

Television in Portugal (2000-2016): the curious case of Portuguese fiction

Television en Portugal (2000-2016): el curioso caso de la ficción portuguesa

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Abstract

Portuguese television has always struggled with the country's demography, geography and permeability to foreign contents. Until 2001, Portuguese television was unable to fulfil any of the Directives regarding minimum European production quotas, and one of its key features was the undisputed dominance of Brazilian telenovelas over Portuguese audiences. Today the situation has changed dramatically and the number of Portuguese telenovelas being broadcasted raised exponentially, as well as its ratings and share. In this article we will examine a very specific period, from 2000 to 2016, and study the dramatic fiction produced in Portugal during this timeframe. We will analyse Portuguese telenovela's hegemony over prime-time, and the impact it is having on other television genres.

Keywords

Portuguese Television, telenovelas, series

Resumen

La televisión en Portugal ha enfrentado siempre la demografía, la geografía y la permeabilidad del país con contenidos extranjeros. Hasta el 2001 la televisión en Portugal no podía cumplir ninguna de las directivas relativas a las cuotas mínimas de emisión de producción europea, y una de sus características principales era el predominio indiscutible de las telenovelas brasileñas sobre el público portugués. Hoy la situación ha cambiado dramáticamente y el número de telenovelas portuguesas broadcasted incrementó exponencialmente, así como sus ratings y su difusión. En este artículo examinamos un período muy específico (2000-2016) y estudiamos la ficción dramática producida en Portugal durante este período. Analizamos la hegemonía de la telenovela portuguesa sobre el horario estelar, y el impacto que está teniendo en otros géneros de televisión.

Palabras claves

Televisión portuguesa, telenovelas, serie

In Portugal, regular television broadcasts started in 1957. For thirty-five years, state-owned RTP was the only network operating in the country, first with just one channel and later on with a second one. The first private channel, SIC, began its broadcasting in 1992, and TVI, originally owned by groups and institutions associated with the Catholic Church, in 1993. Hence, at the beginning of the new century private broadcasting entered a more mature stage. This is precisely the period we will analyse more thoroughly, from 2000 to 2016, and our object of study will be the dramatic fiction produced in Portugal during this timeframe.

The main subject of this article is a very specific period, the beginning of the twenty-first century. However, this was such a rich, dynamic and shifting period that it became necessary to further narrow down the scope of our study. Fiction is a very broad category and can integrate a variety of contents and production models. Therefore, we decided to exclude from this analysis some genres such as comedy, and contents aimed at younger audiences. Their exclusion is not only due to the need to establish a more coherent corpus, but also the fact that these genres often have different models of production and require unique approaches. Nevertheless, apart from the emergence of reality-television, the biggest transformations during the mentioned period were primarily and more strongly felt in the context of dramatic fiction. If the 1990s were marked by different approaches to journalism and the development of new entertainment formats, the new century was defined by an unprecedented increase in the production of fiction contents, especially telenovelas.

We will also leave aside, for future research, what Carlos Alberto Scolari (2009) designates by 'hypertelevision'. Therefore, we do not focus on issues related to convergence, transmedia, or the relationship between television and new media. The contents we propose to study are broadcasted in a fairly conventional way, and for the most of the period we are addressing new media paradigms had little to no effect on them.

1. Introduction

To study and characterise the contemporary Portuguese fiction one must begin by addressing the background and by defining the attributes of the television media in Portugal. Since it would be impossible to do an elaborate, exhaustive and in-depth analysis of the Portuguese media ecosystem, we have identified two aspects that can be objectively argued and that are agreed upon: the small size of the Portuguese market and the fact that it has been traditionally very permeable to foreign contents. These two characteristics may seem somehow tautological, given that a small market will inevitably be more open to foreign contents, but they do carry different and specific challenges to creators, producers and broadcasters. Together, these two characteristics build a typological model that can be defined as Portuguese Television Market.

