreements that they were able to achieve by attending the festival (Quintín 2009, 44).

3.1.6. – The Portuguese presence at festivals

As previously mentioned, the internationalisation of contemporary Portuguese cinema began during the Estado Novo regime and acquired full expression with the advent of the ‘Cinema Novo’ group. From then on, until the present, it became the main and ultimate goal of national auteurs.

According to Paulo Cunha, between 1955 and 1968 (a time-frame that integrates the heyday of the ‘Cinema Novo’), the Secretariado Nacional de Informação, the institution that mediated all relations between Portuguese cinema and festivals or art-house programmers abroad, consisted of 261 processes of internationalisation.¹⁸¹ This number corresponded to the number of times that negotiations occurred concerning the screening of Portuguese films beyond Portugal’s borders (Cunha 2012b, 189-193). What follows is a summary of the list of festivals compiled by Cunha – note that these films were not necessarily screened in the main competition, but mostly in sidebars that presented dozens, if not hundreds, of films. From 1959 to 1965, 11 Portuguese films (it is not entirely clear the length of each one) participated at Venice: *Imagens de Portugal; Actualidades de Angola; Actualidades de Moçambique, Fabricação de Carruagens, Janela Aberta, Lisboa vista pelas suas crianças* (1959); *As Pedras e o Tempo* (1961); *Acto da Primavera* (1962); *Verão Coincidente, Dom Roberto* (1962); *Domingo à tarde* (1965). At Cannes, from 1958 to 1962, three films were presented at the prestigious festival: *Sintra* (1958), *Rapsódia Portuguesa* (1959) and *As Pedras e o Tempo* (1961). At the Berlinale, from 1958 to 1965, nine films represented Portugal: *Pescadores de Amangau* (1958); *Amadeo Souza-Cardoso* (1960); *Paixão de Cristo na Pintura Antiga Portuguesa* (1961); *Barqueiros do Douro* (1962); *Retalhos da Vida de um Médico, Faianças Portuguesas* (1963); *Nicotiana* (1964); *Domingo à Tarde, Sobre a Terra e Sobre o Mar* (1965). Finally, in San Sebastián, a second-tier festival, Portugal had the

¹⁸¹ As cinema started to become less centralised, it became more difficult to keep track of all the participations of Portuguese cinema abroad. However, this thesis will provide an account of the most important moments.

following films screened between 1958 and 1964: *Flores*, *Mundo de Beleza* (1958); *A Luz vem do Alto* (1959); *Raça* (1961). (Cunha 2012b, 194-195)

After this inaugural moment during the 1960s, the first major film event occurred in 1973, when António de Macedo's *A Promessa* became the first Portuguese film ever to enter the official competition at Cannes. The 1970s, due to the initiative of the CPC (Centro Português de Cinema), were also dynamic years in the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema in Europe. According to Cunha, the first significant experience was the organisation, in cooperation with the local film festival, of the *Semaine du Jeune Cinéma Portugais*, in March 1972. On this occasion, a selection of films that included recent productions from the CPC, films from António Cunha Telles productions, films by João César Monteiro, António Campos, Cunha Telles and Rogério Ceitil (none of them yet belonged to the CPC), and a substantial retrospective around Manoel de Oliveira's works. This initiative gave unprecedented media coverage and market exposure to Portuguese cinema. The success was so great in terms of critical reception and media attention that CPC would invest again in this type of initiative (Barcelona in 1973, French Cinémathèque in Paris in 1974) and later the IPC (...) in Liège (March 1977), Poitiers (April 1977), Madrid (April 1977), London (October 1977), Mannheim (October 1977), Amsterdam (November 1977), Leipzig (December 1977) and Orense (March 1978) (Cunha 2012b, 196).

After this *tour de force*, the 1980s experienced a continuation of this trend, as well as being the decade that brought the consolidation of the international vocation of Portuguese cinema. Highlights of the decade included: *Silvestre* (1981) at Venice; *Conversa Acabada* (1981) at Cannes; *A Ilha dos Amores* at Cannes (1982); *Ana* (1982) was exhibited in a sidebar at the Berlinale and won the competition at the Valladolid film festival; *Gestos e Fragmentos* (1982) also went to a sidebar of the Berlinale; *A Estrangeira* (1983) won the Georges Sadoul collateral prize in Venice; *Ninguém Duas Vezes* (1984) competed in Venice; Manoel de Oliveira won the Honorary Golden Lion at Venice, in 1985; *Um Adeus Português* (1985) premiered at the London Film Festival and won the Golden Toucan at the Rio de Janeiro film festival; *Tempos Difíceis* (1988) was selected for the main competition at Venice; *Os Canibais* (1988) was part of the main competition at Cannes (Cunha 2013b, 216-233). José Alvaro de Morais' *O Bobo* won the Golden Leopard at Locarno. In addition, some other films would occasionally participate in less conspicuous festivals. Finally, the decade would

end with another milestone: João César Monteiro won the Silver Lion at Venice with *Recordações da Casa Amarela*, in 1989. Overlooking the fact that the 1980s was the decade of the boom in the number of film festivals and the expansion of existing ones, Cunha's synthesis of the performance of Portuguese films abroad chooses to consider the high moments and is therefore marked by a rather enthusiastic and optimistic tone:

Estes anos foram, até então, os mais internacionais do cinema português. [...] Esta evidente internacionalização foi a natural conclusão de um longo processo iniciado nos anos 60, promovido por uma geração de cineastas formados em instituições de ensino ou formação profissional estrangeiras, e que operou uma significativa mudança de paradigma no cinema português. Ao contrário do paradigma de um cinema nacional para um público luso-falante tentado por António Ferro, nos anos 60 e 70, esta geração lançou bases para uma internacionalização que se consolidaria de forma inequívoca ao longo dos anos 80. [These years were, until then, the most international for Portuguese cinema [...] This clear internationalisation was the natural conclusion of a long process initiated in the 1960s, promoted by a generation of filmmakers educated abroad that brought about a significant change in the paradigm of Portuguese cinema. In opposition to the paradigm of a national cinema for a Portuguese-speaking public devised by António Ferro, in the 1960s and 1970s, this generation laid the basis for an internationalisation that would become consolidated unequivocally throughout the 1980s.] (Cunha 2013b, 237)

In the 1990s, in great part because he was able to shoot regularly and therefore release a film almost every year, Manoel de Oliveira's international career continued to flourish, rendering him an absolute exception in the context of Portuguese cinema and by far the most well-known Portuguese director of all time. His success was very significant, especially when compared with the careers of most of his Portuguese peers, but it was not meteoric. His reputation was built over a vast period of time and the main 'bricks' of that construction consisted of non-competitive prizes. Effectively, throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the 'dean of directors', as he was dubbed, collected several honorary and career prizes – apart from the second Honorary Golden Lion in 2004 and the Honorary Palme d'Or in 2008, these prizes were awarded mostly by second-tier festivals, such as Locarno, Mar del Plata, Montreal, San Francisco, Rome, Pescara, and Tokyo (Ferreira, 2013: 248). In addition, Oliveira would receive the grand prize of the jury, in 1991, at Venice, with *A Divina Comédia*, as well as honourable mentions in São Paulo in 1993,

and Tokyo, in 1997. *A Carta* would also win the Cannes grand jury prize, in 1999. However, his only victory in competition would be at the Haifa international film festival, in 1997, with *Viagem ao Princípio do Mundo* (Ferreira 2013, 249).

Portuguese cinema was present almost every year in the main competition of the Venice Film Festival,¹⁸² which is another positive indicator. In addition to this, Venice gave other awards to Portuguese directors: João César Monteiro won *ex aequo* in the grand prize of the jury in 1995 (he also won the competition in *Mar del Plata*, 1993), Pedro Costa was awarded the best photography award in 1997, and Teresa Villaverde won the Elvira Notária prize in 1994. The 1990s were as crucial for the confirmation of the careers of Manoel de Oliveira, César Monteiro, and Botelho as they were vital for the revelation of the newest directors from the Portuguese school, namely Pedro Costa, Teresa Villaverde, and Manuel Mozos. Costa's *Casa de Lava* would win the competitions at both the Belfort and Thessaloniki film festivals, and *Ossos* would win the competition again at the Belfort festival in 1997. A similar situation with Mozos, who won the *Grand Prix* at Belfort with *Um Passo Outro Passo e Depois...*, in 1990. Villaverde's *Três Irmãos*, from 1994, emerged victor at the Valencia film festival, as did *Os Mutantes*, at Seattle, in 1998. Margarida Gil also participated in the main competition in Locarno, in 1992, with *Rosa Negra*, and Manuela Viegas at the Berlinale with *Glória*, in 1999 (Ferreira 2013, 249).

In the first decade of the new millennium, the steady march of the internationalisation of Portuguese cinema showed no signs of slowing up. However, the map of participation would become even more diverse than in the 1990s, meaning that most of the awards to new Portuguese talents occurred at less prestigious festivals – good examples of this profile of internationalisation are Miguel Gomes's *Aquele Querido Mês de Agosto*, which won the Valdivia international film festival in Chile, and Salaviza's short film *Duas Pessoas*, which received the prize for best fiction at the Hyperion film festival, in Budapest. Paulo Rocha also was also honoured with a career award at the Rome Film Festival, in 2004. Notable exceptions to this situation were Pedro Costa's participation at Cannes in 2006 with *Juventude em Marcha* (although before that Costa's internationalisation was less conspicuous), Manoel de Oliveira's above-mentioned honorary prizes, and the participation of five films (short and full-feature, in all categories) at Cannes (in

¹⁸² 1991, *A Divina Comédia*; 1992, *O Último Mergulho*; 1993, *Aqui na Terra*; 1994, *Três Irmãos*; 1995, *A Comédia de Deus*; 1996, *A Festa*; 1997, *Ossos*; 1998, *Tráfico*; 1999, *Mal*.

competition and sidebars), in 2009. Arguably, the turning point in the visibility of Portuguese cinema, 2009, was the year when Cannes awarded its first Palme d'Or in competition to a Portuguese director (Salaviza, with *Arena*).

While it is important to provide a potted history of Portuguese cinema on the festival circuits in relatively broad-brush as well as positive strokes, it is also necessary to consider the darker nuances of the overall picture and avoid the pitfall of an excessively celebratory tone. In fact, due to their vital importance for the survival of Portuguese cinema, the participation of Portuguese films in festivals and the collection of prizes (even if at second-tier festivals such as Locarno, Budapest or Latin American ones) was an extremely positive sign for the Portuguese film industry. The process of internationalisation was particularly important for the identity of Portuguese cinema as a historic construction and for its self-image and mythology. Moreover, the Portuguese press enthusiastically followed the performance of films abroad – perhaps in a way that distorted the true impact of Portuguese cinema in the broader scene – and any news about ‘victories’ (as small as they were, such as screenings in sidebars at obscure festivals) helped to put political pressure on governments and advance careers. However, not all concur with an overly optimistic tone. As will be shown, this question lends itself to an alternative reading.

3.1.7. – Final remarks

The academics Carolin Overhoff Ferreira and Luís Nogueira, along with the filmmaker José Fonseca e Costa, are three discordant voices, in that they adopt a more cautious stance when assessing the impact of Portuguese cinema. Ferreira, for example, recognises that Portuguese films did well in the 1990s, but her assessment is nuanced:

Este panorama de prémios internacionais não é extraordinário e teve menos repercussão na crítica do que acontecera no início da década de 80, mas foi certamente suficiente para lembrar a comunidade cinematográfica internacional da existência de Portugal, bem como assinalou o surgimento de grandes talentos. [This panorama of international prizes is not extraordinary and had less impact on the critique than in the beginning of the 1980s, but was certainly enough to remind the international cinematic community of the existence of Portugal. It also underlined the emergence of great talents.] (Ferreira 2013, 249)

For his part, Nogueira, in 2009, expressed disappointment at the lack of distinguished artistic recognition abroad and painted an altogether darker scenario. Despite all the efforts made by Portuguese filmmakers to make their films meet festival criteria, he argued, the expectations about the impact of Portuguese films abroad, mainly at festivals, had not been met. For Nogueira, Portuguese cinema was still the ‘poor relative’ of national cinemas on the broader international circuit (Nogueira 2009, 2-5): ‘cinematografias igualmente periféricas como a holandesa, a sueca, a checa, a suíça, a húngara, a sul-africana, a argentina ou a bósnia não deixaram de ver alguns dos seus filmes reconhecidos com várias nomeações ou mesmo vitórias’ [equally peripheral cinemas, such as the Dutch, Swedish, Czech, Swiss, Hungarian, South African, Argentinian or Bosnian, were not prevented from seeing some of their films recognised with various nominations and even victories] (Nogueira 2009, 3). For his part, Fonseca e Costa is the most radical of all following this line of thought: ‘O cinema português não chega às salas porque é mau e o prestígio artístico no estrangeiro não passa de manipulação intelectual’ [Portuguese cinema does not reach theatres because it is bad and the artistic prestige abroad is nothing but intellectual manipulation] (Quevedo 1993, 65).

In a way, mentioning the absence of Portuguese cinema instead of its presence can deconstruct much of what has been delineated above and provide an alternative, equally valid, argument. A more carefully constructed approach to this issue, proposed by this thesis, suggests that for each Portuguese filmmaker who managed to achieve artistic prestige through a prize, there were many others who did not – i.e. only a small percentage of Portuguese filmmakers attained some international recognition. Indeed, a few filmmakers garnered most of the distinctions. Furthermore, even though a reasonable amount of Portuguese films did screen at film festivals, the majority did so in sidebars and were not selected for the final, main selection – in addition to all the empirical information brought to the fore by this thesis, a review of the lists of films in competition throughout the various editions of the major film festivals – see the table below – helps put this situation in perspective. If it is true that, in the 1980s and 1990s, Portuguese films were present almost every year in the main competition of the Venice Film Festival and the Cairo Film Festival, by the same token it should be acknowledged that Portuguese cinema was absent from the main competition of the Berlinale throughout the 1980s and

into the 1990s¹⁸³, as it was from the equivalent section in Karlovy Vary. In 50 years of the Cannes Film Festival (from 1960 to 2010) only 8 films (5 of them by Oliveira) competed for the Palme d'Or.

A careful consideration of the timing of the acknowledgement of Portuguese cinema and the type of prizes reveals that Oliveira won more honorary prizes than actual competitions and that his Golden Lion in 1985 appeared more than 20 years after the inception of the 'Cinema Novo' movement in Portugal. Although very prestigious, Oliveira's Golden Lion and Palme d'Or were given to him in recognition of his long-life dedication to cinema; they were not the main prizes or awarded for the specific distinction of any particular film of his. João César Monteiro's elusive prize, the Silver Lion, also falls more in the scope of honourable mentions than in the category of main award. In fact, as has been mentioned, the first time a Portuguese director won a competition at one of the three A-list festivals was in 2009. Finally, participation in second- and third-tier festivals, such as London, Seattle, Mar del Plata and others, were often heightened, presented and announced as major events by the Portuguese press. The table below provides a fuller picture:

TABLE 1:

Event/Category Name	Number of Feature Films in Main Competition from 1960 to 2010	Number of Main Awards (e.g. <i>Palme d'Or</i>, <i>Golden Lion</i>, <i>Golden Leopard</i>, etc...)	Number of Other Awards/Honourable Mentions/Critic's Prizes
A – Berlinale	2	0	1
A – Cannes Film	8 ¹⁸⁴	1 ¹⁸⁵	2

¹⁸³ This fast was interrupted by Manuela Viegas's *Glória*, in 1999, but then a period of ten years of absence ensued. Interestingly enough, the *Berlinale* came to be the festival to give more projection to Portuguese cinema in the second half of the 2010s.

¹⁸⁴ It should be mentioned that, in addition to these 8 films in the main competition, 11 others competed in the section *Un Certain Regard* (but none ever won a prize), and 4 were screened out of competition.

¹⁸⁵ This refers to Salaviza's Palme d'Or for best short film, and not the highest prize awarded to a feature film.

Festival			
A – Golden Globe (USA) – Best Foreign Language Film	0	0	N/A
A – Montreal World Film Festival (since 1978)	(data from 1997 to 2010) 3	0	3
A – Oscar – Best Foreign Language Film	0	0	N/A
A – Sundance Film Festival (since 1978)	0	0	N/A
A – Venice Film Festival	22	0	14
B – BAFTA – Award for Best Film Not in English Language	0	0	N/A
B – Cairo Film Festival (since 1977)	10	0	1
B – European Film Awards (since 1988) – Best Picture and/or Best Director	2	0	2
B – International Film Festival of India, Goa	¹⁸⁶	0	No data available

¹⁸⁶ The history of the IFFI is particularly intricate and it is difficult to access comprehensive information about it. Before settling in 2004 as a competitive non-specialised festival, IFFI has oscillated throughout the years between non-competitive and competitive, and within that category between non-specialised to specialised. Apart from a database maintained by the Indian Directorate of Film Festivals, where scans from programmes from every other year are made available, there is not much more data, especially concerning editions from the 1960s until the late 1980s. IFFI does not hold records from the distant past or possesses an archive, which deepens the problem. It is also difficult to distinguish the years when the competition was specialised and when it was not. However, from what it was possible to gather, 15 Portuguese films were played at the IFFI from the period 1989–2010 – and it is clear that none ever won the competition.

B – Karlovy Vary International Film Festival	(data from 1992 to 2010) 1 ¹⁸⁷	0	0
B – Locarno Film Festival	10	1	6
B – Mar del Plata Film Festival (interrupted between 1970 and 1996)	5	1	2
B – Moscow International Film Festival	2	0	1
B – San Sebastián International Film Festival	8	0	1
B – Shanghai International Film Festival (since 1993)	0	0	N/A
B – Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (since 1998)	(data from 2004 to 2010) 0	0	N/A
B – Tokyo International Film Festival (since 1985)	3	0	1
B – Warsaw Film Festival (since 1985)	3	0	0
C – César – Best Foreign Film (since 1976)	0	0	N/A

¹⁸⁷ In addition, another 10 Portuguese feature films (and 1 short) were screened in non-competitive sidebars (such as in the ‘Horizons’ section) throughout the 1992–2010 period. According to the KVIFF website (KVIFF 2017b), the festival shows about 150 films per year. This means that Portuguese films occupied about 0.5% of the screening time in those 17 editions of the KVIFF.

C – David di Donatello – Best Foreign Film	0	0	N/A ¹⁸⁸
C – Goya – Best European Film (since 1987)	0	0	N/A
C – Hong Kong International Film Festival (since 1999)	No data available	0	N/A

Sources: International Movie Database and official film festival archives¹⁸⁹. **Edition:** André Graça

This table presents quantitative and qualitative data concerning the impact of Portuguese films in the main competitions of various festivals representing the four corners of the world (ranked here in importance – i.e. perceived visibility – with the letters A, B, and C).¹⁹⁰ As can be seen, Cannes and Venice represented the bulk of the presence of Portuguese films in A-list festivals. This is a sign that efforts were often channelled towards the most prestigious festivals and also that, to a certain extent, they seemed to be receptive. Moreover, about 70 Portuguese films were screened at the Toronto Film Festival (1976-2010) (TIFF 2017), which distributes awards such as people’s choices but is a non-competitive event.

However, it should be noted that, despite the honourable mentions (a category in which these festivals include jury grand prizes, career recognitions, FIPRESCI awards, and other progressively less relevant honourable mentions, which

¹⁸⁸ Despite a generic absence of Portuguese cinema from the history of this event, Oliveira was awarded the honorary Luchino Visconti award, in 1994.

¹⁸⁹ Maximum efforts were made to reach information from official sources or double check IMDB’s numbers. However, some cases proved more difficult than others, and for that reason some figures concerning the films in competitions only start from a certain date onwards. Sources: AACCE 2017; AATC 2016; ACI 2016; AMPAS 2017; BAFTA 2017; Berlinale 2017; Biennale 2016; Cannes 2016a; Cannes 2016b; CIFF 2017; EFA 2016; HEPA 2016; IFF 2012; KVIFF 2017a; KVIFF 2017b; Locarno 2017; Mar del Plata 2017; MIFF 2017; Montreal 2017; PÖFF 2017; Shanghai 2017a; Shanghai 2017b; Sundance 2017; TIFF 2017; Tokyo 2017; WFF 2017.

¹⁹⁰ The relevance and hierarchy of film festivals is an open subject and an ongoing discussion, and is beyond the scope of this thesis. The criteria used were as follows: Oscars and Golden Globes are probably the most conspicuous awards and there is a consensus that the triangle of Cannes, Berlin and Venice constitutes the core of A-list festivals in Europe, while Montreal and Sundance are the most important competitive festivals in North America; other international film festivals such as Mar del Plata, Locarno and Shanghai also play their role in the festival circuit, but are not as preminent as the above-mentioned; finally, local festivals and awards that also recognise foreign films come last in importance. However, it should be noted that the ‘gold-standard’ 14 non-specialised, competitive film festivals accredited by the FIAPF as of 2016 (International Federation of Film Producers Association) are on this list.

have grown as a result of the expansion of film festivals over time and the quest for sponsorship and exterior patronage) and interesting figures of films in competition, no Portuguese feature film ever won the main prize at Cannes, Berlin or Venice – effectively, the number of main awards is rather modest. Furthermore, Portuguese cinema was notably absent from the main categories of the European Film Awards, as it was also from other, local,¹⁹¹ European ceremonies such as the Goyas or the BAFTAs. In the Toronto case, for instance, it is worth mentioning that those 70 works (a substantial number for Portuguese standards) were screened in the context of a universe of more than 10,000 of other films, given that the festival has consistently showed hundreds of films every year. The impact gets, therefore, diluted. Portugal holds the record for submissions to the Oscars (33, since 1980),¹⁹² without a single nomination; even a tribute to Manoel de Oliveira in the year of his death was omitted in the ‘in memoriam’ reel during the ceremony. Similarly, Portuguese cinema did not score in three of the most prominent Asian festivals and was only timidly represented in the main competitions of San Sebastián, Warsaw, Mar del Plata, Moscow, Karlovy Vary, and Montreal.