The first characteristic is self-explanatory. Similarly to other nations and regions across Europe, Portugal has a relatively small population, and if not for Angola, Mozambique, and especially Brazil, the Portuguese speaking community would not be significant at all. There is no self-evident link between population size of a given country and its television market, since economic, political, social and religious frameworks actively shape most activities, which is particularly true for the cultural and media industries. However, even though the so-called 'Big 8' – the countries that have prevailed in worldwide television production market – are not necessarily the most populated countries in the world (at least not all of them), they all have an internal television market big enough to bring forth a competitive industry. In 2016, the Big 8 – United States, China, Japan, India, Germany, France, Brazil and the United Kingdom – represented almost 70% of all the sales in the Television Industry, and the United States alone were responsible for 34%, as seen in a recent study ordered by APIT*, the Portuguese Independent Television Producers Association (23).

Nevertheless, size can be a strong argument to justify the shortcomings of smaller countries

media industries, and the scale of a market can represent an important feature in almost every aspect of a production chain, and its ability to attract advertisement. In Francisco Rui Cádima's book about what he calls 'the light television phenomenon', published in 2006, he recalls his own early warnings regarding the unsustainability of having four channels in Portugal – two public and two private– fighting for a very small television market. On the other hand, Portuguese television's ability to export has been traditionally very small and does not seem to be improving. In fact, the already mentioned APIT report suggests that Portugal's overall sales of television contents – which includes exports and domestic sales – are stagnant at best (25).

The second issue is far more complex, and results from a variety of factors. Since 1989, the European Community –European Union's predecessor– had stressed that Portuguese television programming was overwhelmingly dominated by non-European productions. Cádima (2006) points out that Portugal, in 1995, was unable to fulfil the directive regarding minimum European production quotas, and even though RTP managed to correct the situation in the following year the two private operators were again unable to reach this goal in 1996 (47). Results would have been far worse, even embarrassing, if one inquired the percentage of Portuguese fiction products being broadcasted. In fact, these numbers were historically low, and Cádima concluded that in 1985 national production represented only 7% of the overall production.

Portuguese television, like film distribution, was also extremely permeable to foreign contents. While the film market was mostly exposed to Hollywood productions, television's primetime was, since 1977, dominated by Brazilian telenovelas. Hence, when the European Commission's reports emphasises Portugal's inability to comply with the European directives for television, it is referring less to American films and Anglo-Saxon television series – American, British and even Australian productions were common in Portuguese television[†] – than to Portuguese language telenovelas produced in Brazil. *Gabriela* was the first Brazilian telenovela to be

aired in RTP, back in 1977, by then was the only television network. It had a tremendous impact in Portuguese society. It was adapted from a novel by Jorge Amado and, apart from the language, one might assume that there would be no common feature between the Portugal of that period – the Carnation Revolution had just happened in 1974 – and the region depicted in the telenovela. In fact, the small town of Bahia where the telenovela was set and any Portuguese village would have had little or nothing in common; the main character, Gabriela, was in every possible way a provocation to the traditional and conservative Portuguese morality. However, the audience and the media soon discovered that *Gabriela* could stand for a variety of subjects that, on the aftermath of the revolutionary period, gained momentum within the Portuguese society, such as women's liberation and the sexual revolution. Isabel Ferin Cunha (2003a), while analysing the coverage around Gabriela, alludes to news and columns that emphasise the wide range of social transformations brought by this telenovela. The author classifies *Gabriela* as a manifestation of an emergent media paradigm, inherent to cultural industries and derived from the widespread of an audience primarily focused on television (18).

In 1982, RTP produced its first telenovela: *Vila Faia*. Even though broadly considered as a success, Brazilian telenovelas maintained its dominance over the Portuguese primetime. Jorge Paixão da }+ (2003) counts five Portuguese telenovelas during the 80s, and 32 Brazilians. According to the same author, the number of Brazilian telenovelas would rise to 120 during the 90s, when the two private channels – SIC and TVI – began their broadcasting.

The end of RTP's monopoly – in 1992 – did not mean that Portugal was getting closer to any kind of national production quota, at least not right away, and Brazilian telenovelas remained the most important television contents. In fact, the extremely fast and overwhelming triumph of SIC over RTP was based on the broadcasting of Brazilian telenovelas. The end of RTP's monopoly also meant the end for the monopoly that this network had over Brazilian telenovelas, and

RTP would soon discover that its ratings were deeply anchored to this kind of content. Globo, the producer of almost every telenovela broadcasted in Portugal during the 1980s, was one of SIC's main shareholders. In 1994, SIC finally managed to ensure the exclusive broadcasting rights for Globo's telenovelas, forcing RTP and TVI to increase their own production of telenovelas, or to buy them from other and smaller Brazilian networks. Even though the emergence of private broadcasters brought a huge transformation in areas such as information and entertainment, the dominance of Brazilian telenovelas over Portuguese primetime would remain undisputed until 2000.

2. The triumph of the Portuguese telenovela

At the beginning of the new century, in a sudden and relatively unexpected move, the number of Portuguese telenovelas broadcasted raised exponentially, and by 2001 they already surpassed the Brazilian ones. That same year, Portugal finally managed to ensure that half of the fiction programmes was produced locally. Though this process was very abrupt, it was the result of what an Obercom Report[‡] –which focused on Portuguese television between 1999 and 2012 – describes as a period of instability both in the television market and in audience behaviours. This instability peaked in 2001, when TVI began to broadcast the reality-television show *Big Brother*. Regardless of the importance that this product had in TVI's overall strategy, the network consistently invested in the production of telenovelas, and had already achieved moderate success even before *Big Brother's* debut. There is a general consensus that the boost in TVI ratings, triggered by reality-television, was consolidated by national telenovelas. Instead of losing audience after *Big Brother's* daily broadcasts, TVI carried part of the audiences to the telenovela block that usually followed it, in a strategy designed to strengthen the relations between the two contents.

The key role played by the Portuguese telenovela in TVI's rise seems to confirm Catarina Burnay's (2006) argument that "this genre is in the basis of the biggest transformations in the Portuguese television market" (59). The strategy used by TVI, with reality-television on one side and Portuguese telenovelas on the other, eventually enabled TVI to surpass SIC's global share, which finally happened in 2005, after several years of a ratings war and when the latter had already lost the prime-time, as seen in the table below (Figure 1). However, TVI's investment reflected a broader tendency that had started years before and was beginning to be notorious in every channel, even in SIC. Raquel Ferreira (2014) ascribes this new approach to not only the newly founded tastes of the audience, but also to the pressure of critics, regulators and European institutions (162). Since the late 1990s that the Portuguese governments made an effort to increase national production, offering financial aids and creating partnerships with that purpose.

The strengths of Portuguese telenovela are also its weaknesses. The successful formula developed by TVI was also adopted by SIC, which translated it into a strategy of block programming. At any given day, both SIC and TVI start broadcasting telenovelas at around 21h and will only end at 0h, or even later. Each of these daily blocks can include the broadcast of up to three consecutive telenovelas. Once SIC started to produce telenovelas, Brazilian productions migrated to the late prime-time slot, after 22h30.

The triumph of Portuguese telenovelas, as well as the production model they propose, is not a direct result of high-quality standards. On the contrary, they seem to be the result of both the ability to produce with low costs and an emphasis on Portuguese subjects and scenarios. Catarina Burnay (2005) tries to establish a model capable of identifying and explaining the link between telenovelas and its audiences that is rooted on a quantitative methodology and a more qualitative approach. The results are somehow paradoxical: on one hand, the audience seems to recognise the increasing quality of telenovelas, both in terms of storytelling and in

production and technical aspects; on the other hand, the public transmits a feeling of shame for enjoying telenovelas, something that the Burnay considers a sign of the “social devaluation of the telenovela genre” (108). Nevertheless, one may argue that this devaluation is also a product of the generalised and relatively substantiated idea that a telenovela is seldom defined by quality criteria.