For many years, Portuguese filmmakers only occasionally had the chance to be in the spotlight. But this has been fewer times than directors from several other nations. Despite their efforts throughout the decades, filmmakers did not manage to achieve a preponderant position that could change the situation of Portuguese films or attract further attention for Portugal, its existing talent and emerging potential. Only recently a more optimistic and confident change in the scenario seems to have occurred (and even that will only be properly assessed in a few years), but it is not clear if that was due to a very slow build-up process or a net of other reasons.

The internationalisation of Portuguese cinema was an undeniable reality. Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, Pedro Costa and, more recently, João Salaviza and Miguel Gomes were the major paradigms of acclamation. Yet, in very pragmatic terms, it was not enough to change the precarious commercial situation in which Portuguese cinema finds itself and solve some of its chronic problems – and, particularly, the problem of its visibility.

¹⁹¹ There are many festivals and awards in Portugal designed to celebrate internal achievements (*Globos de Ouro*, *Sophia*, and *Aquila*, for instance). However, their scale is domestic and only Portuguese films compete. For that reason, they were left out of this study.

¹⁹² Alves 2017. <http://www.anoticia.pt/pt/201603/Outros/60/O-OSCAR-QUE-PORTUGAL-MERECE.html>

Another symptom of this problematic visibility is the absence of reference to Portuguese filmmakers in English-language literature about festivals and cinema in general. During the entire research for this thesis, the name of Portuguese directors appeared no more than a handful of times in literature written by non-Portuguese authors or non-specialists. It is true that there were a handful of books and cinemateque catalogues published abroad concerning some Portuguese authors. Yet, in generic bibliographies about national cinemas or the film festival circuit, whenever scholars and critics present examples or case-studies, they mention Italian, British, Scandinavian or Asian filmmakers more readily than Portuguese. Perhaps it should also be acknowledged that this lack of visibility of Portuguese cinema may be linked to a wider problem, related to the problems of distribution and the lack of investment in marketing. As Anne Jäckel underlined: 'European distributors believe the success or failure of a movie at the box office depends on marketing strategy and spending' (Jäckel 2003, 113).

Ultimately, this thesis argues that the presence and performance of Portuguese films in festivals was moderate, but not outstanding. During the period from the 1960s until recently, European festivals were dominated by both the great central powers and the peripheral countries they privileged for a variety of political and economic reasons. Clearly, Portugal was not the first choice of the central powers (with, perhaps, the exception of Venice) until recently. For this reason, Portuguese cinema would not manage to escape its luke-warm status before the 2010s – and perhaps the vibrant victories related to the consistent stream of high-profile awards at Cannes and Berlin after that period were a vivid reminder of how much Portuguese cinema had been waiting to achieve but never quite managed. Jorge Barreto Xavier, the cultural programmer and director of the secretariat of state of culture from 2012 until 2015, echoing António Pinho Vargas's thoughts on this matter, underlined the historical absence of Portuguese culture in an interview:

Temos problemas sérios para os quais temos que olhar a longo prazo. Por um lado de ordem geográfica: é mais fácil para alguém da Holanda, da Bélgica ou da República Checa obter visibilidade no campo das artes do que a um português, na perspetiva da circulação e da contaminação cultural. Algumas gerações portuguesas tiveram maior visibilidade internacional quando puderam ir para os centros culturais geograficamente mais importantes. [...] Se olharmos para a nossa História das Artes temos muito poucos portugueses, quase nenhuns, importantes no contexto universal. [We have serious problems that we will have to deal with in the long run. On

the one hand they concern geography: it is easier for someone from the Netherlands, Belgium or the Czech Republic to gain visibility in the arts field than it is for a Portuguese, in terms of the circulation and cultural contamination. Some Portuguese generations had more international visibility when they managed to go to the most geographically important cultural centres. (...) If we look at our Art History we have very few Portuguese, almost none, who are important in universal terms.] (Sobral 2016)

After the revolution in 1974 Portuguese cinema, like Portugal itself, was not interesting or pressing enough for festivals to support it. Portugal was a country which found itself in a grey area, between the exoticised Third-world countries and the powerful centre: neither too interesting, nor too uninteresting. This may explain why it kept being relatively overlooked. Before the revolution Portugal was not part of the oppressed world, but rather it was the colonial power — a situation that, of course, did not elicit the festivals' best sympathies. Furthermore, as suggested in Chapter II, Portuguese cinema from before the revolution shied away from a politically committed line of cinema in order to survive. The majority of Portuguese filmmakers opted to pursue an artistic approach to cinema and that eventually paid off for some of them. However, in many cases, political questions may have held Portuguese films and directors back in order to favour other films and directors from other countries who were making a politicised type of cinema.

Geopolitical and economic circumstances dictated that Portugal was never a player capable of standing on its own; due to its peripheral position, Portuguese cinema was always dependent on validation from the centre, a situation that fell completely out of the control of any Portuguese filmmaker or indeed any Portuguese political or cultural authority. As a consequence of this lack of recognition, Portuguese filmmakers and producers always had a hard time with distributors and in capturing further interest in their films in the context of the global market. Problems with circulation, absence from the history of festivals and most publications on world cinema, as well as a secondary role in festivals, reveal some of the commercial weaknesses of Portuguese cinema. Ultimately, many auteurs thought that, in denying Hollywood and the dictatorship of audiences, they could be truly independent. However, due to the way the international film market and festival circuit are structured, their careers nevertheless turned out to be dependent on forces beyond their control.

3.2 – Distribution

‘There’s no business like show business.’

Irving Berlin

Together with film production and actual filmmaking, distribution and exhibition are vital components of film economy, as well as of the broader phenomenon of film. Although independent and worthy of being analysed on their own, all the previous elements addressed in this thesis seem to converge to a central vanishing point: the insufficient distribution of Portuguese cinema. Inescapable, and provoked by several circumstances, this matter has affected the dynamics of Portuguese cinema throughout the years and remains as of today unresolved.

It is true that the volume of production is not outstanding and therefore the presence of Portuguese cinema could never rival the ‘flood’ of American and European productions in the different distribution channels (i.e. theatres, TV, DVD, VHS, etc.). However, regardless of that, as this thesis has been conveying and this section 3.2 will show in more detail, it is equally tenable to affirm that the handful of films produced per year by Portuguese film directors, has always strived to find its way to potential audiences.

In Portugal the specific issue of distribution has merited the attention of scholars such as Paulo Cunha and Eduarda Dionísio and has been a recurrent leitmotif in many other studies, interviews with filmmakers, and discussions on Portuguese cinema – unfortunately however, it is rare for this issue to be analysed in greater detail. Problems with distribution have also been enunciated and presented in various ways throughout this thesis. Chapter I posed the problem and drew attention to the precarious situation concerning commercial constriction and market insertion. Chapter II addressed consumption habits and put the difficulties with distribution in perspective, framing it within the broader history of Portuguese contemporary cinema. This Chapter has so far tackled distribution when considering film festivals and how the position of Portuguese cinema in that milieu could have been a determinant factor in achieving a more emphatic insertion in the international film circuit. Finally, Chapter IV will underline the discrepancies between production and theatrical release (in an era when commercial, theatrical release was the standard) and consider issues around cinema laws — namely the ‘war’ between distribution companies in Portugal and taxes.

This part on distribution (3.2), in tandem with the circulation of Portuguese cinema in festivals (point 3.1), intends to bring to the fore the ‘undertow’ of distribution that has routinely been relegated to the background of Portuguese cinema history. Therefore, this part of the thesis will offer an overview of the distribution market and some of its principles, as well as provide some further contextualisation concerning distribution in Portugal. It will analyse the situation from a statistical perspective, as well as from a historical point of view. This will pave the way for the subsequent analysis of a case study, based on data about the number of viewers of Portuguese cinema in Portugal and abroad, that will help in assessing the international reach of Portuguese cinema.

3.2.1 The film market

Unlike production or even exhibition (which might involve curatorial attention), distribution is perhaps the facet of the film world where aesthetics are less preeminent — if present at all. It is the cog in the machine where ‘economics’ is written with capital letters. Arguably, film distribution is, apart from notable exceptions, pure business and is governed by rational principles, with the intention of maximising profits. Angus Finney’s work, for example, shows in great detail how elaborate, complex, pragmatic and technical the mechanisms supporting the film world can be. The naked and crude result of such deconstruction might seem rather at odds with the more widespread vision of cinema as the product of human sensibility and skill. However, these two facets can coexist and their combination attains its peak in more developed economies, such as those of America or of Central European countries – for this reason, some of what Finney describes does not apply to the Portuguese case, or applies only partially, due to its reduced scale.¹⁹³ According to Finney:

The primary products of the film industry are often described as a group or ‘bundle’ of rights [...] Once a film has completed production or post-production an entirely new right is created: the film copyright. [...] The film copyright and related copyrights are then exploited by the

¹⁹³ According to Finola Kerrigan, ‘failure to attach equal importance to these two elements which constitute the film industry, culture and economics, can be viewed as partially responsible for the failure of non-Hollywood industries to sustain their film industries’ (Kerrigan 2010, 22).

licensing of various sales, distribution and merchandising rights to third parties in film sales, distribution, exhibition, home entertainment, merchandising, etc. (Finney 2010, 9)

Historically, there have been two major ways of dealing with a film copyright in the realm of distribution: the Hollywood model and the fragmented model. The former is characterised by a vertical system in which the same company owns the production as well as the distribution and exhibition channels.¹⁹⁴ This not only allows the big studios to control and own as much of the profit margin as possible in the distribution and exploitation of the value chain, but also to mitigate risk through this process (Finney 2010, 10). The second model is based on an interconnection of companies, individuals, and freelancers, dedicated to various stages of the exploitation process (Finney 2010, 10-11). Anne Jäckel states that, in Europe, ‘distribution is dominated by the international divisions of the major Hollywood studios’ (Jäckel 2003, 13). Even in the face of the rekindling of the debate around a pan-European distribution project in the 1980s, ‘The US majors won over European audiences with their massively promoted blockbusters. The Hollywood studios continued to show enormous flexibility in adapting to change by investing in multiplexes, new delivery technologies and independent production outlets’ (Jäckel 2003, 13). This flexibility, along with their early establishment in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century, dictated this circumstance. As Kerrigan put it, ‘the might, experience and structure of Hollywood majors are difficult to compete with’ (Kerrigan 2010, 40). Indeed, this is true not only for production but also for distribution and exhibition.

Apart from a few notable exceptions, the distribution of art cinema – or non-Hollywood films – in Europe has been anchored in two main elements: the second paradigm mentioned by Finney, supported by a network of independent and small entrepreneurs and medium-scale companies; and exhibition quotas imposed by policies in line with the long European tradition of state protection for the arts (Jäckel 2003, 1) that put distributors and exhibitors under an obligation to show a minimum amount of national cinematic works over a given period. The main

¹⁹⁴ This, of course, was subject to some changes after the Paramount case, in 1948, which forbade the full control of the supply chain by companies and ended the Hollywood oligopoly. However, a few lessons from the ‘golden era’ endured and shaped subsequent years: i.e. distributors (which often owned or franchised theatres) and studios operated in a similar manner through pre- or post-production deals, thereby maintaining close links. In a way, vertical integration is still an ‘integral part of Hollywood film industry’ (Kerrigan 2010, 35).

difference between these two elements is that, whereas in the first case entrepreneurs and companies do find some economic or emotional interest in exploring a niche of the market and showcasing non-mainstream films, in the second case the majors do not nurture any particular enthusiasm for art cinema, given the risk of its low profitability.

Scholars such as Angus Finney, Finola Kerrigan and Anne Jäckel, to mention but a few, dissect and stress the importance of different stages involved in film distribution or orbiting around it. An integral part of distribution is on a par with distribution itself – i.e. the act of making a film circulate both physically and digitally through pre-determined circuits – film marketing being usually regarded as a crucial vector of the success (or lack thereof) of a film. Kerrigan condenses these two ideas in the following quote:

The distribution sector is undoubtedly the most instrumental element in a film reaching its audience. Irrespective of the talent of the writer, director, technical staff and stars involved, if a film fails to secure a distribution deal with one of the majors or a respected independent distributor, it will not be widely exhibited and will certainly not recoup its production budget. A good marketing campaign, which is coherently planned with the production team and distributor from the earliest possible stage, is essential in order to secure good box office receipts. (Kerrigan 2010, 37)

Two decisive ideas are contained within this quote that apply to all films, regardless of genre or target audience: the shifting of the cause of the distributional success of a film from aesthetic premises to material circumstances; and the vital importance of film marketing for a sustained and strategic theatrical exhibition window. These ideas, combined with the synthesis presented above, are key to an interpretation of the Portuguese context that will be presented next.

3.2.2 – Portuguese cinema and distribution

The first thing to bear in mind when considering the Portuguese case is that there has never been a solid marketing or distribution structure to underpin it. Although there has been a functioning distribution system, it has always, to a great extent, belonged to companies and conglomerates that never saw their interests aligned with those of Portuguese filmmakers and producers. It is symptomatic that, as early as

1967, when the Cinema Novo movement was in full swing, the document 'Ofício do Cinema Português' stated: "os distribuidores só aceitam a distribuição de filmes portugueses em condições perfeitamente ruins para os produtores" [distributors only agree to distribute Portuguese cinema in utterly pernicious conditions to the producers] (*O Ofício do Cinema em Portugal* 1968, 22). Paulo Cunha's doctoral thesis clearly shows the extent of the hegemony of American cinema in Portugal during the 1960s and 1970s (and even before) and the power available to distribution companies to make their interests prevail, even during a dictatorship (Cunha 2015, 81-180). Eduarda Dionísio also stresses that, from 1973 to 1977, almost two hundred films were made, but only a very small percentage of them were released into the market, a circumstance that caused a problematic log jam of films waiting to be screened (Dionísio 1991, 312). According to the same author: 'Os distribuidores e exibidores estavam, evidentemente, mais interessados nos filmes que constituíam os grandes êxitos de bilheteira. Os "grandes" controlam o Mercado' [Distributors and exhibitors were, evidently, more interested in the box-office hits that generated more revenues. The 'big fish' control the market] (Dionísio 1991, 222). Luís de Pina, for his part, offers a rather dispiriting testimony concerning the post-revolutionary period:

Quem esperava que a liberdade conquistada para os filmes nacionais e estrangeiros fosse o mais ampla possível enganou-se, pois ela depende dos compromissos da distribuição, mais dominada do que nunca, no último decénio, pelas *majors* americanas. De resto, os sectores da distribuição e da exibição continuaram a ser privados, diante de uma produção praticamente nacionalizada [...] E a exibição dos filmes depende fundamentalmente dos interesses (económicos) do distribuidor e do exibidor, motivo pelo qual se registaram atrasos em estreias de filmes portugueses e, em última análise, se negou a exibição de várias obras, que ficaram na prateleira ou viram a luz do dia em especialíssimas condições de estreia. [Those who thought that the freedom conquered for national and international films was as broad as possible were wrong, for that freedom depends on the commitment of the distribution sector, more controlled than ever, during the last decade, by the American majors. Indeed, the sectors of distribution and exhibition continue to be in private hands, while production is practically state-owned [...] And since the exhibition of films depends mainly on the (economic) interests of the distributor and exhibitor, that is why there have been delays in the premieres of Portuguese films and, ultimately, many films stayed on the shelves and did not premiere or did so under very special circumstances] (Pina 1986, 181-182).

This problem has also been highlighted by António-Pedro Vasconcelos (Letria 2016, 144): these policies were not created with citizens in mind, but rather created for the artists, i.e. they focused on providing the means for a milieu to produce cinema, and not on making Portuguese cinema accessible to everyone.

The discrepancy between production and commercial release continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s and even until the early 2000s, as shown by graphs 6 and 7 included in Chapter I (page 54). In 1992, the entrepreneur and exhibitor José Castello-Lopes pointed to the gravity of the situation: about 90 per cent of the revenues of distributors and exhibitors are obtained through American cinema; European cinema is responsible for 7 per cent of income and Portuguese cinema for only 3 per cent (Castello-Lopes 1992, 33). In the 1980s, the situation was even worse, with Portuguese cinema having a market share of only about 1.6% (Cunha 2013b, 235). While mentioning this paralysis in the field of production, Cunha also raises an interesting question, that only adds to the dramatic aspect of this problem:

Cerca de 40 por cento dos filmes concluídos não mereceram a atenção dos distribuidores. Este desinteresse dos distribuidores seria ainda mais estranho ao saber que o IPC atribuía subsídios a fundo perdido para publicidade televisiva aos filmes portugueses em estreia e ainda um subsídio aos cinemas que acolhessem as estreias de filmes portugueses [About 40 per cent of the completed films did not attract the attention of distributors. This lack of interest from distributors is even stranger when bearing in mind that the IPC provided subsidies for TV advertising for Portuguese films about to premiere and money to theatres that hosted the premieres of Portuguese films] (Cunha 2013b, 235).

This asymmetrical relationship between production and distribution was also highlighted 1991 by João Bénard da Costa, who denounced the fact that 29 films subsidised by the Portuguese Cinema Institute and completed in the 1974-1989 period (about 1/3 of the production) had never been seen more than once or twice; some had not even been released to the commercial circuit after their premiere (Costa 1991, 177-178). Indeed, according to João Mário Grilo: ‘Será preciso esperar por 1990 para que a Atalanta Filmes, empresa de distribuição controlada por Paulo Branco, faça sair uma série destes títulos [...]: *Recordações da Casa Amarela*, *O Processo do Rei*, *Non*, *ou a Vã Glória de Mandar*, *O Sangue e Agosto*, além da integral de Paulo Rocha, cujo *A Ilha dos Amores* estava sem estrear quase dez anos depois da sua conclusão.’ [One would need to wait until 1990 for Atalanta Filmes, a distributing company

controlled by Paulo Branco, to release a number of these titles [...]: *Recordações da Casa Amarela*, *O Processo do Rei*, *Non ou a Vã Glória de Mandar*, *O Sangue e Agosto*, apart from Paulo Rocha's complete works, of which *A Ilha dos Amores* has still not been premiered, ten years after its completion.] Grilo 2006, 35).

If some films, namely the most renowned, had a *succès d'estime*, others obtained only a more modest and discreet release due to their thematic or aesthetic extemporaneity, or the low prestige of the technical team. With Portuguese films always forming part of a marginal minority, these cases, given the turbulence and impasse experienced in the market, would become ultra-marginal works. Thus, it can be argued that it was not only critical and aesthetic judgement that interfered in the inclusion or exclusion of the pieces, but also, and mainly, the material and funding questions. Situated at the 'illustrious margins of cultural activity', Portuguese cinema has been, in this sense, a cinema of the almost-happening, and the semi-fact.

Monteiro recalls the discontent of the filmmakers about the lack of an alternative distribution circuit (Monteiro 2010, 334). As mentioned, the state provided financial support for production but not for distribution, a situation that caused the 'contradição de se investir num produto que não se distribui.' [contradiction of investing in product that is not distributed] (Monteiro 2010, 334). The difficulty of reaching a greater audience was, for Portuguese cinema, double: the masses showed little enthusiasm for these films; and the distributors, complying only with the minimum legal requirements, created a barrier that separated the films from their potential spectators. The complaint expressed by the intellectual and film and theatre director Jorge de Silva Melo seems paradigmatic of this problem: 'O facto de muitos filmes não chegarem a estrear provoca uma ausência de real muito grande. Porque não são confrontados com o público ou a falta dele, e com a concorrência.' [The fact that many films do not premiere provokes a great absence of reality. Because they are not confronted with the public or its lack, or with the competition.] (as cited in Monteiro 2001, 335-336)

As Chapter IV will see, legislation attempted to address this problem by envisaging the implementation of a quota system that would oblige exhibitors to show Portuguese cinema. However, delays over the necessary regulation, subsequent court battles to prolong the delays until the passing of new laws that would require still further regulation to work, or lack of compliance coupled with the lack of active inspection made the efficiency of this system fall short of expectations. Moreover,

independent theatres were not even able to screen Portuguese cinema because distributors refused to deal with them or, apart from some exceptions, would distribute only the bare minimum of films. A lack of demand for Portuguese films and low budgets of the Portuguese films themselves would in turn determine the creation of only a few copies, which would reduce a film's availability. A plausible solution to this problem, brought frequently to the table but never implemented, was the creation of the state's own distribution channels to serve Portuguese cinema. This would have allowed state protection to come full circle, reaching all the way from the production stage to the distribution to theatres. José Filipe Costa explains that the creation of a national distributor was envisaged. A ministerial task group to be in charge of management and coordinate efforts with the IPC was to be created. It would study options for an eventual nationalisation of distribution. The group would also be assigned to search for spaces and technical equipment in order to secure the implementation of a Popular Circuit of Exhibition and the utilisation of a private circuit for the distribution of films by the national distributor. A park with material even began to take shape, where one could find a number of 16mm projectors – this was intended to allow local infrastructures to become an alternative network of distribution and exhibition (Costa 2014, 80-81). However, such initiative did not follow through.