Finally, telenovela’s hegemony enabled its production model to colonize a variety of formats, genres and even media. It is common for Portuguese film critics to compare some commercial movies with telenovelas by emphasising the use of a similar style, the submission to a shot/reverse shot technique, and the lack of an artistic approach to lighting and sound. Another curious aspect revealed by Burnay’s study is that the audience frequently classifies some television series as telenovelas, meaning that this “designation prevails over other fiction formats” (104).

The daily broadcast format that defines the telenovela became a requirement in programming. A television show that does not unfold daily has little or no place in the primetime of any private network. Therefore, genres that use narrative processes that cannot be combined or transported to the telenovela format and formula –which include most of the more celebrated and critically acclaimed international television series – are assigned the worst time slots. Be that as it may, there are other television products that refuse to be classified as telenovelas, but apart from a few characteristics are hardly indistinguishable from any other telenovela. This is the case of RTP’s *Bem-Vindo a Beirais*¹. It airs daily and has a production model similar to the one of a telenovela, such as a small number of scenarios and studio-like interiors. The main difference is in its narrative structure, since it has seasons and can sustain episodic plots. Nevertheless, the first season had 100 episodes but the fourth went up to 260, a number far similar to that of a telenovela.

Figure 1: Prime-time share from 2000 to 2015. This graphic confirms TVI’s dominance over prime-time since 2001.

PRIME-TIME SHARE																	
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
RPT 1 AND RPT 2	32,8	29,3	22,4	24,7	27,6	27,8	26,8	27,3	29,2	26,7	26,9	26,4	23,5	19,5	16,4	19,9	15,1
SIC	49,1	43,1	31,8	29,5	29,8	29	27,9	26,7	24,9	24,2	23,7	23,8	24,7	24,5	26,4	24	23,5
TVI	13,9	22,6	40,1	37,8	33,4	33,6	34,1	34,7	33	35,8	34,2	32,4	29,6	30,1	28,5	25,7	26,5
OTHER CHANNELS	1,5	2,7	4	6,4	8	8,4	10,1	10,4	11,6	11,4	13,2	15,2	18,5	20,6	22,6	23,1	24,2
VIDEO, SATELITE, OTHERS	2,7	2,3	1,7	1,6	1,2	1,2	1,1	0,9	1,3	1,9	2	2,1	3,7	5	6,1	7,3	10,7

3. The fall of the television series and mini-series

Before the analysis of some television series and mini-series produced after 2000, one must address another specificity of Portuguese television. Contrary to the features identified in the previous pages, that is, the small size of the Portuguese market and its permeability to foreign contents, both of which are chronic and not exclusive to television, there is another feature that is relatively new and inherent to the Portuguese television market. This refers to the predominance of paid television, mainly via cable, that started before the implementation of Televisão Digital Terrestre (TDT), the digital terrestrial television project, but has since soared.

As seen in the graphic provided, cable television has consistently grown during the last decade. Consequently, cable channels saw their market share raising from a little over 10% in 2002 to 42% in 2015. There are several reasons for the enormous success of cable television, one being the failure of TDT. For several years, TDT only offered the same four channels that were already available in the analogue service, hence the resistance of most viewers to sign on to digital terrestrial broadcasting at least until 2012, when the analogue service was fully discontinued.

TDT's modest results drove the audiences straight to cable providers. While the primetime of a majority of the Portuguese channels, especially the two private operators, was dominated by telenovelas and blocked programming strategies, the segments of the audience that were not interested in this product switched to cable. Presently, any producer or network executive that chooses to produce or order a television series is competing with high-budget international products and is required to develop a product able to attract an audience with high standards. For that reason, producing series and mini-series has been increasingly regarded as a mission for public service network, since the risk is deemed as too high for any of the private networks.

As it shall be argued, it does not seem to exist a direct correlation between television series

genre and its success, or even its longevity. The number of successful Portuguese dramatic series and miniseries during the period we are studying is scarce enough to make it extremely difficult to identify patterns. Therefore, due to their high budgets and association with a country's culture and history, period television dramas can be a very pertinent object of study.