The odds were stacked against exhibitors during the 1980s and early 2000s. According to Dionísio, in January of 1989, there are just 4 or 5 distribution companies operating (when there were 20 in 1974) and there were still many films left to be premiered (Dionísio 1993, 362). The reduction in the number of distributors, as well as in the number of independent theatres, was the result of mergers, franchise deals and acquisitions, in great part due to the presence of big companies that took advantage of the crisis in cinema-going in the 1980s that weakened the position of small-scale businesses and theatres in city centres.

The multiplex expansion, made possible by the increase in the number of shopping malls during the 1980s and 1990s, changed the paradigm of film-going in Portugal. However, these chains belonged mainly to American multinationals or exhibitors interested in screening American cinema, and were designed to serve it. Despite this, collaterally, multiplexes eventually contributed to the increase in the number of Portuguese film screenings – 'mainstream' films that were partly financed

by big companies or had deals with them benefited the most¹⁹⁵. In 2000, journalist Pedro Ribeiro remembered that since the opening of the first multiplex in 1985, at the Amoreiras, in Lisbon, the habits of cinema consumption have changed forever (Ribeiro 2000). The author continues with a depiction of the presence of American companies and how the multiplex experience gradually replaced traditional theatres:

A partir do final dos anos 80, encerraram no Porto salas como os Lumières, o Foco, o Pedro Cem ou o Águia D'Ouro; em Lisboa, salas clássicas como o Éden, o Império ou o Condes fecharam as portas há ainda mais tempo. Com mais ou menos sucesso, alguns pequenos cinemas vão subsistindo, mas é sobretudo pelas salas dos grandes centros comerciais que hoje passa o cinema em Portugal: os novos templos da sétima arte são sítios como o Arrábida Shopping (AMC), o Colombo, o Norte Shopping ou o Oeiras Shopping (Warner-Lusomundo). O AMC é um exibidor norte-americano, o terceiro maior dos Estados Unidos [From the end of the 1980s onwards, theatres in Oporto like the Lumières, Foco, Pedro Cem or Águia D'Ouro closed down; in Lisbon, classic places such as Éden, Império or Condes also closed their doors even earlier. With more or less success, some small theatres remain, but it is mainly through the screening rooms in big shopping malls that cinema in Portugal takes place: the new temples of the seventh art are places such as Arrábida Shopping (AMC), Colombo, Norte Shopping or Oeiras Shopping (Warner-Lusomundo). AMC is an American exhibitor, the third biggest in the USA] (Ribeiro 2000)¹⁹⁶.

The film critic Jorge Mourinha recalls that the 1980s were in Lisbon ‘uma década que ficou marcada pelo encerramento das grandes salas de cinema (a demolição do Monumental foi em 1984) e pela inexistência de um circuito alternativo de distribuição e exibição, reduzido ao Quarteto’ [a decade marked by the closing of the major theatres (the demolishing of the Monumental was in 1984) and by the non-existence of an alternative distribution and exhibition circuit, reduced to the Quarteto theatre] (Mourinha 2009). For Portuguese art cinema the situation would only improve a little in the early 1990s, with the advent of the small-scale distribution and exhibition initiative *Atalanta/Medeia* headed by Paulo Branco and the persistence of other entrepreneurs like Castello-Lopes. In addition, a much-reduced selection of Portuguese films was available in VHS or other domestic formats – and

¹⁹⁵ This created a sort of context disparity and widened even more the gap between Portuguese cinematic practices: on the one hand, the more formulaic films would be presented along with American cinema, while, on the other hand, art cinema was connoted with other venues.

¹⁹⁶ Fifteen years after the first multiplex, in 2010, there are 17 of these structures in the country. They amount for one third of the the total screens in and generate almost half of the total box office revenue (ICA 2010, 33).

consisted mainly of a handful of ‘classics’ which were not really contemporary films. The situation was so precarious that the late 80s’ and early 90s’ generation, the one after the ‘Portuguese school’, was dubbed the ‘forgotten generation’, because they operated in a structurally weak context of production and a great part of the films were not shown outside of the film school or had a very limited circulation (Ribas 2014, 135).

Neither did television serve as a significant alternative distribution channel for Portuguese cinema, as point 2.3.3 mentioned – although it did play its role in making some films (especially the comedies from the 1930s and 1940s) available to an increasingly wider audience. Portuguese cinema was given a residual share in TV programming. The situation would change only slightly (and with a different emphasis) from 1992 onwards, when the private television channels appeared and invested in co-productions and television films. By the same token, film marketing was a much-neglected component in the commerce of Portuguese cinema until quite some time later. In fact, the paradigm-shift and the beginning of a period which saw a rise in the number of Portuguese cinema hits started when, in the mid-1990s, private television channels injected money into film marketing, in order to make the product in question more ubiquitous and appealing. In a 1998 book on cultural policies in Portugal, Maria de Lourdes Santos analysed the budgets of Portuguese films and capital distribution. She presented the information in the form of a chart and concluded that there was a massive investment in production and a disregard for exhibition and publicity (Santos 1998, 200). This disinvestment in marketing is both a consequence and a cause: on the one hand, a consequence of the lack of funds available to channel into publicity; on the other, it was also its cause, given that publicity was traditionally regarded as out of sync with the precepts of an anti-industrial cinematic practice.

The factors described above were responsible for the absence of Portuguese cinema in the international market. It was in fact never on an equal footing with other kinds of cinema – especially American. Distribution problems went back a long way and can be said to have been both chronic and perennial. In that sense, the destiny of Portuguese cinema and its true impact has been more of a market problem than an aesthetic conundrum. In the same way that musicologists discuss when music begins (in the score or in the moment of performance?), a similar question

should be asked in the case of cinema – to define the moment of passage that makes cinema a cultural gesture and not solely an artistic act.

3.2.3 – The reach of Portuguese cinema

After the presentation of the narrative on the domestic consumption and distribution of Portuguese cinema, this thesis will now focus on its international reach in order to better assess its circulation. As mentioned previously, many scholars have preferred to address Portuguese cinema through theoretical, philosophical and qualitative lenses, and only a few efforts have been made to understand Portuguese cinema through quantitative methods. The following chapter intends, through the reading of data, to fill some of the existing gaps concerning the consumption of Portuguese cinema in one of its primary markets – the European. The main goal is to provide a case-study and conclude with some statistical notes on the geography, type and dimension of internationalisation of Portuguese cinema over the last two decades.

When it comes to the international market, it is hard to determine which strand of cinematic practice carried out in Portugal (films with mainstream characteristics or art, personalist works) is more suitable for exporting. On one side, auteurs have tried to mark their position abroad and attain cultural value with ‘opaque’ works filled with national-specific issues. On the other side, popular cinema, in assimilating tried and tested formulae, has had the advantage of acquiring a certain ‘transparency’. According to Charles Acland, one way of assessing whether a particular film will be capable of attaining success beyond its internal market is the notion of ‘cultural discount’ (Acland 2003, 33). This vision (a North American perspective, it should be noted) believes that a film that brings to the fore cultural specificities will not last long in theatres and will not travel as much as a film with zero local specificities (Acland 2003, 33). However, for national cinematic practices that are more well-known abroad for their auteur cinema (and more focused in producing it) than for their popular cinema, this idea seems to acquire a reverse logic (Vincendeau 2000, 61-63): depending on the way a particular national cinema is received abroad and the kind of market that absorbs it, cultural discount is more or less beneficial. As mentioned previously, the international market that Portuguese cinema has typically targeted is the art-house market. The resultant data will test whether Acland’s hypothesis is applicable to the case of Portuguese cinema.

According to Paulo Cunha, there are three privileged spaces for the distribution of Portuguese cinema. Latin American countries, members of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLC), and Europe, and all three have maintained ties with Portuguese filmmakers and producers in the co-production and exhibition of cinema (Cunha 2012a, 21). As the same author writes: 'o caminho das co-produções parece cada vez mais uma forte alternativa para contornar as dificuldades de financiamento em Portugal e a reduzida dimensão do mercado exibidor externo' [co-productions progressively seem a strong alternative to circumvent the difficulties of financing in Portugal and the reduced dimension of the external exhibition market] (Cunha 2012a, 27). However, the problem in the backdrop of this situation is, once more, the small amount of leeway given by the multinationals and their lack of interest in distributing and screening Portuguese cinema. Moreover, regarding Latin American countries and the CPLC, it is important to stress that many of these partners are developing countries, where the circulation of films in theatres is weak or modest and occurs primarily in the few urban centres.

An important resource for this research project has been the Lumière database, created and maintained by the European Audiovisual Observatory.¹⁹⁷ Unlike in Latin America and the CPLC, it is possible to find sufficient data in Europe to determine the market presence of Portuguese cinema. The Lumière database collects and aggregates information from about 37 countries, from data provided by local governmental institutions (the processing of this data is the responsibility of each local institution, exhibitor or distributor). The methodology used by this research project to produce the matrix chart, which in turn generated the simplified chart presented below, was as follows: a search was made for every film included in the database in which some Portuguese participation (major, minor or national production) was conducted, and from the data a table was created, showing the countries participating in the production of each individual film and the presence of that film (i.e. number of viewers) in each of the 37 countries. This original compilation of data makes it possible to assess in detail the reach and market penetration of 200 Portuguese films – as many as were listed in the database – that premiered between 1996 and 2010. Obviously, films that did not manage to find a distributor were excluded. From the matrix chart, the following synthesis was extracted:

¹⁹⁷ <http://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/search/> - Last accessed on March 18, 2017.

TABLE 2:

Country	Number of films with Portuguese participation screened	Number of viewers
Albania	0	—
Armenia	0	—
Austria	5	18,376
Bosnia	0	—
Belgium	17	31,459
Bulgaria	2	33,126
Switzerland	7	25,105
Cyprus	0	—
Czech Republic	2	2,256
Germany	5	142,900
Denmark	1	130
Estonia	0	—
Spain	30	594,259
Finland	0	—
France	68	962,554
United Kingdom	8	16,392
Greece	1	1,187
Croatia	0	—
Hungary	3	9,785
Republic of Ireland	2	767

Iceland	0	—
Italy	18	390,805
Liechtenstein	0	—
Luxembourg	2	256
Latvia	0	—
Malta	0	—
Netherlands	19	59,251
Norway	2	5,139
Poland	4	51,514
Romania	2	5,970
Russia	1	1,050
Sweden	1	10
Slovenia	0	—
Slovakia	0	—
Turkey	0	—
Portugal	199	4,995,715

Source: Lumiere Database. **Edition:** André Graça

As we can see, the total number of viewers of Portuguese cinema in theatres, between 1996 and 2010, was 7,264,590. Furthermore, of the 200 films that managed to have a theatrical release, 19 were *Eurimages* co-productions. The only film that had Portuguese participation but did not premiere in Portugal was *A Filha*, by Solveig Nordlund 2003, which was screened in Sweden and France. In fact, it was the juxtaposition of the information concerning the countries participating in the production and the countries where the films were screened that allowed me to ascertain that a film made possible by a cross-national production or even by the

Eurimages programme will not automatically be distributed or premiered in the countries that took part in the production.

3.2.4 Final remarks

Concerning the typology of films that were distributed abroad, the metadata in the Lumière database suggests, perhaps unsurprisingly, that auteur cinema really was the type of cinema more prone to circulate and more capable of reaching beyond the Pyrenees. This was particularly true in the case of a handful of acclaimed filmmakers connected to the producer, Paulo Branco, such as Manoel de Oliveira, João César Monteiro, and Paulo Rocha. These auteurs managed to secure distribution for some of their films (never for all of them) in about five or more countries, albeit inconsistently.¹⁹⁸ Those films belonging to that portion of national production that should, according to the theory of ‘cultural discount’, have had more aptitude for internationalisation rarely left their country of origin (like many of their European counterparts [Vincendeau 2000, 62]) and, when they did, the results were low.¹⁹⁹ Even films that performed well at the box office in Portugal (which were also those with the higher numbers of viewers), like *O Crime do Padre Amaro* or *Conversa da Treta*, did not premiere anywhere beyond Portugal. To a certain extent, this suggests that, in practice (if not in theory too), Acland’s idea of cultural discount does not apply to the case of Portuguese cinema.

Despite its chronic fragilities, the internal market can be confirmed as having been the most important space of consumption of Portuguese cinema, in terms of exhibition/premieres and numbers of viewers. Although often disregarded by filmmakers and producers who have focused their efforts on external approval, without the domestic market Portuguese cinema would have been but a mirage. Portugal is where more than half of the total of European spectators was concentrated — which makes sense given that it was, by far, the country with the highest number of premieres. Of the remaining privileged spaces in Europe,

¹⁹⁸ For instance, the case of João César Monteiro: the film *A Comédia de Deus* (1996) was distributed in nine countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal), yet *A Bacia de John Wayne* (1997) circulated only in Belgium, France and Portugal, and *As Bodas de Deus* (1999) through Germany, Spain, France and Portugal. *Branca de Neve* (2000) was the filmmaker’s work with the least international projection, having premiered only in Portugal and France. Monteiro’s final film *Vai e Vem* (2003) was distributed in Belgium, Spain, France and Portugal. With the exception of France and Portugal (and to a certain extent, Belgium), the presence of César Monteiro’s works abroad is inconsistent.

¹⁹⁹ Note the discrepancy between the 78 viewers in Spain for António-Pedro Vasconcelos’s film *Call Girl* (2008) and the 232,581 viewers accounted for in Portugal.

France²⁰⁰ was the country that consumed the most Portuguese cinema, followed by Spain²⁰¹ and, more distantly, by the Netherlands (and its neighbour Belgium) and Italy. It is no exaggeration to state that the presence in the rest of the map over the time-span of 14 years was either negligible or non-existent – especially in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. One of the main consequences of such an occasional presence is that it did not pave the way for the creation of a habit of watching Portuguese cinema among the audiences of those countries. It can therefore be concluded that not only was the penetration in the international market rather sparse, but also that the number of viewers was indeed modest, probably representing on average – calculated by dividing the number of spectators by the number of films – a small percentage of the total of audience numbers in those countries. It is hoped that the notes and data presented in this chapter are able to help clarify the distribution and circulation of Portuguese cinema in both the internal and external markets.

²⁰⁰ In the French market, the amount of national productions can easily reach more than 30% of share and *auteur* cinema has a long tradition. It is common to premiere each year more than 500 feature films in France and the number of tickets sold has increased throughout the years (about 160-180 million). This means that, according to statistics from the CNC (*Centre National du Cinema et de l'Image Animé*), from 1996 to 2010, 2,646,720,000 (more than 2.5 billion) tickets were sold in France (Pierron, Danard, Landrieu 2014) therefore making the 962,554 tickets to see Portuguese films about 0.036% of the total. Although about 30% of the Portuguese filmic production managed to find its way to France, this residual percentage confirms Portuguese cinema as virtually irrelevant in French context.

²⁰¹ According to the Spanish Ministry of Culture, from 1996 to 2010, 1,753,421,848 tickets were sold in Spain. The percentage of penetration of Portuguese cinema was thus 0.033%. See MECD 2017a; MECD 2017b: <http://www.mecd.gob.es/cultura-mecd/dms/mecd/cultura-mecd/areas-cultura/cine/mc/anuario-cine/ano-2002/exhibicion/26-CuadEvol1992-2002.pdf>; http://www.mecd.gob.es/cultura-mecd/dms/mecd/cultura-mecd/areas-cultura/cine/mc/anuario-cine/ano-2010/exhibicion/21-Evolucion_Exhibicion/21.Evolucion_Exhibicion.pdf.

Chapter IV – Portuguese Cinema Laws (1971–2006)

Cinema, as a cultural and economic activity, has been regulated in Portugal since 1948, when the first cinema law came into effect. Furthermore, cinematographic practice, understood in its broader sense, has been highly dependent on governmental support in order to subsist. Thus, any regulation or law concerning the funding system has had a significant impact on the life of Portuguese cinema and its protagonists. This chapter will address the development of the legislation in Portugal regarding cinematic practice. It aims to present a critical reading and historical account of the legal documents and actions that have been approved from 1971 onwards.²⁰² Hence, it falls within the scope of the present text to simultaneously highlight and debate some aspects, practical consequences, and tendencies of these policies that seem to matter most in the context of this research project. Although some scholars have occasionally commented on the laws and their repercussions, a chronological and critical history of this topic is yet to be written. The following text seeks to fill this gap.

In the first place, it ought to be noted that there has been abundant legislation. Four laws,²⁰³ more than 20 regulatory decrees (including amendments), as well as several other specific statutes and ordinances, attest to the increasingly sophisticated and ever-changing legal framework of cinema.²⁰⁴ As will be further developed below, many reasons can justify this, as cinema laws encompass, and sometimes can even reflect, diverse elements of the socio-political history of the

²⁰² Every legal document mentioned and/or quoted in the body of the text was extracted directly from the *Diário da República*, the official gazette of the Portuguese Republic – in Portugal, legislative texts are only binding after publication. Every edition of this gazette since 1910 is made available from the *Diário da República Electrónico*, a free-access website maintained by the Government and considered public service: <https://dre.pt/web/guest/home>.

²⁰³ Explaining this part of the Portuguese legal system *in breve*, the hierarchy and role of the different types of statutory instrument should be made clear, as well as their purposes and practical functions. The ‘Lei’ [law], issued by the Assembly of the Republic, and the ‘decreto-Lei’ [law decree], issued by the Government, are the most powerful and basic juridical norms (except for the Constitution). Often ‘Leis’ and ‘Decretos-Lei’ can be very broad and somewhat vague, since it is expected that further regulation in accordance with their terms will be produced in the near future. ‘Regulamentação’ [regulations] is a normative act, second to the ‘Lei’ and ‘Decreto-Lei’, and is usually meant to unfold and/or detail the superior instrument. Finally, the ‘Portaria’ and ‘Despacho Normativo’ [ordinances] are documents invested with ministerial authority, containing recommendations and instructions concerning the application of the ‘Lei’ and ‘Regulamentação’.

²⁰⁴ Chicago author-date style, which is used for the majority of this thesis, has difficulties in accommodating references to legislation. Furthermore the *Chicago Manual of Style* does not provide guidance concerning Portuguese legislation and its specificities, such as the lack of an explanatory title. Therefore, in the body of the text, I will make as clearer as possible to the reader the source and the location of the material invoked – which, naturally, will correspond to the final bibliography.

country: changes of governments with different political sensibilities; adaptation to the entry into the European Economic Community, in 1985, and to the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992; financial constraints; the needs for updates due to new technologies, audiovisual practices and changing times; and the urge to simplify or synthesise complex and dispersed legislation.

4.1 – The late 1960s and the 1970s, or the revolution anticipated

Não admira que, chegado o 25 de Abril, nos déssemos conta de que o nosso problema já tinha sido resolvido antes. [It was not surprising that, when the 25th of April came, we realised that our problems had been resolved before] (Fernando Lopes 1985, 68).

The first law of the period under discussion is the famous 7/71 law approved on 7 December 1971. At that point the Estado Novo regime was still in existence. Unlike most of the legal system, this law was not changed during the revolution or the years immediately preceding it. In fact, it was considered the law of reference throughout the 80s, only to be revoked in 1993. Similarly, the first regulation of the 7/71 law, the decree n° 286/73 was approved on 5 June 1973 (almost 18 months afterwards), and was in force until 1984. Written in the context of a decaying nationalist dictatorship with a considerably protectionist economy, this law was the culmination of a long process of negotiation between the dynamic new generation of filmmakers, parliament, and Marcello Caetano's government, known to have introduced policies which were more open than Salazar's. Modelled after the solution proposed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1968 in response to the increasingly vocal requests for financial and technical aid made by the 'Cinema Novo' group, the 7/71 law founded the Portuguese Cinema Institute (loosely based on the previous Portuguese Cinema Centre), with the intention of providing the means to guarantee the quality of cinematographic production and the development of the remaining industrial film sectors.

The text of the law clearly shows that the state considers cinema to be a significant manifestation of Portuguese culture and creative achievement, and that it should therefore be supported in order to maintain both national consumption and international presence. As this thesis demonstrated, the participation of Portuguese films in the selection of film festivals, the quest for awards and the sort of legitimacy they could not find among the domestic audience and critique, as well as the

internationalisation of Portuguese production in general, were components of a consistent ambition to put Portuguese cinema and culture on the world map. It was an ambition nurtured by both the legislator and those associated with production and filmmaking, although for slightly different reasons – the legislator sees Portuguese cinema as a vehicle capable of popularising Portuguese culture across the globe in a way that brings prestige and prominence to the country in the international press, whereas the directors wanted prizes in order to reinforce their legitimacy to compete for further funding.

In many senses, given its thoroughness, this law and its subsequent regulation in 1973 followed from the basis that had been in use since 1948. Having failed to attract sufficient investment or establish the necessary cooperation to generate a truly functional industry, even today cinema in Portugal has very little liberal leeway, remaining to a certain extent at the mercy of variable policies. As will be seen, Portuguese cinema has almost always been under the aegis of the state, through an institution that regulates and supervises cinematic activity, centralises the decision-making process, and deliberates about the distribution of funding.

This tradition was very much in line with totalitarian and propagandistic mechanisms that had been present in Portugal for many decades, in which the state reserved the right to inspect and approve spontaneous cultural activities, when not promoting its own. Furthermore, Luís de Pina's words, when commenting on the 7/71 law are expressive:

Este desejo de 'centralização', de depender de um financiamento garantido, aproxima-se das intenções dos cineastas que estiveram na base da redacção final da Lei 207 (centralizadora, privilegiando a produção), que também desejava uma 'melhoria de qualidade' do cinema nacional, projecto tão combatido por um homem como Roberto Nobre, que via nessa dependência de protectores a criação de um cinema de estufa, ligado ao poder por via do favoritismo, do tráfico de influência. [This desire for 'centralisation', for depending on a guaranteed funding, comes close to the intentions of the filmmakers that were present in the final redaction of the 207 law (centralising, privileging the production), which also desired an 'improvement of the quality' of national cinema, a project countered by a man such as Roberto Nobre, who saw in that dependence of protectors the creation of a hothouse cinema, linked to the power by means of favouritism and influence peddling] (Pina 1986, 164).

The same policies that were once applied to develop the modest film production in Portugal, a medium that found growing popularity among the masses during the

1940s and was personally cherished by the then-minister of propaganda António Ferro, were, in the context of 1971, and as a result of a sea-change and the affirmation of a new wave of protagonists, convenient to the interests of niche practices and auteurist manifestations.

It is worth mentioning that the various laws, beginning in 1948, had also shown a continuous concern with the creation and fostering of several other elements of infrastructure directly related to cinema, such as studios, laboratories and theatres. These measures demonstrated that the law was based on far more than the attribution of subsidies and aimed to create a sustainable commerce for film activity. The 51st Article of the 286/71 decree, complementing chapter II of the 7/71 law, for example, stated: ‘O Instituto Português de Cinema poderá conceder empréstimos e garantias de crédito às empresas portuguesas que explorem ou se proponham a explorar estabelecimentos técnicos destinados à produção de filmes e careçam de assistência financeira para seu adequado apetrechamento.’ [The Portuguese Cinema Institute may concede loans and warranties of credit to companies that explore or intend to explore technical establishments destined to film production, and lack financial assistance for its proper equipping.] Additionally, the distribution and exhibition sectors, mainly held by multinationals, would also have to submit to quite tight norms; however, this was more in theory in practice – it rarely actually happened.

In 1971 a great part of the country’s economy was still being directly channelled into the war effort in Africa. To a certain degree, the 7/71 law demonstrates an awareness of the fragile situation of the existing resources available for film production. One point states that the Portuguese Cinema Institute has the obligation to ‘Promover a elaboração de acordos cinematográficos internacionais, nomeadamente co-produções’ [promote the making of international cinematographic agreements, namely co-productions], meaning that the regime that once defended the “orgulhosamente sós” [proudly alone] doctrine had recognised that Portuguese cinema would benefit from good international relations. For this reason, co-productions were considered on equal grounds with domestic ones, and the regulation concerning the former was not as strict as for the latter. Another important aspect of the law is that it stipulated the characteristics that a production had to possess cumulatively in order to enjoy the status of a Portuguese film – and hence become eligible for funding and other forms of support. It had to be produced

by a Portuguese producer; filmed by a Portuguese director and crew, who used in that process laboratories and other facilities within the country; be spoken in Portuguese; and finally, perhaps the most vague and interesting of the terms: the film in question had to ‘ser representativo do espírito Português’ [be representative of the Portuguese spirit]. While this single quote justified *per se* lengthy discussion in Chapter II, in this context it is important to underline the rigidly nationalist parameters contained in this term. The representation of Portugal according to the regime – otherwise it would not pass through the censorship – would not just be a stylistic, iconographic or thematic option; it was now first and foremost a legal requirement.

According to João Mário Grilo, this law was greeted positively in cinematographic milieux, which in part explains its remarkable durability (Grilo 2006, 24). The positive acceptance of this statute resides essentially on two points. First, this law was predicated on the need to ‘Estimular o cinema de arte e ensaio’ [stimulate the development of art and experimental cinema], since it was tailored to fit its time and aimed to meet the needs of the new generation of filmmakers from the Cinema Novo movement. According to Article 37 of the 1973 regulation, the financial assistance took the form of loans, subsidy, and credit warranties to cover up to 50 percent of the film’s budget. Effectively, the decline of the formulaic musical comedies of the 1940s and 1950s, and the rise of a few filmmakers who were aesthetically rather than politically motivated, can as Paulo Filipe Monteiro stated, explain the goodwill of Caetano’s government towards the Cinema Novo group. As was seen in Chapter II, Monteiro went even further in his conclusions, suggesting that the government ceded power to the Cinema Novo group because it knew that their films were unlikely to mobilise the masses, and that even if they did, the mobilisation concerned would not be overtly political (Monteiro 2001, 338). This determined the subsidies and the institutional support given to the new generation – which, in their turn, asserted its consequent establishment – during Caetano’s rule, a time when new and old-school filmmakers coexisted.

A second important characteristic was that the 7/71 law applied a 15 percent tax: ‘que deslocava uma parte das receitas de bilheteira para o financiamento indirecto da produção (é este imposto que passa a sustentar a estrutura económica da produção, posta em prática pelo Instituto Português de Cinema)’ [which moved a part of the revenues to the indirect financing of the production (it is this duty that

sustains the economic structure of the production, carried out by the Portuguese Cinema Institute)]. In addition to this ‘Robin Hood-type’ taxation, which affected mainly international companies and diverted capital from profitable business sources into risky productions, the state instituted the annual fixing of minimum quotas for the distribution and exhibition of Portuguese cinema within the country. This policy was made explicit in the 62nd article of the 286/73 decree, in line with chapters III and IV of the 7/71 law: ‘O Instituto Português de Cinema estabelecerá até 31 de Julho de cada ano o número mínimo de sessões de filmes nacionais e equiparados de longa metragem que cada recinto de cinema em funcionamento em território metropolitano deverá cumprir durante o ano cinematográfico seguinte.’ [The Portuguese Film Institute shall establish, until the 31st of July of each year the minimum number of sessions of national or equivalent feature films that each theatre operating on metropolitan soil must carry out during the ensuing cinematographic year.] By the same token, regarding distribution, Article 67 from the same document determined that: ‘A distribuição de filmes nacionais e equiparados sera assegurada pelos distribuidores, de acordo com um coeficiente annual a estabelecer para cada um deles pelo Instituto Português de Cinema até 31 de Julho de cada ano.’ [The distribution of national, and equivalent, films will be secured by the distributing companies according to an annual ratio to be established for each one of them by the Portuguese Cinema Institute.] Conscious of the disadvantageous position faced by Portuguese cinema as a result of foreign competition, and the fact that international companies dominated distribution and exhibition circuits, this legal imposition was the solution found by the government to increase and maintain the number of screenings of Portuguese films. Finally, concerning heritage conservation, it should be pointed out that clause XCII of the 7/71 law decreed that all producers benefiting from financial assistance from the state were required to deliver to the Portuguese Cinemateque a minimum of one copy of the film.

4.2 – The consequences of the legislation on distribution and exhibition

The consequences of this legislation deserve to be discussed in particular due to their importance to our analysis of the presence or absence (and thus the success or failure) of Portuguese cinema in Portugal. Grilo mentions the controversies created by these measures, which led to quarrels with the producers (Grilo 2006, 24-25). The distributors were unhappy and complied with this taxation only begrudgingly. In

effect, Portuguese cinema generated a small profit and the rate was applied to the revenue of all films screened. Portuguese Cinema Novo was no exception to Steve Neale's considerations that art cinema is a niche within the international film marketing (Neale 2002, 118). As Grilo states: 'O imposto adicional foi sempre entendido pelos distribuidores – que nunca viram, em geral, qualquer interesse na produção – como um tributo político, uma (injusta) franquía a pagar ao Estado português pela exibição dos filmes fornecidos pelos seus patrões americanos' [The additional taxation was always understood by the distributors – who never saw, in general, any interest in the production – as a political tribute, a (unfair) franchise to be paid to the Portuguese state for the exhibition of the films delivered by their American bosses] (Grilo 2006, 25). On the other hand, from the point of view of those who benefited, 'parecia justo que fossem as cinematografias mais fortes e rentáveis a promover – na exacta proporção dessa força e dessa representatividade – as cinematografias com bases de produção mais frágeis e periféricas, mas também mais livres e experimentais' [it seemed fair that it should be the strongest and more profitable cinematographies to promote – in the exact proportion of that force and representativeness – the cinematographies with more fragile and peripheral bases of production, but also freer and experimental] (Grilo 2006, 24).

According to the same author, 'desde as décadas de 60 e 70, a [situação do cinema] funcion[e] a duas velocidades: produz-se maioritariamente, cinema português, distribui-se e exhibe-se, maioritariamente, cinema americano' [since the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, the cinema circuit in Portugal has worked at two different speeds: what has been produced is chiefly Portuguese cinema, while what has been distributed and exhibited is chiefly American cinema] (Grilo 2006, 24). This section of the 7/71 law would only be altered so as to favour the distributors, initially with the law-decree n° 196-A/89, of 21 June 1989, when the tax on profits was lowered from 15 to 10 percent, and one year later, with the law-decree n° 143/90, of 5th May 1990, which approved a tax rise on advertising from 2 to 4 percent,²⁰⁵ and abolished the duty on the box office revenue. This circumstance is, arguably, the core cause of the turbulence that affected the life of Portuguese cinema during the 70s and 80s. It should be stressed that the repercussions of this law do not seem to be as

²⁰⁵ It should be noted that the law-decree n° 184/73, of 25 April 1973, was still in force. This ordinance aimed to further regulate the charging of the extra taxes mentioned in the 7/71 law. Section III of this law-decree prescribed an exhibition fee of 2 percent over the revenues of the advertisements shown in both theatres and television. The profits of this tax would revert to the financial endowment of the Portuguese Cinema Institute.

simple as the quotes from Grilo would have us believe: the situation was more complex than this, since the distributors carried out what this thesis would call a partial embargo that would only later be circumvented.

4.3 – The 1980s: A decade of transition and political consolidation

The decade of the 1980s in Portugal has been an object of scholarly study for many years, but only recently have there been attempts to carry out an in-depth analysis of the period, given its temporal proximity and particular complexities. It can be said that, generically, this was the decade when more structural changes could be felt in the recent past of the country. The end of the dictatorship and the abrupt collapse of the Portuguese empire, as well as the cooling down of the fervent years of the revolution, provided the tone for the years to come. The legacy of all these events, the search for democratic dialogue and political stability, aligned with the integration of Portugal in the European project produced a wide variety of feelings towards the redefinition of the country's identity. In their turn, the political and ideological circumstances gave rise to many changes in the social, cultural and artistic fields.

However, as to the legislation of cinematographic activity, the changes did not come about as a result of a new law, but rather through the introduction of a series of ordinances over the years. According to the law-decree 22/84, of 14 January 1984, this legislative option of confirming and/or amending pre-existing laws happened as a consequence of the need for time for both the legislative process and the stabilisation of the film market to bed down. These new amendments published during the 1980s implemented judicious and detailed alterations, namely: the creation of different competitions and the stimulus to encourage private patronage, which helped to shape the model of financial assistance that would persist in the 90s and 2000s. While recognising that the transition to a democratic regime and 13 years of experience with the same law justified some future alteration, the philosophical premises of the 7/71 law were, however, left untouched until 1984. In fact, the above-mentioned law-decree 22/84 stated that: 'A Lei n°7/71, de 7 de Dezembro, continua a ser o diploma básico por que se rege o cinema português.' [The law n° 7/71, of the 7th December, continues to be the basic diploma by which Portuguese cinema is ruled.]

The new regulation governing financial assistance (Statute n°29/84 from 31 January 1984), published a few days after the 22/84 law-decree, did not break with

previous legislation. It maintained that cinematographic activity was not only a manifestation of the cultural vitality of the Portuguese nation, but also: ‘Um elemento significativo da projecção internacional de Portugal. Por isso o Estado a protege.’ [A significant element of the international projection of Portugal. That is why the state protects the activity.] Yet, considering the economic reality of the country (the International Monetary Fund had to intervene in 1983 in order to prop up the economy), it recognised that some improvements should be made in order to ‘diminuir o custo de produção dos filmes portugueses, melhorar a sua relação com o público, fortalecer as empresas produtoras e os criadores [...] reconsider[ar] [a] problemática da distribuição e da exibição do filme português, quer em Portugal quer nos mercados estrangeiros’ [reduce the cost of the production of Portuguese films, improve its relation with the public, strengthen the production companies and the creators [...] reconsider the problem of the distribution and exhibition of Portuguese film, both in Portugal and in the overseas markets]. Symptomatically, this quote seems to express awareness of the *mens legislatoris* about the problems with distribution. It also expressed concern regarding the *décalage* in the sphere of Portuguese cultural production, i.e the gap between the general audience and Portuguese films. Furthermore, the ordinance also aimed to articulate, for the first time, the relationship [between film production and the Radio e Televisão Portuguesa (RTP), the national television channel (the only one available then).

Apart from these aims as enunciated in the preamble, ordinance n°29/84 tightened up the regulation of the two existing forms of financial assistance (non-refundable subsidies, and loans). Among the amendments, three are particularly relevant. First, Articles 7 and 8 defined, respectively, the constitution of the jury in charge of evaluating the application for funding, which should be made up of ‘7 personalidades, representativas dos sectores de distribuição, exibição e crítica cinematográfica e da televisão’ [7 people, representing the sectors of distribution, exhibition and cinematographic critique, and television], and the criteria that should guide the deliberations. Items *a)*, *b)* and *c)* of Article 8 held that the funds should be primarily channelled to projects that demonstrate better guarantees of artistic and cultural quality; a better capacity to communicate with the public; and, finally, that there ought to be a rotation of the funded directors. Of these three criteria, the first two were as subjective as they were before, especially as far as projects were concerned, and only the final one was clear – in a context of economic austerity, the

choice to be made was to divide the resources. Precisely because of this linguistic vagueness and all its drawbacks, later regulations, as this thesis will demonstrate, would repeatedly feel the need to improve the meritocratic system, and make the selection process more transparent.

The second major amendment concerned the granting of loans. Statute 29/84 ruled that the 'IPC concede empréstimos reembolsáveis contra a apresentação de boas garantias de exibição em, pelo menos, 3 salas, situadas em 3 localidades diferentes dos circuito comercial português ou de um circuito estrangeiro.' [The Portuguese Cinema Institute provides refundable loans against the presentation of good assurances of exhibition in, at least, 3 theatres, situated in three different localities of the Portuguese commercial circuit, or an overseas circuit.] Once more, this measure proved that the solution of the discrepancy between production and exhibition was paramount. Equally, it showed that the government-determined quotas prescribed by the 7/71 law, which were still in force at that time, were far from sufficient to guarantee the exhibition of all of the (few) films produced in Portugal during those years.

The third and final amendment in Statute 29/84 concerned the monitoring process. It split the public competitions and other requests for financial assistance into different groups that had at one time been within the same department. Therefore, in order to reduce inequities arising from the confusion between different types of cinematographic works, feature films, short films, and first works had for the first time their own specific sections. Competitions for funding applications all ran in parallel and did not intersect. The trend to create separate, dedicated lines of funding would be carried over into all future laws (e.g. this would later be extended to documentaries and animated films).

With the political change brought about by the results of the 1985 elections that gave an absolute parliamentary majority to the Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata – PSD), considered to be right-wing by Portuguese political standards, in August 1986, the law-decree 258/86 on private patronage came into force. This law was innovative and formed part of the enterprise of PSD's moderately liberal project to gear up a competitive economy and progressively transfer to the private sector certain commitments previously assumed by the state. In short, it encouraged the community to actively invest and take part in the cultural life of the country, in return for tax benefits.

The text of the decree seems clear enough:

No momento em que o País se integra na Comunidade Económica Europeia, mais imperioso se torna preservar e afirmar a identidade cultural portuguesa, pelo que se afigura necessário criar condições capazes de permitir aos particulares apoiar decididamente a criação cultural portuguesa e um melhor e mais amplo conhecimento, pelos portugueses, da sua própria cultura. [At a moment when the country has been integrated into the European Economic Community, the more imperative it becomes to preserve and affirm Portuguese cultural identity. It is therefore necessary to create conditions that are capable of enabling the private sector to support with determination Portuguese cultural creation, and provide a better and wider knowledge to the Portuguese of their own culture.]

Apart from explaining the *raison d'être* for these measures, this excerpt also denotes the paradox of the troublesome relationship between Portugal and the European project. To a certain degree, this situation can be perceived in terms of the fear of a possible cultural transfiguration of Portugal by the EEC. Not only was it the case that the laws seemed to support a distinctively Portuguese cinema, but this threat also had repercussions on the artistic intentions of filmmakers.

In line with this patronage policy, and reflecting to a certain extent the political transition, in 1987 the government asserted its position by approving a financial assistance package to replace the one drawn up three years earlier. In the preamble of the ordinance n°14/87, of 13 February 1987, the legislator begins by assuming, once more, the importance of cinema for the international image of Portugal, but then came a note of regret: 'Devido a circunstâncias internas e internacionais, continua a não atrair os capitais privados suficientes para a sua subsistência.' [Due to internal and international circumstances, (Portuguese cinema) continues not to attract sufficient private capital for its subsistence.] Although this new ordinance retained most of the features of the previous law, it revolved around the development of three main axes: sharing the costs of the production between the state and potentially interested bankers ('mobilização de fundos de diferentes proveniências' [mobilisation of funds from different sources]), via the patronage law-decree 258/86; accelerating the process of co-operation between cinema and television; and, finally, applying a new, faster and automatic form of financial assistance, targeted at rewarding the producers who could prove the profitability of their past works/investments. Hence, grant-funding for feature films, from this

ordinance onwards, was divided into automatic (also called ‘direct’) funding, and tendering.

In effect, in practical terms, what distinguishes these two forms of subsidy, is that the selection criteria for automatic funding had strictly to do with monetary results (subheading *a*) of Article 40) or the guarantee that a great part of the funding was already secured, and that the subsidy given would be just complementary (subheading *b*) of Article 40). In other words, any project applying for this funding would not be judged solely on the basis of its artistic and cultural merits. In this scenario, any producer could benefit from assistance for any sort of film, even the type of film that would achieve a low score in the criteria used by the jury, provided the preceding film had generated a revenue of at least ten percent of the maximum subsidy given by the Portuguese Cinema Institute. Additionally, co-productions and international co-productions were encouraged even more than before: this would mean a relief for the financial role assumed by the state, and provide proof of the successful integration of Portugal and its producers into the EEC, as well as the vitality of the international relationship between Portuguese producers and their European audiovisual partners.

4.4 – The beginning of the 1990s: further developments in the legislation, the liberal agenda and its paradoxes

After four years of Ordinance 14/87 and the same, stable government (which was re-elected for a further four-year term in 1991), the attempt to progressively reduce state intervention in Portuguese cinema continued. However, constant changes in the audiovisual sector²⁰⁶ and in the international configuration²⁰⁷ led to the revision of the existing policies. Among the major changes carried out by the PSD government was the abolishment of the additional taxation on box office revenues, in 1990, through law-decree n° 143/90, and the establishment of the collection of income for the Portuguese Cinema Institute through a levy of four percent on advertising. Lacking the time and opportunity to draft a new law in 1991 (a process that had been

²⁰⁶ For this reason, in February 1990, the Secretariado Nacional do Audiovisual (National Secretariat for the Audiovisual) was created. This structure was designed to coordinate the then-unclear inter-sectoral articulation between the different protagonists and their interests (Resolution of the Cabinet Council n° 2/90, from 10 February 1990).

²⁰⁷ Especially the first MEDIA (*Mésures pour Encourager le Développement de l’Industrie Audiovisuelle*) programme launched in 1990, the Eurimages programmed since 1988, and the negotiations around the upcoming Treaty on European Union

suspended for a long period of time) or a general regulation, the solution found was to rush through parliament three separate amendment bills in that year: bill n° 53/91, from 4 January, that regulated selective funding; bill n° 188/91, from 4 September, which concerned the financing of short films, documentaries and animated films; and bill n° 231/91, of 17 October, that stipulated new policies governing direct assistance.

To some extent, the first two 1991 bills, which concerned competitive funding, brought about only minor changes. They both recognised that 1991 is different from 1987, and that the policies in force were no longer adequate for the needs of specific film genres: thus, the placing of the three minor cinematic activities (short films, documentaries and animated films) under the authority of the same legal instrument – the 188/91 bill. Perhaps the most remarkable variations introduced by the 53/91 bill were the economic stimulus provided for the writing of original scripts, and the rescheduling of both the competitions and the tenure of the jury. Instead of one jury per annual competition, this ordinance decreed the creation of three annual periods for applications for financial assistance, and determined a three-year period for the mandate of the jury in order to increase the co-accountability regarding the decisions taken. This pointed to a preoccupation with transparency and meritocracy in the competition.

Regarding bill n° 231/91, the policies conveyed a clear statement of the *zeitgeist* and the political project initiated by the Social Democratic government in 1987. With regard to this direct support, the legislator stated:

‘Trata-se, por um lado, de reconhecer o esforço de produtores que conseguem realizar a montagem financeira dos seus projectos com recurso maioritário a financiamentos externos ao Instituto Português do Cinema e, por outro, garantir o apoio oficial a projectos de inegável interesse artístico, prestigiando a cinematografia nacional. Procura-se, em consequência, fomentar aquele sector da actividade de produção cinematográfica que entende o apoio do Estado necessário apenas supletivamente e que se deseja que venha a ser a realidade do panorama audio-visual português dentro de alguns anos.’ [This is, on the one hand, a tribute to the effort of the producers able to carry out the financial arrangements for their projects using funds external to the Portuguese Cinema Institute, and, on the other hand, guarantees official support to projects of undeniable artistic interest, prestigious to the national cinematography. Therefore, this ordinance seeks to foster that sector of the activity of cinematographic production that understands the support of the state as only necessary in a supplementary way. It is desired that this will become the prevailing reality in the Portuguese audiovisual panorama in a few years.]