RTP used period dramas to renew its commitment with public service, thus responding to the critics who since the early 90s accused the channel of being a State-owned commercial channel. RTP, from 2000 to 2016, produced an average of one period television series per year. However, the results seem to confirm the concerns shared by the two private operators. Not only this kind of product is expensive and very demanding, the risks are extremely high. Even television historical series that are celebrated as successes, such as *Ferreirinha*** (2004), which premiered with a share of 17,6%, are often unable to compete with the telenovelas that TVI or SIC broadcast at the same time-slots. Nevertheless, *Ferreirinha* achieved its best result in the series finale^{††}. The inevitable risks and challenges of competing against telenovelas or reality-shows are well-known, even to the most successful period series of RTP. *Conta-me como foi*^{‡‡} (2007-2011), for example, an adaptation of a Spanish format, managed to reach 10,7% of rating and 23,4% of share, while competing with talent-shows and reality-television. Even though this acclaimed series managed to find its place within an extremely competitive time-slot, it was unable to leave a mark for its successors.

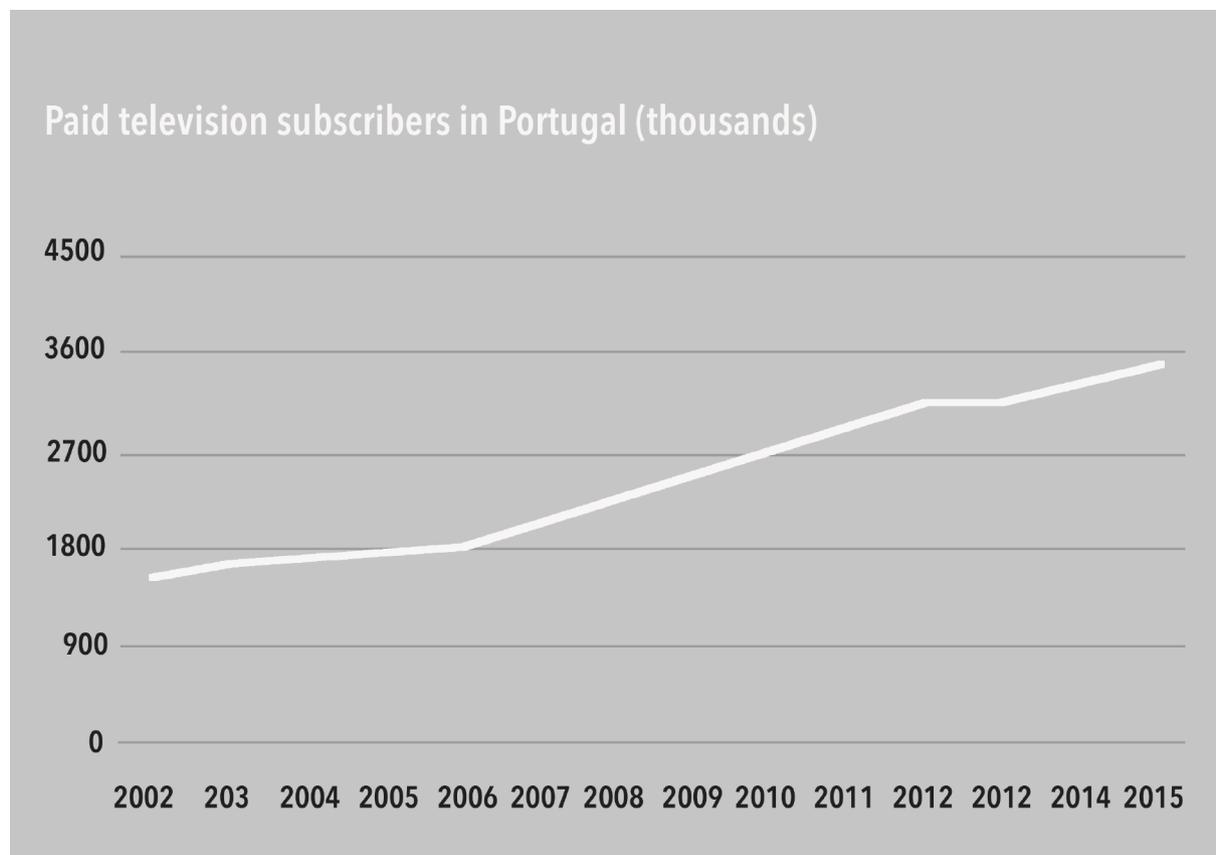
Depois do Adeus (2012), the series that replaced *Conta-me como foi*, can be used as a case study for the difficulties and hardships facing period dramas. First, it did not receive the critical acclaim of its predecessor. Although it was aired in the same time-slot and had a similar story – based on the everyday life of ordinary people in a period of transformation – and to some extent started where *Conta-me como foi* ended –the Revolution of 1974 – it was not as well received. It was set in a different period, with different conflicts, and, most of all, different and less consensual protagonists^{§§}. The series lingered