The wording used here goes to the essence of the argument of this thesis; as we can see, the state is interested in supporting prestigious examples of Portuguese cinema; the encouragement of a more active role for producers and private capital; and the desire to establish a self-sustaining industry. To some extent, this policy generates a paradox: if the great majority of the prestigious productions (barring a handful of examples) until then had not been financially successful, how could films with the same characteristics become more attractive in the near future, especially after the state had withdrawn its support? According to Paulo Leite, all those decades of legislation might have altered the amount and technical quality of film production in Portugal, but no law or measure had managed to change the fact that, in Europe, Portugal came second to last (Ireland being the first) in its consumption of national cinema (Leite 2013, 478). In fact, there has never been a significant change in this tendency, as the initial chapter of this thesis showed. Ultimately, the problem was either in the films or in the audiences (or perhaps in both).

In addition to the above, bill 231/91 divided funding into two different paths: the first, which already existed, included a direct financing (though under new conditions) and the second had to do with exceptional financial assistance. These two schemes diverged in that the former was subject to evaluation according to three subparagraphs whereas the latter was provided automatically. This competition was not therefore a duplication of the 53/91 bill, since this subsidy/loan was complementary and, unlike the other tranche of funding, was not meant to cover the majority of the budget.

As stated in Article 1 of the first chapter of the 231/91 bill, a project would be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: '*a*) Pela qualidade artística e profissional da produção; *b*) Por terem como tema os costumes e a tradição portuguesa; *c*) Pela contribuição para a divulgação e prestígio da imagem de Portugal.' [*a*) the artistic qualities and professionalism of the production; *b*) to have as theme Portuguese mores and cultural traditions; *c*) its contribution to the presentation and prestige of the image of Portugal.] Once more, a film would have to abide by a series of subjective rules in order to obtain funding, and, not surprisingly, the criteria reflected traditional obsessions. Films obtaining this funding had to have very similar characteristics to those enshrined in the nationalist 7/71 law, which had in any event never been repealed. In light of this, and considering that the preeminent figures of

Portuguese cinema at the time came directly from either the Cinema Novo movement or the Portuguese School, it seems legitimate to argue that different governments, in a more or less conscious way, have been privileging over the decades the type of cinema that depicts the country through an artistic lens and, preferably, in such a way as to have a positive impact on (i) the niche cinephiles and (ii) foreign critics. This bill encapsulates the ‘legal’ canon of Portuguese cinema, while encompassing the country’s own crisis of self-esteem. The paradox is once more evident: the state insists on supporting a cinematic practice that is neither seen by the masses nor to their taste, and is therefore incapable of generating sufficient revenue to support itself, while the state wishes that it could. The state wants cinema to be self-supporting, and yet insisted on offering state support to a cinematic practice that was not in position to have mass popular appeal and would therefore not be able to support itself.

With regard to exceptional financial assistance, almost the same can be said, for Article 15 states that this funding is targeted at: ‘Realizadores cinematográficos que, pelas provas dadas ao longo da carreira, pelo prestígio alcançado pela qualidade internacionalmente reconhecida da sua obra, contribuam de forma decisiva para a projecção de Portugal no mundo e que são veículo permanente para a divulgação da cultura lusófona.’ [Film directors who, by the proof given throughout their career, by the prestige achieved through the internationally-acknowledged quality of their work, contribute decisively to the projection of Portugal in the world, and thus become permanent vehicles for the propagation of lusophone culture.] It is hard to imagine a director fitting a profile other than that of an auteur benefiting from such funding.

4.5 – The European Union legal framework concerning cinema

The next step in Portuguese cinema legislation was the publication of the long-awaited new bill which reflected recent developments in European politics and the revised needs of the reformulated European political horizon. In order to understand the impact of this bill it is important to provide some context regarding the European legal perspective on cinema and the audiovisual sector, since this was the political reality into which the long-awaited bill n°350/93 was inserted.

With the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the economic and cultural circumstances of all member states changed. The new policies were anchored in the premises of creating the Euro and constituting a broader European Union, built at

the expense of the transfer of some local sovereignty to centralised, supra-national institutions. At this communitarian level, the European Commission and the Council of Europe were to be the responsible bodies for the production and control of audiovisual policy.

The Commission to this day regulates the MEDIA programmes (I, II, PLUS, 2007, MUNDUS), and the Council promotes the *Eurimages* consortium (which consisted of 33 members in 2010). According to Finola Kerrigan, the MEDIA programmes are oriented towards the development of a ‘sustainable film industry across the member states’ (Kerrigan 2010, 62). In its turn, ‘Eurimages has a greater “cultural” remit than the European Commission programmes, which have more commercially focused aims’ (Kerrigan 2010, 64). Therefore, the collection of the funding, its distribution and the intentions behind *Eurimages* are in many ways similar to those of the Portuguese government. Such a parallelism is confirmed by the words of the *Eurimages* Executive Secretary, Ryclef Rienstra: ‘[the aim of this fund] is not to get its money back but to support an activity which is both industrial and cultural, and which asserts Europe’s identity’ (as cited in Jäckel 2003, 76). In addition to these two programmes, the ‘Framework Five, Six and Seven, and the European Structural Fund contribute more financially to the film industry than MEDIA’ (Kerrigan 2010, 63), since they are charged with developing the member states in general through various infrastructural measures, the effects of which are inevitably shared by those in the audiovisual sector. As Kerrigan points out, ‘The need to protect the cultural industries was enshrined in Article 128 of the Treaty of European Union’ (Kerrigan 2010, 61-62). Regarding the film industry, Kerrigan explains that the European Commission was supportive in three main areas: ‘continually assessing the legal case for state support for the film industry in line with competitive legislation, protection of film heritage, in terms of archiving European films across the member states and promoting the European film industry’ (Kerrigan 2010, 61-62). Ultimately, these serious efforts to endow a unified Europe with an economically backed circuit of co-productions and empower a broader industry through cooperation between different European partners compelled Portugal to adapt its own obsolete legislation in order to keep up with the rest of Europe.

4.6 – From 1993 to 1996: adapting to changing times

On 7 October 1993 bill n° 350/93 was finally published, bringing Portuguese

national law into line with European directives in the film sector. In addition, the bill recognised the need to legally accommodate the private television channels that had appeared in Portugal (Sociedade Independente de Informação, in 1992, and Televisão Independente, in 1993). Although this bill revised a great portion of the previous 7/71 bill, it should be remembered that a long list of amendments had already taken place over the course of the previous two decades. Consequently, this law was more of a merging of existing policies and a ‘cosmetic manoeuvre’ than an actual reformist document. It did attempt to harmonise national production with European policies – which would ideally lead to more external funds –, implemented some important updates concerning the status of ‘Portuguese film’ (which was now less strictly defined than before) and developed the requirement for any national production to be deposited in the Cinemateque under a legal deposit law.

Consisting of about 32 pages, this was the most comprehensive bill on Portuguese cinema/audiovisual to date. Oddly enough, however, it seemed to imply increased bureaucratic control over the activity in an era when all the previous regulations had suggested that the state was relinquishing its grip on film. Perhaps the legislative maze of the previous bills had given risen to the need for greater legal control. The 350/93 law certainly did not appear to be any more flexible than the 7/71 law. In Article 5, which dealt with the duties of the state, for example, there were 15 subchapters, covering almost every possible aspect of the Portuguese cinematographic universe regarding production, international relations, distribution, exhibition and conservation of film. Though films from other EU countries were considered equivalent to national production and the competitions were open to EU citizens, the Portuguese government continued to control the central institutions, such as the Portuguese Cinema Institute and the Cinemateque. Financial assistance (now with a declared preference for loans with special interest rates) would continue, and the state reserved the right to establish distribution and exhibition quotas as before. Regarding this matter, it should be pointed out that measures to back independent distributors and technical establishments, as well as plans to expand the network of cinemas and modernise the old theatre houses, were also contained in this bill – in Articles 17, 14 and 22 respectively. Ultimately, the pillars that had been supporting the model of state intervention until then were modified, but the structure remained more or less intact.

On the back of the 350/93 bill, in 1994, the presidency of the Cabinet

Council issued a new law (n° 25/94), on 1 February, which closed down the Portuguese Cinema Institute and the National Secretariat for the Audiovisual, and merged these two bodies to form the Portuguese Institute of Cinematographic Art and the Audiovisual [Instituto Português da Arte Cinematográfica e Audiovisual, IPACA]. Created for the sake of a ‘política global e coerente para o sector do audiovisual, política essa que se entrecruza com a do sector do cinema’ [global and coherent policy for the audiovisual sector, a policy that intertwines with cinema’s sector], this new institution was intended, for practical reasons, to administer and bring under the same banner the two sectors (TV and cinema) directly benefiting from the European programmes. While the rest of the document dwelt on the definition of the internal operations of IPACA and the definition of its remit, the most striking and symptomatic part of the text is arguably this important sentence in the preamble:

Aquela [ajuda financeira] tem de passar a ser um meio eficaz de auxiliar a criação de indústrias tendencialmente auto-sustentadas e integrada numa economia europeia e não uma forma de manter actividades cronicamente assistidas e exclusivamente dependentes de apoios estatais, sem vitalidade nem racionalidade económica. [That (financial help) must be an effective means of assisting the creation of tendentiously self-sustained industries, integrated in the European economy, and not a way of maintaining chronically-assisted activities, depending exclusively on state support, without vitality or economic rationality.]

Although this was not news, this quote demonstrates that the government did perceive the issue of state subsidy to be a problem, rather than a solution.

Approximately one year after the creation of IPACA, on 19 January 1995, the same Social-Democrat government issued the regulation of the financial assistance envisioned in the 350/93 bill. The second supplement of the *Diário da República* for that day contains the bills 45-C/95, 45-D/95, and 45-E/95, which regulate, respectively, selective, automatic and direct assistance. Apart from being the formal regulations for the newly created IPACA, these statutes were, in practical terms, identical to the ones they replaced. There are no significant surprises in the wording – perhaps with the exception of the increase in penalties for those transgressing the terms of the contracts.

Once more, the preambles to the various bills show the concerns felt by the Portuguese government, and are important testimonies to what was happening to

Portuguese cinema at the time. For instance, the following quote found in bill 45-C/95 is paradigmatic of the persistence of the gap between audiences and films: ‘É seu objectivo principal conciliar o público com o cinema português e rendibilizar os financiamentos públicos viabilizando o maior número de obras cinematográficas.’ [It is the primary objective of this ordinance to bring together the public and Portuguese cinema and capitalise the public funds in order to enable the making of the highest number of cinematographic works.] In a way, this also suggests that, for the *mens legislatoris*, quantity is the main goal and that the problem would be resolved by simply increasing the number of Portuguese films produced. Paradoxically, if it was a continuation of what had gone before, it could hardly be expected that this bill would be able to solve an already existing problem. Bill 45-D was written along the same lines: ‘Pretende-se, assim, fomentar a criação de obras cinematográficas que associem à qualidade estética e artística a aceitação e o reconhecimento do público.’ [It is intended, thus, to foster the creation of cinematic works that associate aesthetic and artistic qualities with acceptance and recognition by the public.]

4.7 – 1995 to 2004: new political agents, prolific legislation, and persisting issues

With the ending of the Social-Democratic term of office in 1995, the Socialist Party (Partido Socialista – PS) – moderate left wing – won the elections and formed a government with an absolute parliamentary majority. This new administration subscribed to a different ideological viewpoint from that of the previous government, and soon asserted its position concerning cinema, in 1996, with the publishing of seven laws, as follows: n° 86/96, on 18 March, on selective support; n° 314/96, on 29 July, concerning direct assistance; n° 315/96, also on 29 July, regulating financial support for co-productions (the first one of its kind); n° 316/96, again on 29 July, on short films; n° 317/96, from the same *Diário da República* issue of the previous three bills, regarding first works; n°496/96, on 19 September, stipulating the selective funding of documentaries; and n° 497/96, also on 19 September, dedicated to animated films. In essence, all these new laws had similar aims and style to those of the documents they revoked. They were designed to financially aid the milieu of a minor national cinema with a fragile entrepreneurial network, struggling with audience results, and striving to fulfil the desire solid international respect. However, some alterations that came about deserve to be mentioned.

In the first place, in an attempt to rationalise the bureaucracy, the government acted as once before and separated the different types of cinematic works (short films, feature films, documentaries and animated films). The same happened with the application for funding process (direct, selective, co-productions, and first works). Secondly, funding by loan or credit guarantee was abolished for all competitions, on the basis that it had apparently been irrecoverable many times in the recent past. To some extent this measure and the statutes' silence about the desire to create an autonomous film industry mirrored how this new government understood its role in terms of the protection of cultural manifestations. As is stated in bill n° 314/96:

As principais alterações agora consagradas dizem respeito, por um lado, à unificação dos apoios numa única modalidade de subsídio a fundo perdido, com a consequente eliminação do subsídio reembolsável, que a experiência demonstrou ser de difícil aplicação prática, e, por outro, à instituição de um sistema mais claro e transparente de selecção dos projectos a apoiar [...]. [The main changes now enacted concern, on the one hand, the unification of the forms of support in a single modality of non-refundable subsidisation, with the consequent elimination of the refundable subsidisation that experience has shown to be of difficult practical implementation, and, on the other hand, concern the institution of a clearer and more transparent system for the selection of the projects to be supported [...]].

Another aspect mentioned in this passage, which leads to the next point of this thesis concerning these bills, is the question of the fairness of the competitions and their processes. This seems to be another enduring preoccupation, probably deriving from complaints within the cinematographic sector about the bias of the jury or the biased assessment of particular projects. For this purpose a scoring system was created that would attribute a score from 1 to 5 in each parameter. Yet, rather inexplicably, this system was applied only to those projects requiring direct assistance, and not to the so-called selective assistance. As for the criteria to be taken into account, it is important to note that a series of subchapters specifying significant elements were introduced. For instance, the professional curriculum of the director had almost always been an item to be taken into consideration, but this was the first time that a festival presence (films selected to be screened, awards and other distinctions) and the cumulative number of spectators of her/his work over the last five years were to be taken into account. Indeed, evidence of a previous presence and

impact at festivals gained an unprecedented relevance in the decision-making process according to this new law. The following text can be found in subchapters concerning the assessment criteria of both bills n° 316/96 and 314/96: ‘Currículo do realizador, com menção dos prémios e distinções que tenha recebido e dos festivais em que obras suas tenham passado’ [Curriculum of the director, specifying the prizes and distinctions received, as well as the festivals at which her/his works were screened].²⁰⁸ Given that festivals are much more than places where cinematic achievements are celebrated, bringing as they do privileged opportunities to sign distribution contracts and establish international partnerships, it can be argued that the desire for recognition abroad and the integration between Portuguese cinema and other partners can be subliminally found here.

At the same time, ‘Portugueseness’ continued to be a major premise for the attainment of funding, specifically in first works and documentaries. In the first case, subchapter *c)*, on the criteria to be assessed by the jury, mentions the ‘Importância da componente nacional da obra, do ponto de vista técnico, cultural e artístico’ [Importance of the national component of the work, from technical, cultural and artistic points of view]. By the same token, subchapter *c)* of Article 16 of the ordinance 496/96, stresses, for funding purposes, the ‘Relevância do documentário para o conhecimento da realidade, da história e da cultura portuguesas.’ [Relevance of the documentary to the knowledge of Portuguese reality, history and culture.] These two points present a problematic paradox. As this thesis has argued, the characteristics of the cinema present in film festivals are usually very different from those of the films consumed by the masses. Although all films eventually aim to sell and make as much profit as possible, it is accepted that cinematographic works channelled to the festival circuit constitute a niche in the broader global cinema market. Since the presence in these festivals is a major criterion for winning state support, it is logical to assume that these regulations not only financially assisted but also encouraged this type of cinema above any other manifestation that did not fit this category. In this context it should be stressed that the representation of national values and iconography, a highly prized element in film festivals and one that is almost mandatory for beginners and documentary makers, potentially orientates the career of any Portuguese director towards the ‘marginal side’ of the film market and production from the start. This generates a vicious cycle. The system was structured

²⁰⁸ This is from the 316/96, but it is in everything identical to what is imprinted in the 314/96.

as if the making of a film with art-house characteristics was a precondition for film production in Portugal, especially when considering that, without a proportion of the costs being covered by state support, it would not normally be feasible to carry out such an enterprise with a minimum of technical quality. It is true that the number of spectators is also taken into account. However, this factor is not nearly as pervasive and ubiquitous in the legal documents as the one concerning a specific approach to film. Furthermore, it seemed to be an unrealistic expectation to wait for the spontaneous birth of a self-sustaining industry out of films that did not usually generate profits.

Before continuing chronologically with the reading of the laws, a reference should also be made to bill 315/96, concerning co-productions. The first of its kind, this legal document set out to bring this part of production under the control of the state as well. As is described in the preamble and throughout the document, it aimed to create beneficial environment, through financial assistance, for the production of foreign feature films (in the sense that producers and directors are European citizens and/or from Portuguese-speaking countries) in Portugal, in association with Portuguese nationals, technical establishments, and teams. Therefore, this represented a significant step in international relations towards the opening of Portuguese facilities and human resources to external financing, and an opportunity for Portugal to increase its presence on the map of the global cinema market.

After the 1996 legislative wave, the plot thickened in 1998, with the advent of the digital and the multimedia, as the government's ministry of culture once more marked its position by closing IPACA and creating the Institute for Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM). Another episode of the government's saga to appropriate under the same, single, central structure everything concerning the moving image, bill n° 408/98, issued on 21 December 1998, argued that the objectives and competence of IPACA were outdated and decreed its substitution by a more comprehensive institution. At this point, it should be recalled that ICAM (as IPACA was, and previously IPC) was the legal instrument of power through which the government could now extend its influence and control these sectors. This jurisdiction required a proper body of tutelage. Thus, in this context, the normal course of events was that, with time, new structures would be created (or old ones reformulated) in order to embrace emerging artistic practices which were unregulated, as permitted by technological advance.

Despite the similarities of ICAM to its predecessor, one major alteration in the functioning of the internal organisation should be underlined. Effectively, Article 22 of the bill n° 408/98 brought about the split of the department for cinema, audiovisual and multimedia into two organic units: there was to be one division to support creation, and the other to support promotion. In this way energies could be directly channelled to each type of function. Ultimately, this investment in an independent section dedicated only to the promotion (the recognition of the importance of the ‘image’ of a product in its wider marketability) was a measure that was clearly targeted at combating the lack of national and international visibility of Portuguese cinema – and was probably motivated by the financial success enjoyed by recent films produced by SIC and TVI. Arguably, alongside the professionalisation of the sector, the active participation of the television channels in many co-productions, as well as other factors inherent to the phase of economic prosperity and stability experienced by the country towards the end of the 1990s may have contributed to the positive results in Portuguese cinema during the subsequent years.

In fact, the new set of legislation in 2001 begins with a self-indulgent note. Combined with a boastful display of numbers (it was optimistic indeed in quantitative terms: so much and so diverse a cinema had never been made before in Portugal), expressions such as the following attest to that congratulatory posture: ‘Trata-se de um balanço claramente positivo, revelador da bondade e sucesso da aposta feita na diversidade.’ [It is clearly a positive balance, revealing the quality and success of the investment made in diversity], ‘Pode hoje concluir-se, sem favor, que a aposta no crescente apoio público à produção das curtas metragens de ficção foi ganha’ [It can be concluded at this point, without bias, that the bet made in the increasing of public support for the production of short fiction films was won], ‘[...] Mas, é justo reconhecê-lo, foi ultrapassada a situação em que a viabilização de todos os projectos de filmes de longa metragem nacionais, sem excepção, só podia contar com o apoio financeiro do Estado como única entidade de rendimento.’ [...] Yet, it is fair to acknowledge that the situation in which all feature films projects, without exception, could count solely on the financial support of the state, as being the single source of income, has been solved.]

During 2001 the government, still headed by the Socialist Party (in its second term of office), published eight new bills concerning the regulation of financial assistance to cinematic works. These were: bill n° 5/2001, from 5 February 2001,

concerned with co-production in Portuguese-speaking countries; bill n° 255/2001, from 24 March, designed to regulate the selective support offered to feature films; bill n° 481/2001, from 10 May, on first works; bill 482/2001, also from 10 May, designed to determine the mechanisms governing direct assistance to feature films; bill n° 1168/2001, from 4 October, explaining the selective aid provided for short films; bill n° 1165/2001, also from 4 October, concerning animated films; bill n° 1166/2001, again from 4 October, regarding selective funding for the production of documentaries; and bill 1167/2001, included in the same *Diário da República* as the previous three, which was concerned with assistance for research and development of documentaries.²⁰⁹ Additionally, bill n° 483/2001 was also approved, on the translation of culturally relevant works to DVD format, with the intention of disseminating and making Portuguese films (among others) accessible via domestic consumption – this, as many other bills, was put into practice with several limitations, due to constraints relating to human and economic resources.

The majority of these bills were again motivated by the government's desire to regulate situations threatening to escape their control and to make it clear that these bills were subject to ICAM's jurisdiction. Some further refinement of the funding processes and concerns to create clearer wording for some bills were also evident. Paradigmatic of this was the inclusion of a scoring system in the selection criteria for first works and feature films, as well as the disappearance from the bill on short films of the need to include a c.v., as had been stipulated in previous bills (in practice, though, this discrimination would still be applied, given that the c.v.'s of the director and producer were still to be taken into account). This last issue was, however, maintained in bill n° 482/2001. In fact, it would only be removed in the near future, with the publishing of bill n° 317/2003.

As for the regulations for the funding of feature films, two points should be borne in mind. The first is the partial return of the discourse, adopted by the Socialist Party government, of the preparation of the necessary conditions for the implementation of an industry without state intervention. Indeed, as stated in the preamble to bill n° 482/2001: 'É ainda longo o caminho para se alcançar a desejável auto-sustentação da produção cinematográfica' [We are still a long way off from achieving the desirable aim of a self-sustaining film industry.] A little ahead, Articles

²⁰⁹ It deserves to be mentioned that, on 30 October 2000, was published the first regulation on direct assistance for documentaries (ordinance n° 1060/2000).

1 and 2 of the same document make it transparently clear that any assistance offered should have a budget already containing external contributions. The second point is the investment in the strengthening of the production process emphasised in bill n° 255/2001. The most noteworthy alteration introduced by this bill was the possibility of the release of part of the funds at a pre-shooting phase.

In March 2002 the governance of the country switched to a right-wing coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the People's Party (CDS-PP). The elaboration of new regulations concerning cinema again occurred about one year after the change of government. This happened through the publishing of the monolithic bill n° 317/2003, from 17 April (republished and revised with minor changes three months later, on 29 July – 653/2003). This document was designed with two main objectives in mind: to gather in a single legal document all the regulations concerning every modality of financial assistance offered to first works, short and feature films;²¹⁰ and to introduce alterations in the selection criteria and chronological procedures.

As an increasing number of Portuguese directors and producers (a consequence of the entrance of cinema as a field of study in the higher education system) strove to make films in the country, the natural tendency was to add elements to evaluation for funding while narrowing its terms. Thus, bill n° 635/2003 provides new guidelines for the jury in their deliberations. Even though the bill does not significantly change the criteria (the main criteria used were still the track records of producer and director, along with the technical and artistic quality of the script or its potential to communicate with an audience), it attempted once more to reduce subjectivity by the greater distribution of assessed elements, employing a mathematical formula for the individual weighting of criteria. This was, ultimately an attempt to make the funding process more rigorous and more sophisticated.

4.8 – 2004 onwards: a new law and a new regulation: new perspectives for Portuguese cinema?

On 18 August 2004, in the aftermath of governmental restructuring following the resignation of Prime Minister Durão Barroso, the Assembly of the Republic ordered the publication of bill n° 42/2004, on cinematographic art and the audiovisual. As

²¹⁰ With regard to documentaries, the ordinance n° 878/2003, from 20 August 2003, is published with essentially the same purposes of the ordinance n° 317/2003 described above, but adapted to the context of the legislation on documentaries.

this is a document approved by a parliamentary majority, and not just a bill issued by the administration, it did not contain a preamble summarising the context, purpose and contents of the bill. It begins by defining what, in the eyes of the legal system, is constituted by a cinematic work, an audiovisual work, and a filmic and audiovisual activity – the latter is a new category including works not covered by the first two terms. There was followed by a thorough rewrite of all the existing parameters concerning these two sectors. The structural aspects altered included: the revision of the status of national cinematic or audiovisual work to include a greater share of Portuguese participation; the reorganisation of the mandatory register of audiovisual and cinema companies; the implementation of a 5 percent tax on the revenues of pay-per-view television channels, and a 2.5 percent tax on tickets, while maintaining the existing duties on advertising (all these fees would be channelled directly into an investment fund dedicated to the fostering of the sectors); and, last but not least, the decision that the producer was the only legal entity eligible to apply for financial assistance, thus withdrawing that right from the directors.

Some of these measures were fiercely contested by João Mário Grilo, an ardent supporter of the ‘dissidence’ of Portuguese cinema, who believes this law was ‘feita de costas voltadas para os cineastas [...]’ [made with its back turned to the filmmakers] capable of creating a new cinematography and bringing Portuguese cinema closer to the ‘linguagem falada pelo cinema americano na generalidade das cinematografias do mundo.’ [language spoken by American cinema in the generality of global cinematographies] (Grilo 2006, 33). Grilo argued that the bill intended to create a self-sustaining industry, at the mercy of stronger markets, and that it sought to do so by elevating the status of the producer (traditionally one of the most money-driven figures of the field) to the privileged intermediary between the State and cinematic activity. Exposing his hopes and fears, Grilo went even further by stating that the main problem of this law was that: ‘ameaça definir um conjunto de novos protagonistas, novas regras e, sobretudo, novos filmes’ [it threatens to define a set of new protagonists, new rules, and, principally, new films] (Grilo 2006, 33). To some extent, the subtext of Grilo’s comment seems to be that not only is he aware of the existence of factions of filmmakers and producers, at whom this law may be targeted – factions prepared to question the old canons and modify the aesthetics of Portuguese cinema – but that he also believes this wind of change should not be encouraged by the State. Ultimately, for Grilo, all this meant a one-way trip towards

the hegemony of the American model. Indeed, the emergence of a new generation at the turn of the century had led to some innovations to the evolution of Portuguese cinema. The doubt remains, however, as to whether this new state of affairs was a direct consequence of the above-mentioned policies or whether it had been brought about by a new group of individuals, heirs to an auteurist approach to cinema but historically and ideologically distanced from the Cinema Novo and the myths of the Portuguese School.

Finally, on 15 November 2006, the legislation for 42/2004 was thoroughly completed by the coming into force of law of law-decree n° 227/2006. This very long document (16 pages), in line with the one it superseded, combined in one place all the fundamental regulation on the cinematographic and audiovisual sectors, especially the funding programmes. The modalities and parameters of the funding programme remained unaltered. Additionally, this law incorporated the regulations governing the economic strategy for the investment fund for the cinema and audiovisual (FICA) works. It set an initial investment of one hundred million Euros, and stipulated that the fund would last for seven years, of which five would correspond to a phase of investment and two to a period of disinvestment. This option was chosen to try once more to insert the economy of cinematic practices within the broader economic panorama of Portugal, ideally reaching all possible participants, ranging from specialised technicians and artists to medium and small companies involved in the process of making, distributing and exhibiting films.

Regarding the incumbencies of the state and the aims of the law, the preamble read as follows:

Assim, no presente decreto-lei, o Estado assume claramente, por um lado, as suas responsabilidades na protecção e apoio à actividade artística na área do cinema e do áudio-visual, reconhecendo que a preservação e afirmação do património e das identidades culturais exige políticas públicas que subtraíam os bens culturais à condição de meras mercadorias [...] Por outro lado, porém, é criado simultaneamente, através do referido fundo de investimento, um instrumento complementar, que contempla a dimensão económica do sector do cinema e do áudio-visual e a necessidade de promover a sua sustentabilidade, designadamente através do estímulo ao investimento e participação do sector privado no desenvolvimento dessa indústria [...] [Thus, in the present law-decree, the state clearly assumes, on the one hand, its responsibilities in the protection and support of the artistic activity in the area of the cinema and the audiovisual, recognising that the preservation and affirmation of the heritage, as well as the cultural identities, demand public policies to subtract the cultural goods from the conditions of

mere merchandise [...] On the other hand, however, there is simultaneously created, through the investment fund, a complementary instrument, that contemplates the economic dimension of the cinema and audiovisual sectors on the same grounds as the necessity to promote their sustainability, namely through a stimulus to the investment and participation of the private sector in the development of this industry].

In a close reading, Paulo Leite highlights the ‘bizarre’ nature of this text. Effectively, the state considered the mechanisms of commerce to be harmful to the purity of the arts and cultural manifestations, while, in the same paragraph, it appeared to stress the importance of external entities and the desire to create policies in order to attract private funding, i.e. from the market. (Leite 2013, 480) What lies, to some extent, behind this paradox is the no less paradoxical idea that market and culture are incompatible, based as it is on the concept that, from the moment a work is accepted and consumed by the market, it is distorted through this appropriation. In Leite’s view, the legislation was self-contradictory and even left open the possibility that the state could virtually finance 100 percent of the budget of a film with this regulation: ‘A estratégia para o cinema português é não haver estratégia e, em muitos domínios, estamos onde estávamos há 20 anos.’ [The strategy for Portuguese cinema is there is no strategy. In many domains we are where we were 20 years ago.] (Leite 2013, 486). Finally, there should be a mention of section III of Chapter I of the law 227/2006, which is dedicated exclusively to the support provided for distribution, exhibition and the participation/organisation of film festivals. This was the first time that a law mentioned support for film festivals. Although no values or percentages concerning the amount of state contribution were specified, it confirmed that it was within the competence of the ICAM to consider and deliberate about requests for aid in these fields.

The decade ended with a final major event: the extinguishing of ICAM to give way to the establishment of yet another body of regulation, the Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual (ICA), via bill 95/2007, issued on 29 March 2007. This restructuring left many of the premises of the previous institution unaltered, the only major difference being the drop of the confusing multimedia component and the attempt to enhance the articulation between FICA and the body governing cinematic activity. Reprising some previous policies, bill 95/2007 incorporated an acknowledgement of the legacy of the 7/71 law: ‘A missão e as atribuições gerais definidas para o ICA, I. P., colocam-no inequivocamente na continuidade dos

organismos públicos que, a partir das bases estabelecidas pela Lei n.º 7/71, de 7 de Dezembro, asseguraram a intervenção do Estado no sector da cinematografia em Portugal' [The mission and general competences defined for the ICA, I. P., place it unequivocally in continuity with public institutions which, from the bases established by the 7/71 law, from 7 December, assure state intervention in the cinematic activity in Portugal]. Despite changes over the years and despite oscillations in funding, in 2007, the pillars of the relationship between state and cinema were still in the same place.

4.9 – Final remarks

Regardless of the amount of money injected into Portugal's film industry and the active financial intervention of the state throughout the years, with a few honourable exceptions, the films did not reach a satisfactory (even by the standards set by legislators) number of spectators (when compared to other films in the same market). Even though some bills expressed concern for issues such as marketing and distribution, their practical implementation remained problematic due to the lack of available funds, delays in further regulation, and a generalised bureaucratic confusion.

As discussed above, the problems facing the Portuguese film industry go far deeper than any putative lack of technical quality or aesthetic genius in any given set of films. The problems, to a great extent, relate directly to the socio-cultural issues mentioned in Chapter II, the peripheral (at many levels) circumstances of the country as analysed in Chapter III, the cultural consumption habits of the Portuguese public, the lack of investment in marketing and, above all, conflicts with the distributors. In this sense, film policies were constantly updated by successive governments in continuous attempts to avoid the failure of the Portuguese film industry or to find ways of implementing what the previous legislation had not manage to carry out. At the same time, we have noted a tendency to obstruct the apparatuses and mechanisms of the economy of cinema, as suggested by offering financial assistance to non-profitable films, as well as creating taxation imposed by force of law. Instead of simultaneously applying measures designed to improve the visual literacy of the public (in other words, orientating audiences towards a better receptivity for the products it had financially supported), the state often eschewed proactive educational initiatives and opted to draw the line of its responsibilities at the products (i.e. the

films) themselves in terms of financial assistance.²¹¹

Furthermore, the state always demonstrated concern about the cultural quality of Portuguese cinema, yet in an inconsequential manner, given that it is an entity devoid of critical judgement, it assumed the position from 1971 onwards of supporting what can internationally be called the practice of art-house cinema in Portugal, an artistic manifestation with roots in European new waves of post-war cinema. In this context, the attainment of a better international outlook for Portuguese cinema within this restricted field became one of the major goals. This happened to such an extent that the efficacy of a particular law or bill could be measured by this indicator. To a great extent, this obsession justified the continuing support of specific types of cinema.

There has clearly been an effort on the part of successive governments to adapt the legislation to different economic, historical and political contexts. Additionally, there has been concern expressed about the quality and clarity of the wording of the legal documents designed to support the Portuguese film industry, as well as concerns raised about the transparency of the competitions, the impartiality of the juries, the criteria, and the need for more objectivity in the assessments. However, whereas the issuing of new legislation has been regular and prolific, the same cannot be said of their actual impact. Some of the bills seem, indeed, to be more statements of power from the administration in office than real political interventions. The lack of political will to open up new avenues and experiment with different formulae has been a longstanding problem. All the above-mentioned bills have managed to keep Portuguese cinema alive. Yet the desire to emancipate film-making from the economic aegis of the state was (perhaps unsurprisingly, considering all the inconsistencies and contradictions) dropped and, what is more, seemed never to have been desired in any case by many filmmakers of the 'dissident' cinema movement.

In 2010, almost 40 years after the revolution and the issuing of the 7/71 law, a major crisis occurred in the Portuguese film industry when, at the height of the economic crisis, the ICA nearly went bankrupt.²¹² One year earlier, the Portuguese Association of Filmmakers reiterated their accusations that a 'glaring suffocation' was

²¹¹ In fact the first Plano Nacional de Cinema [National Cinema Initiative] would not appear until 2013, via bill 15377/2013.

²¹² Coelho 2010. http://sol.sapo.pt/inicio/Cultura/Interior.aspx?content_id=2586

disturbing cinematic activity in the country,²¹³ even though almost as much Portuguese cinema was produced in the first decade of the century than in the 1980s and 1990s combined.²¹⁴ The state of affairs for the film industry in this decade has an uncanny similarity with how it was back in the 1960s. This was suggested when the writer, Alexandra Lucas Coelho, in April 2014, at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, on the occasion of receiving the Portuguese Writers Association prize for best novel, and before a full auditorium of intellectuals and representatives from the government, shook the walls of the very same institution that, 50 years earlier, had supported the very existence of Portuguese New Cinema when she stated:

[Este país] é de quem faz arte apesar do mercado, de quem luta para que haja cinema, de quem não cruzou os braços quando o Governo no poder estava a acabar com o cinema em Portugal. Eu ouvi realizadores e produtores portugueses numa conferência de imprensa no Festival do Rio de Janeiro contarem aos jornalistas presentes como 2012 ia ser o ano sem cinema em Portugal. Eu fui vendo, à distância, autores, escritores, artistas sem dinheiro para pagarem dívidas à Segurança Social, luz, água, renda de casa. [(This country) is of those who produce art despite the market; of those who fight so there may be cinema; of those who did not fold their arms when the government in office was putting an end to cinema in Portugal. I heard Portuguese directors and producers at a press conference in Rio de Janeiro telling the journalists that 2012 would be a year without cinema in Portugal. I saw, from a distance, authors, writers, artists without money to pay their social security debts, electricity and water bills, and house rent] (Coelho 2014).

Whether one agrees with the economic interference of the state and/or other institutions in the life of a liberal business, what seems to be implied in this statement is that, even in 2014, the majority of Portuguese filmmakers and producers were waiting for government support to carry out their plans and were still at the mercy of the concept of good cinema as envisioned by a handful of people. Thus, on the one hand, they remain extremely dependent, while, on the other hand, the lack of interest from potential investors persists or is dependent on state funding – and, as expected, the Portuguese government is held to account and is the main body responsible for questions of art and culture.

Ultimately, this thesis will reiterate that it is of the utmost importance to

²¹³ Lusa 2009. <http://www.publico.pt/cultura/noticia/associacao-portuguesa-de-realizadores-diz-que-situacao-no-sector-do-cinema-e-de-asfixia-gritante-1366048>

²¹⁴ See Graphs 6 and 7 from Chapter I.

understand Portuguese cinema through the laws and structures that have governed it. Although they represent only a part of the explanation for the unsuccess of the Portuguese film industry, public policies do hold an important share of the responsibility. With this critical history of the legislation of Portuguese cinema, this thesis hopes to have contributed in clarifying the correspondence and the latent relationship between power and cinematic practice.

General Conclusions

‘Lento, no luar lá fora da noite lenta, o vento agita coisas que fazem sombra a mexer.’
[Slow, in the moonlight outside in the slow night, the wind stirs things that cast shadows while
moving.]

The Book of Disquiet – Fernando Pessoa

‘Neste país fazer Cinema representa um acto de fé.’
[In this country filmmaking is an act of faith.]

O Rio do Ouro – Paulo Rocha

As Fernando Pessoa’s epigraph suggests, there is something about the status and spectral presence of Portuguese cinema that inevitably stirs one’s curiosity; there is a somewhat disquieting doubt that persists about its mysterious absence, about a practice that is there without actually being clearly visible, and that is while it is not. As this thesis argued so far, Portuguese cinema was a play of light and shadow, in both literal²¹⁵ and figurative senses. This seems to be one of those cases in which absence acquires the inverse proportion of presence, and of which Vargas,²¹⁶ Spivak,²¹⁷ and Santos²¹⁸ have been telling us. In other words, if on the one hand the very presence — the physical existence and cultural impact that should provide the *raison d’être* for the objects — and visibility of Portuguese cinema is ‘difficult’, on the other hand its invisibility is rather conspicuous.

Questions surrounding this matter needed to be addressed and deconstructed. Indeed, although Camus²¹⁹ and Sartre²²⁰ taught us the importance of not overlooking the roles of chance and absurd in daily life, it would be naïve to believe that the absence of Portuguese cinema was the fruit of fortuitous events. The economic circumstance of Portuguese cinema described in Chapter I and further explored throughout the thesis can be explained in great part by the joint analysis of the modes of production of Portuguese cinema and elements related to consumption habits and market trends. The investigation about the place of Portuguese cinema

²¹⁵ An allusion to Maxim Gorky’s expression ‘Kingdom of Shadows’.

²¹⁶ Vargas 2010.

²¹⁷ Spivak 1988, 271-313.

²¹⁸ Santos 2008, 87-125.

²¹⁹ Camus 1975.

²²⁰ Sartre 2013.

within Portuguese culture assessed the impact and clarified the tensions between high and low culture in Portugal. In its turn, the study on visibility provided contextual information on the market in which the Portuguese film industry operates. Last but not least, the dissection of legislation carried out explained in great part why the object of study followed the path it did and became so firmly established. In this moment, at the conclusion of this research project, all points converge in a summary conclusion and final comments, therefore making this thesis come full circle.

It is worth underlining once again that this thesis arose from the need to address an observable, real-life problem (the ‘unsuccess’ of the Portuguese film industry) about which very little was known or had not been systematised in a research project. Indeed, the idea behind this investigation was to complement studies on Portuguese cinema, by tackling it as a material and commercial phenomenon. Besides providing a study of the legislation affecting Portuguese cinema, this thesis’ ‘angle of attack’ also relied on a new statistical analysis of screenings, viewings and admissions of Portuguese film both in Portugal and abroad – a rare feature in Portuguese cinema studies – either by bringing together dispersed figures or producing them directly. This was done in order to help tell the story of a cinematic practice and demystify various hypotheses and claims about the Portuguese film industry that did not have statistical back up.

This thesis covered three major topics that directly affected the commercial performance of Portuguese films. Through its methodology and sources, this thesis tried to present original conclusions and bring to the table new tools to discuss the past (and, to a certain extent, the present) of Portuguese cinema. Several gaps remain to be filled about the history of Portuguese films, including those relating to public policies, and filmmakers – and perhaps future researchers might find fruitful some of the points or passages of this thesis. Many elements (especially in what concerns audiences and the reception of Portuguese cinema, or other economic elements, such as the budgets of Portuguese films) are still difficult to gain access to or are now irrecoverable at this point in time. Hopefully, there will be conditions in the future to unearth more new (old) information, and bring fresh points of view to complement the findings of this research project.

In addition, it should be stressed that this thesis is also a study on the broader Portuguese cultural context and its evolution, as well as on the art cinema circuit.

From the start, this project did not conceive cinema as something isolated; it was based on the premise that a variety of perspectives could reveal facets yet unseen and therefore believed that many questions about Portuguese cinema could only be answered by exploring extra-cinematic elements such as laws, cultural atmosphere and consumption, and the relation between films and their place in society. It is hoped that the present work contributes to knowledge by raising new questions, providing some answers, and inculcating the desire to see this object of study from a different perspective.

Chapter II provided historical background and specified the artistic resources that came to characterise the predominant style of filmmaking in Portugal. This thesis confirmed that Portuguese films had the tendency to rely on themes related to Portuguese history and/or Portuguese identity. Portuguese ‘Cinema Novo’ was seen as a vehicle to comment on the country, was constructed on the pillars of Portuguese high-culture, and did not see financial profit as important. Furthermore, in great part because Portuguese contemporary film directors tried to emulate foreign new waves, the majority of their films tackled themes in a very specific fashion: they adopted an artistic approach, and oftentimes their films were mood-pieces conveying to audiences the impression of dark atmospheres and serious tonalities. These traits, together with an ‘artisanal’ presentation that brought to the fore technological limitations, placed Portuguese films at odds with mainstream films and TV series from abroad – mainly American films and Brazilian telenovelas. In a way, the fact that some Portuguese films with less artisanal characteristics managed to capture audiences, as well as the statistics and surveys quoted, proved that there was a correlation between the main contents of Portuguese art films and their lack of popular acclaim. This analysis focused on intra-cinematic elements and was able to ascertain that most Portuguese were not particularly fond of their filmmakers, although this does not tell the whole story.

The first part of Chapter III shifted away from consumption quotas and focused on the history of the internationalisation of Portuguese films. Even in the festival sphere, the stage *par excellence* for Portugal’s art-cinema, it is not clear that Portuguese cinema was in any way central or an artistic powerhouse capable of affirming itself abroad and showcase more than a handful of filmmakers. In that sense, despite the filmmakers’ and producers’ best intentions, the cinematic impact of Portugal in various cultural centres was predicated on the peripheral role occupied

by Portugal in the broader picture. The reasoning developed by this thesis demonstrated that valuation in the art cinema circuit was dependent on criteria and rules set by central powers (i.e. significant, A-list film festivals) that exercised their privilege by bestowing artistic prestige upon those they deemed worthy.

The second part of Chapter III carried out an analysis of another crucial aspect concerning the visibility of Portuguese film: distribution. The main conclusion is that a series of events constricted the circulation of Portuguese cinema. This was due to four main points: the lack of interest from big distribution companies – which in turn control a large portion of the market; the lack of a solid and assertive artistic prestige to leverage further interest from conspicuous players in the international art-film circuit (i.e. producers, distributors, and exhibitors); the demise of the art-film theatre network in Portugal associated with problems with finding space in alternative channels, such as television, pay-per-view, or VHS/DVD; the prevalent disregard for the importance of marketing (that eventually proved fruitful in the 1990s and led to success for some Portuguese films) or meagre resources to present films and tease audiences; and finally, the state's lack of investment in the final stages of a practice financed by public funds.

Chapter III also presented a new overview of the exhibition of Portuguese cinema across Europe and some parts of Eurasia. It established that, in spite of the fact that Portuguese films had an international tendency, its main market was a domestic one. Everything assessed in Chapter III led to the conclusion that Portuguese cinema was, indeed, marked not just by a 'difficult'/low visibility, but also by problems with availability.

Chapter IV dealt with laws and politics, which were crucial determining aspects of the life of a highly-regulated activity such as Portuguese cinema, where production is in great part supported by the state – or, at least, dependant on legislation concerning taxes and distribution of the funds. This new study of the legislation provided an answer as to why some problems persisted throughout the years, despite the many *nuances* and small changes that occurred in the aesthetics and commercial dynamics of Portuguese cinema. As the final section of that chapter argued, legislation shares some responsibility for the unsuccess of the Portuguese film industry given its influence over developments (or maintenance) in style and in the modes of production. The main conclusion from this chapter is that cinema laws in Portugal since 1971 have produced a profound impact. At first, the law established

a type of cinema with artistic premises, averse to the notion of profit, and gave power to the Cinema Novo generation. Afterwards, with the imposition of taxation on box office revenues, legislation widened the gap between major, foreign distributors/exhibitors on the one hand and Portuguese producers/filmmakers on the other. Some laws were also pivotal in maintaining and supporting the initial paradigm and refused to produce pathways to effectively make a (supposedly envisioned and desired) transition from a demi-*dirigiste* model to a *laissez-faire* model of the film industry.²²¹

The results of this research project show that poor commercial results were the product of an unfortunate combination of both intra- and extra-cinematic factors. On the one hand, most Portuguese films did not appeal to audiences for stylistic and thematic reasons. The fact that films and other audiovisual products with very different characteristics were subject to mass consumption during the same period only contributed to the stretching of the distance between audiences and Portuguese filmmakers. On the other hand, due to distribution problems and budget constraints, Portuguese cinema did not really stand a chance: audiences' reactions could not be tested because Portuguese cinema was not widely available in the first place. All of the above-mentioned factors led to the absence of Portuguese cinema in international circuits and also produced its fragile economic viability.

Ultimately, the histories of the commerce and circulation of Portuguese cinema are filled with episodes of the lack of success and could be presented in this conclusion as such. However, this is not the final message this thesis wants to convey. The ability to survive despite so many problems, the 'can-do' attitude of so many filmmakers, who are passionate about their work, and the longevity of this marginal cinematic practice proved that Portuguese cinema has been a success story in the art world. The poet Fernando Pessoa is author of a well-known verse that, in a way, seems to encapsulate this history of this artistic impulse and perseverance: 'Deus quer, o homem sonha, a obra nasce' [God wants, the man dreams, the work is born]. In a way, Portuguese auteurs were men and women capable of dreaming and imagining, and it was their *esprit de corps* at a vital time and their willpower (with or without divine providence) that led to the existence of this 'miracle' that Portuguese cinema was – and still is.

²²¹ For more on these two film industry models, including a breakdown of their characteristics, see Miller, Govil, et.al. 2005, 3-7.

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Appendix 1

Year	Number of Portuguese films screenings ¹	Number of Portuguese feature films (fiction) produced ²	Number of Portuguese feature films (fiction) commercially released in Portugal ³	Number of admissions to Portuguese feature films commercially released in Portugal ⁴	Total number of admissions (in thousands) ⁵
1974	x	x	x	x	35,684
1975	x	3	3	7,731 ⁶	41,593
1976	x	x	5	33,028 ⁷	42,812
1977	x	9	3	16,312	39,154
1978	x	21	4	72,301	34,038
1979	39,792	6	3	36,332	32,609
1980	41,283	9	6	98,379	30,761
1981	45,194	9	7	346,228	30,339
1982	36,772	8	4	168,143	27,311
1983	34,209	4	5	117,847	24,278
1984	26,656	8	7	526,423	18,795
1985	18,119	9	4	14,720	18,984
1986	10,128	6	4	58,511	18,394
1987	18,055	6	5	209,730	16,931
1988	8,934	9	6	70,033	13,704
1989	4,944	7	4	27,450	11,909
1990	3,199	8	5	124,813	9,593
1991	3,818	8	9	65,913	8,234
1992	3,575	9	11	169,607	7,848
1993	1,496	16	9	116,036	7,786
1994	4,472	10	10	309,054	7,133
1995	2,390	14	12	375,135	7,397
1996	5,944	8	9	353,941	10,447
1997	4,971	12	7	454,287	13,708
1998	8,154	14	13	575,826	14,873
1999	14,166	13	15	408,367	17,025
2000	9,812	10	13	237,361	17,914
2001	5,005	17	12	85,542	19,471
2002	7,460	12	15	219,891	19,478
2003	10,310	17	17	159,875	18,722
2004 ⁸	10,882	15	20	208,708	17,128
2005	11,994	15	12	464,161	15,754
2006	15,727	17	18	382,697	16,367
2007	17,554	12	14	439,787	16,318
2008	6,920	14	14	213,001	15,979
2009	21,112	15	18	341,933	15,705
2010	11,930	22	15	275,090	16,560

Sources: Instituto do Cinema e Audiovisual/ Pordata/ Observatory for Cultural Activities -Portuguese Ministry of Culture

x – Information not available.

¹ <http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Cinema+exibições+sessões+total+e+por+pa%C3%ADs+de+origem+dos+filmes-321>.

² Source: information provided by ICA.

³ This excludes short films and documentaries of unspecified length. Until 2003 (included) the information came from the table on Appendix 2, from 2004 onwards the information source is: <http://www.ica-ip.pt/pt/downloads/filmes-estreados/>. (ICA 2017).

⁴ The total is the result of the calculation of the sum of the number of admissions to each feature film commercially released in that year (animation and documentaries included). This information was provided by the ICA and can be found in Appendix 2. From 2004 onwards information can be found in ICA 2017. In order to be coherent with the number of films premiered, the number of admissions to short films is not accounted for. Also, only feature films that were in some way supported by the Portuguese Institute for Cinema (first IPC, then IPACA, then ICAM, and finally ICA) are included in this calculation. Thus, any films that were produced entirely with external funding are excluded. These, however, a very small minority.

⁵ <http://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Cinema+recintos++ecrãs++sessões+e+espectadores-184>. Note that numbers are not exact – they are rounded up (i.e. in 2010 the real total number of admissions according to ICA was 16,559,731, but the numbers appear in Pordata as 16,560,000)

⁶ Information on the number of admissions to two of the Portuguese films released in 1975 is unknown.

⁷ Information on the number of admissions to two of the Portuguese films released in 1976 is unknown.

⁸ Until 2003, the distributors provided the data concerning the number of admissions to the state organisation in charge of supervising the cinematographic activity. From 2004 onwards, this information was communicated directly by the exhibitors.

Appendix 2

Commercial Release of Portuguese Feature Films: 1975-2010

Source: Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual²²²

YEAR	TITLE	TYPE	DIRECTOR	PRODUCER	DISTRIBUTOR	VIEWERS
1975	Brandos Costumes	FICTION	Alberto Seixas Santos	CPC	Filmes Castello Lopes	7 731
1975	Cartas na Mesa	FICTION	Rogério Ceitil	CPC	Filmes Castello Lopes	?
1975	Benilde ou a Virgem Mãe	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Tobis	Filmes Lusomundo	?
1976	Cântico Final	FICTION	Manuel Guimarães	Manuel Guimarães	IPC	?
1976	Deus, Pátria , Autoridade	FICTION	Rui Simões	Rui Simões	IPC/Rui Simões	22 188
1976	O Funeral do Patrão	FICTION	Eduardo Geda	RTP	Animatógrafo	505
1976	Trás-os-Montes	FICTION	António Reis e M. Cordeiro	CPC	V O Filmes	10 335
1976	Barrinhos	FICTION	Luís Filipe Costa	Prole Filme	IPC	?
1977	Os Demónios de Alcácer Quibir	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Tobis	Animatógrafo	10 978
1977	O Princípio da Sabedoria	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Astória Filmes/Cinequipa	772
1977	As Ruínas no Interior	FICTION	José de Sá Caetano	Tobis	Animatógrafo	4 562
1978	A Confederação	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	Cinequanon	Exclusivos Triunfo	19 029
1978	Nós Por Cá Todos Bem	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	CPC	Animatógrafo	15 077
1978	O Rei das Berlengas	FICTION	Artur Semedo	IPC	Filmes Ocidente	30 370
1978	Veredas	FICTION	João César Monteiro	João César Monteiro	V O Filmes	7 825

²²² Number of admissions according to the distributors until 2003, according to the exhibitors from 2004 onwards.

1979	Amor de Perdição	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	IPC	V O Filmes/Ver Filmes	4 058
1979	As Horas de Maria	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Cinequanon	23 969
1979	Recompensa	FICTION	Arthur Duarte	Arthur Duarte	Sofilmes	8 305
1980	Bárbara	FICTION	Alfredo Tropa	RTP	Filmes Lusomundo	35 576
1980	O Diabo Desceu à Vila	FICTION	Teixeira da Fonseca	Teixeira da Fonseca	Imperial Filmes	3 673
1980	Manhã Submersa	FICTION	Lauro António	Lauro António	Sonoro Filme	44 036
1980	O Príncipe com Orelhas de Burro	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Filmes Lusomundo	2 837
1980	A Santa Aliança	FICTION	Eduardo Geada	Eduardo Geada	Distribuidores Reunidos	7 130
1980	Verde Por Fora, Vermelho Por Dentro	FICTION	Ricardo Costa	Diafilme	Doperfilme	5 127
1981	A Culpa	FICTION	António Victorino d'Almeida	António Victorino d'Almeida	Cinequipa/Distrib. Reunidos	13 267
1981	Francisca	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	V O Filmes	Rank Filmes de Portugal	76 132
1981	Kilas, o Mau da Fita	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Filmform	SIF	121 269
1981	Oxalá	FICTION	António Pedro Vasconcelos	V O Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	89 484
1981	Velhos São os Trapos	FICTION	Monique Rutler	Monique Rutler/Filmform	Animatógrafo	483
1981	Bom Povo Português	FICTION	Rui Simões	Rui Simões	Doperfilme/Filme Filmes	10 654
1981	Cerromaior	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	Prole Filme	Doperfilme	34 939
1982	O Chico Fininho	FICTION	Sério Fernandes	Bei Filme	Mundial Filmes	3 817
1982	Conversa Acabada	FICTION	João Botelho	V O Filmes	Rank Filmes de Portugal	14 302
1982	Silvestre	FICTION	João César Monteiro	V O Filmes	Filmes Lusomundo	9 950
1982	A Vida é Bela ...!?	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	Luís Galvão Teles	Filmes Lusomundo	140 074
1983	Dina e Django	FICTION	Solveig Nordlund	Grupo Zero	Talma Filmes	4 637
1983	A Estrangeira	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	V O Filmes	Doperfilme	18 030
1983	Fim de Estação	FICTION	Jaime Silva	V O Filmes	Sacil	696
1983	Um S Marginal	FICTION	José de Sá Caetano	Filmform	Filme Filmes	2 404
1983	Sem Sombra de Pecado	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Filmform	Filmes Lusomundo	92 080

1984	Os Abismos da Meia-Noite	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Filmes Castello Lopes	100 408
1984	O Crime de Simão Bolandas	FICTION	Jorge Brum do Canto	Bourdain de Macedo	Filmes Castello Lopes	4 230
1984	Crónica dos Bons Malandros	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	Fernando Lopes	Filmes Castello Lopes	67 760
1984	Guerra do Miradum	FICTION	Fernando Matos Silva	Cinequipa	Filmes Lusomundo	9 257
1984	Jogo de Mão	FICTION	Monique Rutler	Paisà	Filmes Castello Lopes	16 911
1984	O Lugar do Morto	FICTION	A. Pedro Vasconcelos	A. Pedro Vasconcelos	Mundial Filmes	271 845
1984	Vidas	FICTION	António da Cunha Telles	Animatógrafo	Filmes Lusomundo	56 012
1985	Ana	FICTION	António Reis e M. Cordeiro	António Reis e M. Cordeiro	Filme Filmes	3 233
1985	Ninguém Duas Vezes	FICTION	Jorge Silva Melo	Jorge Silva Melo	Doperfilme	6 761
1985	A Noite e a Madrugada	FICTION	Artur Ramos	Forum	Distribuidores Reunidos	3 006
1985	O Nosso Futebol	FICTION	Ricardo Costa	Diafilme	Doperfilme	1 720
1986	Um Adeus Português	FICTION	João Botelho	João Botelho	Doperfilme	27 676
1986	O Barão de Altamira	FICTION	Artur Semedo	Doperfilme	Doperfilme	11 685
1986	Saudades para D. Genciana	FICTION	Eduardo Geada	Animatógrafo	Filmes Castello Lopes	14 043
1986	O Vestido Cor de Fogo	FICTION	Lauro António	Lauro António	Filmes Lusomundo	5 107
1987	A Balada da Praia dos Cães	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Animatógrafo	Mundial Filmes	81 995
1987	Duma Vez Por Todas	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	Produções Off	Mundial Filmes	28 563
1987	O Meu Caso	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Filmagem	Distribuidores Reunidos	6 918
1987	O Querido Lilás	FICTION	Artur Semedo	Doperfilme	Doperfilme	86 742
1987	Repórter X	FICTION	José Nascimento	José Nascimento	Talma Filmes	5 512
1988	Os Canibais	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Filmagem	Filmes Lusomundo	14 051
1988	Matar Saudades	FICTION	Fernado Lopes	Fernando Lopes	Filmes Lusomundo	1 531
1988	Mensagem	FICTION	Luís Vidal Lopes	A Quimera do Ouro	Filmes Castello Lopes	726
1988	A Mulher do Próximo	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	MGN Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	48 046
1988	Tempos Difíceis	FICTION	João Botelho	João Botelho	SIF	4 448

1988	Três Menos Eu	FICTION	João Canijo	Filmargem	Cinefilme	1 231
1989	Os Emissários de Khalôm	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Filmes Castello Lopes	551
1989	Uma Pedra no Bolso	FICTION	Joaquim Pinto	GER	Atalanta Filmes	1 699
1989	Recordações da Casa Amarela	FICTION	João César Monteiro	GER	Atalanta Filmes	24 592
1989	Relação Fiel e Verdadeira	FICTION	Margarida Gil	Monteiro & Gil	Filmes Lusomundo	608
1990	O Processo do Rei	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Filmargem	Atalanta Filmes	23 149
1990	Filha da Mãe	FICTION	João Canijo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 700
1990	Non ou a Vã Glória de Mandar	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	69 000
1990	Na Pele do Urso	FICTION	Ann & Eduardo Guedes	Eduardo Guedes	Cinefilme	7 164
1990	O Sangue	FICTION	Pedro Costa	Trópico Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	18 800
1991	O Bobo	FICTION	José Álvaro de Morais	Animatógrafo	Animatógrafo	678
1991	A Ilha dos Amores	FICTION	Paulo Rocha	Suma Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 800
1991	O Desejado	FICTION	Paulo Rocha	Suma Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 800
1991	Os Cornos de Cronos	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	MGN Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	4 683
1991	Um Crime de Luxo	FICTION	Artur Semedo	Artur Semedo	Filmes Lusomundo	2 602
1991	Agosto	FICTION	Jorge Silva Melo	Filmargem	Atalanta Filmes	6 200
1991	A Idade Maior	FICTION	Teresa Villaverde	Invicta Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	7 100
1991	A Divina Comédia	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	14 400
1991	Ao Fim da Noite	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	Produções OFF	Filmes Lusomundo	20 650
1992	Nuvem	FICTION	Ana Luísa Guimarães	Trópico Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	44 300
1992	Aqui D' El Rei !	FICTION	António-Pedro Vasconcelos	Opus Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	35 927
1992	Solo de Violino	FICTION	Monique Rutler	Cinequanon	Vitória Filme	2 706
1992	O Inverno em Lisboa	FICTION	?	?	Edifilmes	1 469
1992	O Rei Pasmado	FICTION	Imanol Uribe	?	Atalanta Filmes	55 000
1992	Das Tripas Coração	FICTION	Joaquim Pinto	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 200

1992	No Dia dos Meus Anos	FICTION	João Botelho	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 200
1992	Retrato de Família	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	MGN Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	11 348
1992	O Último Mergulho	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 900
1992	O Dia do Desespero	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 800
1992	Vertigem	FICTION	Leandro Ferreira	Inforfilmes	Filmes Lusomundo	757
1993	Amor e Dedinhos de Pé	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	MGN Filmes	MGN Filmes	25 472
1993	Os Olhos Azuis de Yonta	FICTION	Flora Gomes	Vermédia	Atalanta Filmes	8 500
1993	Chá Forte com Limão	FICTION	António de Macedo	Cinequanon	Filmes Lusomundo	721
1993	O Fim do Mundo	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 800
1993	Encontros Imperfeitos	FICTION	Jorge Marecos Duarte	SP Filmes	Filmes Lusomundo	2 998
1993	A Força do Atrito	FICTION	Pedro Ruivo	MGN Filmes	MGN Filmes	1 746
1993	Aqui na Terra	FICTION	João Botelho	CFPR	Atalanta Filmes	7 800
1993	Vale Abraão	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	38 000
1993	Santa Maria	ANIMATION	Nuno Leonel	GER	Atalanta Filmes	26 999
1994	A Casa dos Espíritos	FICTION	Bille August	Costa do Castelo	Filmes Lusomundo	198 935
1994	Até Amanhã, Mário	FICTION	Solveig Nordlund	Prole Filmes	Vitória Filme	11 000
1994	O Fio do Horizonte	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	CFPR	Atalanta Filmes	3 000
1994	Uma Vida Normal	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	MGN Filmes	Filmes Lusomundo	7 466
1994	Adeus Princesa	FICTION	Jorge Paixão da Costa	Cinequanon	Cinequanon	4 154
1994	Belle Époque	FICTION	?	?	Filmes Castello Lopes	40 139
1994	Longe Daqui	FICTION	João Guerra	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	900
1994	Passagem por Lisboa	FICTION	Eduardo Geda	Animatógrafo	Filmes Lusomundo	4 335
1994	Três Irmãos	FICTION	Teresa Villaverde	GER	Atalanta Filmes	25 000
1994	A Caixa	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	11 000
1994	Os Salteadores	ANIMATION	Abi Feijó	Filmógrafo	Atalanta Filmes	3 125

1995	Casa de Lava	FICTION	Pedro Costa	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	11 000
1995	O Miradouro da Lua	FICTION	Jorge António	Exclusiva	Vitória Filmes	6 148
1995	Eternidade	FICTION	Quirino Simões	Imperial Filmes	Vitória Filmes	3 519
1995	Ao Sul	FICTION	Fernando Matos Silva	Fábrica de Imagens	Filmes Lusomundo	1 582
1995	O Convento	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	35 000
1995	Sinais de Fogo	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	MGN Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	22 481
1995	O Paraíso Perdido	FICTION	Alberto Seixas Santos	Animatógrafo	Atalanta Filmes	2 900
1995	Terra Fria	FICTION	António Campos	Inforfilmes	Filmes Lusomundo	1 963
1995	Adão e Eva	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	MGN Filmes	Filmes Lusomundo	254 925
1995	Lisbon Story	FICTION	Win Wenders	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	16 000
1995	No Recreio dos Grandes	FICTION	Florence Strauss	Costa do Castelo	Filmes Lusomundo	426
1995	Schizophrenia	ANIMATION	Nuno Leonel	GER	Atalanta Filmes	19 191
1996	A Comédia de Deus	FICTION	João César Monteiro	GER	Filmes Castello Lopes	30 069
1996	Pandora	FICTION	António da Cunha Telles	CFPR	Atalanta Filmes	3 200
1996	Corte de Cabelo	FICTION	Joaquim Sapinho	Rosa Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	40 361
1996	Cinco Dias, Cinco Noites	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	44 516
1996	À Flor do Mar	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 400
1996	Party	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 772
1996	Adeus, Pai	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	MGN Filmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	100 461
1996	Mortinho por Chegar a Casa	FICTION	Carlos da Silva	Europa 7	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	100 034
1996	Afirma Pereira	FICTION	Roberto Faenza	Fábrica de Imagens	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	18 128
1997	Os Olhos da Ásia	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 938
1997	Viagem ao Princípio do Mundo	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 535
1997	Inês de Portugal	FICTION	José Carlos de Oliveira	Imagem Real	Filmes Castello Lopes	19 299
1997	Porto Santo	FICTION	Vicente Jorge Silva	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 309

1997	Elas	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	Luís Galvão Teles	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	27 912
1997	Ossos	FICTION	Pedro Costa	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	19 982
1997	Tentação	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	361 312
1998	Le Bassin de John Wayne	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Fábrica de Imagens	Fábrica de Imagens	1 591
1998	Ma'Sin	FICTION	Saguenail	Hélastre	Atalanta Filmes	900
1998	Sapatos Pretos	FICTION	João Canijo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	52 387
1998	O Testamento do Sr Napumoceno	FICTION	Francisco Manso	J.L.Vasconcelos	Filmes Castello Lopes	13 556
1998	Inquietude	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 600
1998	Pesadelo Cor-de-Rosa	FICTION	Fernando Fragata	Virtual Audiovisuais	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	185 472
1998	Os Mutantes	FICTION	Teresa Villaverde	Mutante Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	27 000
1998	A Tempestade da Terra	FICTION	Fernando d'Almeida e Silva	Cinamate	Cinamate	1 028
1998	Zona J	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	246 073
1998	Tráfico	FICTION	João Botelho	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	34 287
1998	Comédia Infantil	FICTION	Solveig Nordlund	Prole Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 000
1998	Po Di Sanguí	FICTION	Flora Gomes	SP Filmes	Uniportugal	932
1998	Requiem	FICTION	Alain Tanner	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	1 000
1999	Fintar o Destino	FICTION	Fernando Vendrell	David & Golias	Uniportugal	2 017
1999	Em Fuga	FICTION	Bruno de Almeida	MGN Filmes	MGN Filmes	7 746
1999	O Rio do Ouro	FICTION	Paulo Rocha	Suma Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	14 500
1999	Longe da Vista	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 534
1999	Jaime	FICTION	António-Pedro Vasconcelos	Fado Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	220 925
1999	A Sombra dos Abutres	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	Inforfilmes	Filmes Castello Lopes	15 315
1999	O Anjo da Guarda	FICTION	Margarida Gil	AS Produções	AS Produções	1 943
1999	Ilhéu de Contenda	FICTION	Leão Lopes	Vermédia	Filmes Castello Lopes	619
1999	A Carta	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	17 428

1999	As Bodas de Deus	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 277
1999	Glória	FICTION	Manuela Viegas	Rosa Filmes	Rosa Filmes	4 245
1999	Inferno	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	84 792
1999	O Judeu	FICTION	Jom Tob Azulay	Animatógrafo	FBF Filmes	17 500
1999	Amor & Cia.	FICTION	Helvécio Raton	Rosa Filmes	FBF Filmes	3 680
1999	Bocage - O Triunfo do Amor	FICTION	Djalma L. Baptista	Animatógrafo	FBF Filmes	1 846
2000	Quando Troveja	FICTION	Manuel Mozos	AS Produções	FBF Filmes	6 013
2000	Mal	FICTION	Alberto Seixas Santos	Rosa Filmes	Columbia Tristar Warner	5 734
2000	Tarde Demais	FICTION	José Nascimento	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	10 000
2000	Capitães de Abril	FICTION	Maria de Medeiros	Mutante Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	110 337
2000	Noites	FICTION	Cláudia Tomaz	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 500
2000	Peixe Lua	FICTION	José Álvaro de Moraes	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	7 500
2000	Kuzz	FICTION	José Pedro Sousa	Alfândega Filmes	Alfândega Filmes	1 465
2000	O Fantasma	FICTION	João Pedro Rodrigues	Rosa Filmes	Kinomania	10 000
2000	Branca de Neve	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 000
2000	Palavra e Utopia	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	23 500
2000	Camarate	FICTION	Luis Filipe Rocha	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	42 018
2000	Hans Staden	FICTION	Luís Alberto Pereira	Jorge Neves Produções	Alfândega Filmes	2 830
2000	A Cidade dos Prodígios	FICTION	Mario Camus	Continentalfilmes	FBF Filmes	10 464
2001	A Raiz do Coração	FICTION	Paulo Rocha	Suma Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 500
2001	Duplo Exílio	FICTION	Artur Ribeiro	AS Produções	FBF Filmes	4 669
2001	Ganhar a Vida	FICTION	João Canijo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	10 100
2001	Frágil Como o Mundo	FICTION	Rita Azevedo Gomes	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	1 600
2001	Vou Para Casa	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	16 300
2001	A Janela	FICTION	Edgar Pêra	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 900

2001	Quem És Tu?	FICTION	João Botelho	39 Degraus	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	3 678
2001	Rasganço	FICTION	Raquel Freire	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	13 000
2001	Finisterre, Onde Termina o Mundo	FICTION	Xavier Villaverde	Fábrica de Imagens	FBF Filmes	8 902
2001	Combat D'Amour en Songe	FICTION	Raoul Ruiz	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	1 200
2001	O Xangô de Baker Street	FICTION	Miguel Faria Jr.	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	6 412
2001	Lena	FICTION	Gonzalo Tapia	Take 2000	FBF Filmes	981
2001	No Quarto de Vanda	DOCUMENTARY	Pedro Costa	Contracosta Produções	Atalanta Filmes	4 300
2002	A Bomba	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	MGN Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	23 099
2002	António, um Rapaz de Lisboa	FICTION	Jorge Silva Melo	Fábrica de Imagens	Fábrica de Imagens	2 516
2002	Água e Sal	FICTION	Teresa Villaverde	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 600
2002	O Gotejar da Luz - Paixão em África	FICTION	Fernando Vendrell	Cinamate	LNK	2 973
2002	Porto da Minha Infância	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 178
2002	O Fato Completo ou à Procura de Alberto	FICTION	Inês de Medeiros	Filmes do Tejo	Atalanta Filmes	1 100
2002	O Delfim	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	37 700
2002	O Aparelho Voador a Baixa Altitude	FICTION	Solveig Nordlund	Filmes do Tejo	FBF Filmes	3 564
2002	Em Volta	FICTION	Ivo Ferreira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	1 750
2002	A Falha	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 850
2002	A Selva	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	Costa do Castelo	Costa do Castelo	80 460
2002	O Princípio da Incerteza	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 150
2002	Esquece Tudo o Que te Disse	FICTION	António Ferreira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	25 650
2002	A Jangada de Pedra	FICTION	George Sluizer	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	19 836
2002	Brava Gente Brasileira	FICTION	Lucia Murat	Costa do Castelo	Vitória Filmes	465
2003	A Mulher que Acreditava ser Presidente dos EUA	FICTION	João Botelho	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	13 561
2003	A Filha	FICTION	Solveig Nordlund	Ambar Filmes	Lusomundo	679
2003	Nha Fala	FICTION	Flora Gomes	Fado Filmes	New Age Entertainment	4 200

2003	A Passagem da Noite	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 155
2003	A Mulher Polícia	FICTION	Joaquim Sapinho	Rosa Filmes	Kino Filmes	1 033
2003	Vai e Vem	FICTION	João César Monteiro	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 302
2003	O Rapaz do Trapézio Voador	FICTION	Fernando Matos Silva	Take 2000	FBF Filmes	7 002
2003	Preto e Branco	FICTION	José Carlos de Oliveira	J.C. de Oliveira	Lusomundo	4 688
2003	Quaresma	FICTION	José Álvaro de Moraes	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 114
2003	Altar	FICTION	Rita Azevedo Gomes	Rita Azevedo Gomes	FBF Filmes	1 023
2003	Xavier	FICTION	Manuel Mozos	Suma Filmes	FBF Filmes	10 121
2003	Um Filme Falado	FICTION	Manoel de Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 218
2003	Os Imortais	FICTION	António-Pedro Vasconcelos	Animatógrafo II	Lusomundo	48 890
2003	Nós	FICTION	Cláudia Tomaz	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 187
2003	O Fascínio	FICTION	José Fonseca e Costa	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	18 000
2003	Joana, a Louca	FICTION	Vicente Aranda	Take 2000	FBF Filmes	6 152
2003	Desmundo	FICTION	Alain Fresnot	Continentalfilmes	FBF Filmes	3 503
2003	Onde Jaz o Teu Sorriso?	DOCUMENTARY	Pedro Costa	Contracosta Produções	Contracosta Produções	1 047
2004	Portugal S.A.	FICTION	Ruy Guerra	Mgn Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	20 121
2004	A Virgem Da Luxuria	FICTION	Arturo Ripstein	Fado Filmes	Fbf Filmes	847
2004	Rosa La China	FICTION	Valeria Sarmiento	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	169
2004	Lá Fora	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	9 364
2004	Tudo Isto É Fado	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	Fado Filmes	Columbia Tri Star Warner	6 766
2004	Daqui P'rá Alegria	FICTION	Jeanne Waltz	Filmes Do Tejo	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	352
2004	Maria E As Outras	FICTION	José De Sá Caetano	Animatógrafo li	Prisvideo	5 418
2004	O Mistério Galindez	FICTION	Gerardo Herrero	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	1 165
2004	O Milagre Segundo Salomé	FICTION	Mário Barroso	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	20 232
2004	O Herói	FICTION	Zézé Gamboa	David & Golias	Fbf Filmes	445
2004	A Viagem De Carol	FICTION	Imanol Uribe	Take 2000	Fbf Filmes	164

2004	Sem Ela	FICTION	Anna Da Palma	Filmes Do Tejo	Filmes Do Tejo Audiovisuais	1 330
2004	André Valente	FICTION	Catarina Ruivo	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 197
2004	Balas & Bolinhos - O Regresso	FICTION	Luís Ismael	Aacv	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	46 671
2004	Noite Escura	FICTION	João Canijo	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	13 060
2004	Querença	FICTION	Edgar Feldman	Suma Filmes	Fbf Filmes	78
2004	Kiss Me	FICTION	António Da Cunha Telles	Animatógrafo li	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	18 693
2004	A Costa Dos Murmúrios	FICTION	Margarida Cardoso	Produções Off	Atalanta Filmes	12 231
2004	Sorte Nula	FICTION	Fernando Fragata	Virtual	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	48 968
2004	Ordo	FICTION	Laurence-Ferreira Barbosa	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	62
2004	Desassossego	DOCUMENTARY	Catarina Mourão	Laranja Azul	Atalanta Filmes	375
2004	Autografia	DOCUMENTARY	Miguel Gonçalves Mendes	Jumpcut	Atalanta Filmes	N/A
2005	O Quinto Império - Ontem Como Hoje	FICTION	Manoel De Oliveira	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	8 218
2005	Um Tiro No Escuro	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	Mgn Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	28 571
2005	A Cara Que Mereces	FICTION	Miguel Gomes	O Som E A Fúria	O Som E A Fúria	773
2005	Antes Que O Tempo Mude	FICTION	Luís Fonseca	Contracosta	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	N/A
2005	Adriana	FICTION	Margarida Gil	Take 2000	Atalanta Filmes	7 019
2005	Querida Família	FICTION	Teresa Pelegri /Dominic Harari	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	4 174
2005	Um Rio	FICTION	José Carlos De Oliveira	J.C.Oliveira	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 555
2005	Alice	FICTION	Marco Martins	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	33 489
2005	O Crime Do Padre Amaro	FICTION	Carlos Coelho Da Silva	Utopia Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	317 234
2005	Manô	FICTION	George Felner	Costa Do Castelo	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	1 443
2005	O Fatalista	FICTION	João Botelho	Madragoa Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	3 291
2005	Odete	FICTION	João Pedro Rodrigues	Rosa Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 846
2005	O Sonho De Uma Noite De São João	ANIMATION	Ángel De La Cruz /Manolo Gómez	Appia Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	56 548
2006	Lavado Em Lágrimas	FICTION	Rosa Coutinho Cabral	Clap Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 328
2006	Coisa Ruim	FICTION	Tiago Guedes /Frederico Serra	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	29 239

2006	Espelho Mágico	FICTION	Manoel De Oliveira	Filbox	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 656
2006	Vanitas	FICTION	Paulo Rocha	Suma Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	493
2006	O Veneno Da Madrugada	FICTION	Ruy Guerra	Mgn Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	192
2006	Pele	FICTION	Fernando Vendrell	David & Golias	Fbf Filmes	809
2006	Inconscientes	FICTION	Joaquin Oristrell	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 928
2006	O Diabo A Quatro	FICTION	Alice De Andrade	Filmes Do Tejo li	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	3 179
2006	Animal	FICTION	Roselyne Bosch	Ff Filmesfundo	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	7 632
2006	Diário De Um Novo Mundo	FICTION	Paulo Nascimento	Costa Do Castelo	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	1 583
2006	98 Octanas	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 906
2006	Alguns Dias Em Setembro	FICTION	Santiago Amigorena	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	6 246
2006	Transe	FICTION	Teresa Villaverde	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	5 020
2006	Filme Da Treta	FICTION	José Sacramento	Stopline Films	Lnk Audiovisuais	278 421
2006	Brumas	FICTION	Ricardo Costa	Ricardo Costa	Bosque Secreto	24
2006	Viúva Rica Solteira Não Fica	FICTION	José Fonseca E Costa	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 353
2006	Juventude Em Marcha	FICTION	Pedro Costa	Contracosta	Contracosta	1 943
2006	20,13	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	Mgn Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	6 594
2006	Lisboetas	DOCUMENTARY	Sérgio Tréfaut	Faux	Atalanta Filmes	15 246
2006	Movimentos Perpétuos	DOCUMENTARY	Edgar Pêra	Cordaseca	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 028
2006	Natureza Morta	DOCUMENTARY	Susana Sousa Dias	Kintop	Atalanta Filmes	1 149
2006	Diários Da Bósnia	DOCUMENTARY	Joaquim Sapinho	Rosa Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 728
2007	Body Rice	FICTION	Hugo Vieira Da Silva	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 946
2007	Suicídio Encomendado	FICTION	Artur Serra Araújo	Fbf Filmes	Fbf Filmes	2 829
2007	Dot.Com	FICTION	Luís Galvão Teles	Fado Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	27 915
2007	O Mistério Da Estrada De Sintra	FICTION	Jorge Paixão Da Costa	Ff Filmesfundo	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	29 193
2007	A Educação Das Fadas	FICTION	José Luis Cuerda	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	2 340
2007	Atrás Das Nuvens	FICTION	Jorge Queiroga	Filmes Do Tejo li	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	9 529

2007	Belle Toujours	FICTION	Manoel De Oliveira	Filbox	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	4 096
2007	O Capacete Dourado	FICTION	Jorge Cramez	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	5 149
2007	Julgamento	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	Stopline	Clmc-Multimédia	10 706
2007	A Vida Interior De Martin Frost	FICTION	Paul Auster	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	8 160
2007	A Outra Margem	FICTION	Luís Filipe Rocha	Clap Filmes	Atalanta Filmes	12 088
2007	Corrupção	FICTION	-	Utopia Filmes	Bworld-Entertainment	228 481
2007	Floripes	FICTION	Miguel Gonçalves Mendes	Jumpcut	Jumpcut	2 230
2007	Call Girl	FICTION	António Pedro Vasconcelos	Mgn Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	56 579
2007	Brava Dança	DOCUMENTARY	Jorge Pires/José Câmara	Filmes Do Tejo li	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 158
2007	Torre Bela	DOCUMENTARY	Thomas Harlan	C.E.N. Era Nacional	Atalanta Filmes	4 535
2007	Fados	DOCUMENTARY	Carlos Saura	Fado Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	31 853
2008	Cristóvão Colombo - O Enigma	FICTION	Manoel De Oliveira	Filmes Do Tejo li	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	5 577
2008	Daqui P'Ra Frente	FICTION	Catarina Ruivo	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	1 942
2008	Lobos	FICTION	José Nascimento	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	2 034
2008	The Lovebirds	FICTION	Bruno De Almeida	Arco Films	Midas Filmes	2 515
2008	A Ilha Dos Escravos	FICTION	Francisco Manso	Cinamate	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	2 305
2008	Terra Sonâmbula	FICTION	Teresa Prata	Ff Filmesfundo	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	1 454
2008	Goodnight Irene	FICTION	Paolo Marinou-Blanco	Filmes Do Tejo li	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 959
2008	Treze Badaladas	FICTION	Xavier Villaverde	Take 2000	Fbf Filmes	460
2008	Aquele Querido Mês De Agosto	FICTION	Miguel Gomes	O Som E A Fúria	O Som E A Fúria	20 073
2008	Mal Nascida	FICTION	João Canijo	Clap Filmes	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	1 661
2008	Entre Os Dedos	FICTION	Tiago Guedes / Frederico Serra	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	3 430
2008	Arte De Roubar	FICTION	Leonel Vieira	Stopline Films	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	28 942
2008	1ª Vez 16Mm	FICTION	Ruy Goulart	Filmes Do Mussulo	Filmes Do Mussulo	812
2008	Amália - O Filme	FICTION	Carlos Coelho Da Silva	Valentim De Carvalho	Valentim De Carvalho	136 798
2008	Cartas A Uma Ditadura	DOCUMENTARY	Inês De Medeiros	Faux	Faux	2 039

2009	Contrato	FICTION	Nicolau Breyner	Hora Mágica	Hora Mágica	45 379
2009	Veneno Cura	FICTION	Raquel Freire	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	2 552
2009	Esta Noite	FICTION	Werner Schroeter	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	1 155
2009	Second Life	FICTION	Alexandre Valente, M. Gaudêncio	Utopia Filmes	Lusomundo Audiovisuais	90 186
2009	100 Volta	FICTION	Daniel Sousa	Fbf Filmes	Fbf Filmes	7 685
2009	A Corte Do Norte	FICTION	João Botelho	Ff Filmesfundo	Midas Filmes	2 780
2009	La Caja - Quatro Mulheres E Um Morto	FICTION	Juan Carlos Falcón	Take 2000	Clap Filmes	2 693
2009	Um Amor De Perdição	FICTION	Mário Barroso	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	5 109
2009	Salazar - A Vida Privada	FICTION	Jorge Queiroga	Valentim De Carvalho	Valentim De Carvalho	2 603
2009	Singularidades De Uma Rapariga Loira	FICTION	Manoel De Oliveira	Filmes Do Tejo li	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	6 104
2009	A Zona	FICTION	Sandro Aguilar	O Som E A Fúria	O Som E A Fúria	628
2009	O Último Condenado À Morte	FICTION	Francisco Manso	Cinamate	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	2 388
2009	Star Crossed - Amor Em Jogo	FICTION	Mark Heller	Yellow Films	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	12 419
2009	4 Copas	FICTION	Manuel Mozos	Rosa Filmes	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 282
2009	A Esperança Está Onde Menos Se Espera	FICTION	Joaquim Leitão	Mgn Filmes	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	40 675
2009	Morrer Como Um Homem	FICTION	João Pedro Rodrigues	Rosa Filmes	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	5 842
2009	Os Sorrisos Do Destino	FICTION	Fernando Lopes	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	2 316
2009	Uma Aventura Na Casa Assombrada	FICTION	Carlos Coelho Da Silva	Valentim De Carvalho	Valentim De Carvalho	103 995
2009	As Operações Saal	DOCUMENTARY	João Dias	Bazar Do Vídeo	Midas Filmes	1 783
2009	Ruas Da Amargura	DOCUMENTARY	Rui Simões	Real Ficção	Real Ficção	934
2009	Ne Change Rien	DOCUMENTARY	Pedro Costa	Open Space Studio	Midas Filmes	2 141
2009	De Profundis	ANIMATION	Miguelanxo Prado	Zeppelin Filmes	Bosque Secreto	284
2010	A Bela E O Paparazzo	FICTION	António-Pedro Vasconcelos	Mgn Filmes	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	98 889
2010	Cinerama	FICTION	Inês De Oliveira	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	646
2010	Como Desenhar Um Círculo Perfeito	FICTION	Marco Martins	Ff-Filmesfundo	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 238
2010	A Religiosa Portuguesa	FICTION	Eugène Green	O Som E A Fúria	O Som E A Fúria	719

2010	Um Funeral À Chuva	FICTION	Telmo Martins	Lobby Productions	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	9 216
2010	Duas Mulheres	FICTION	João Mário Grilo	Costa Do Castelo	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	2 923
2010	Contraluz	FICTION	Fernando Fragata	Virtual	Virtual Produção	83 724
2010	O Inimigo Sem Rosto	FICTION	José Farinha	Take 2000	Bosque Secreto	352
2010	Marginais	FICTION	Hugo Diogo	Costa Do Castelo	Bosque Secreto	3 808
2010	O Último Voo Do Flamingo	FICTION	João Ribeiro	Fado Filmes	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 518
2010	Assalto Ao Santa Maria	FICTION	Francisco Manso	Take 2000	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	4 632
2010	Filme Do Desassossego	FICTION	João Botelho	Ar De Filmes	Ar De Filmes	16 357
2010	Embargo	FICTION	António Ferreira	Persona Non Grata	Sofá Filmes	4 597
2010	Mistérios De Lisboa	FICTION	Raoul Ruiz	Clap Filmes	Clap Filmes	12 863
2010	Quero Ser Uma Estrela	FICTION	José Carlos De Oliveira	J.C.Oliveira	Zon Lusomundo Audiovisuais	2 943
2010	Ruínas	DOCUMENTARY	Manuel Mozos	O Som E A Fúria	Alambique	2 709
2010	Pare,Escute,Olhe	DOCUMENTARY	Jorge Pelicano	Costa Do Castelo	Costa Do Castelo Filmes	3 957
2010	Fantasia Lusitana	DOCUMENTARY	João Canijo	Periferia Filmes	Midas Filmes	4 127
2010	Ilha Da Cova Da Moura	DOCUMENTARY	Rui Simões	Real Ficção	Real Ficção	1 372
2010	Muitos Dias Tem O Mês	DOCUMENTARY	Margarida Leitão	Ff-Filmesfundo	Ukbar Filmes	327
2010	Lisboa Domiciliária	DOCUMENTARY	Marta Pessoa	Real Ficção	Real Ficção	716
2010	Vai Com O Vento	DOCUMENTARY	Ivo M. Ferreira	Am Produções	Am Produções	445
2010	José E Pilar	DOCUMENTARY	Miguel Gonçalves Mendes	Jumpcut	Jumpcut	15 012