for weeks and, at its lowest point, was unable to surpass 1,7% of rating.

Certain historical themes, like biographies, seem to have problems of its own, especially when they aspire to represent very well-known stories and highly symbolic historic events. *Pedro e Inês* (2005), for example, is based on the tragic love story of Prince Pedro and his mistress Inês¹¹. Has it happens frequently in this kind of television series, the first episode achieved a result that would prove very difficult to maintain: 6,2% of rating and 17,6% of share.

RTP has also used telefilms, series and mini-series to celebrate special events, for instance to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Portuguese Republic, in 2010. The public channel ordered a variety of fictional contents to mark the date. The purpose of these products was not only to entertain, but also to teach its audiences. However, most of their contents were extremely expensive and did not reach a large enough audience. Once again, these series and telefilms were treated as part of RTP's public service goals and not necessarily as means to increase the ratings.

Figure 3: The growth of pay-tv in Portugal since 2002



Source: Obercom***

Equador (2008-2009), produced for TVI, a private network, is probably the best example, and both its success and shortcomings reflect the difficulties inevitably associated with the production of period television series. Based on a best-seller by a well-known writer, journalist and commentator, *Equador* tells the story of the Portuguese colonial governor of São Tomé and Príncipe in the beginning of the twentieth century. It was a very high-budget production, with a huge cast, and filmed on location in Portugal, Brazil and India. It was a success, and, according to the Media Monitor^{†††}, 11 episodes of its 30 episodes were the most seen programmes on their broadcasting day. The series managed to keep relatively stable audience ratings and share during the four months in which it was aired, and it was even sold to other countries. Nevertheless, during the period it was broadcasted the highest rating shows were TVI's telenovelas.

The high stakes involved in historical productions seem to startle most of the networks and, to some extent, also RTP. The lack of success of a series is not necessarily straightforward, and the pressure to ensure ratings can lead to the cancelling of a television series before it finds its audience. *Os Filhos do Rock* (2013-2014), for example, a series that was set in the early 1980s, during the so called Portuguese Rock Boom, and told the story of a fictitious music group, had a high quality production design, cast, direction and writing, but both its ratings and share were disappointing. Although critically acclaimed and airing on Sunday nights, the series plummeted with a rating of 3,8%. As a result, it was shifted to Saturday night, known as 'audience purgatory', where it eventually reached its lowest result: 1,4%.

One of the strategies used by networks, both public and private, has been to promote intersections between television and film, making use of national and European funds created for that effect. That is the case of *Linhas de Wellington* (2012), a super-production set during the Peninsular War, and with an international cast that included John Malkovich and Catherine Deneuve. It was a television series – aired in three episodes – and a feature film. SIC also

did the same in several occasions, like with *Até Amanhã Camaradas* (2005), based on a novel by Álvaro Cunhal, that was aired as a two-episode television series.

It is not easy to establish a direct relation between adaptation and audience acceptance or recognition in television period dramas. On one hand, television series adapted from literary texts are not a clear path for success. *Equador* was the most successful literary adaptation during this period, but it was a very recent best-seller and it is more of a standalone example than a trend, or even a formula. Some adaptations have had very modest results, like the already mentioned *Até Amanhã Camaradas* or even *Quando os Lobos Uivam* (2006) – adapted from a novel of Aquilino Ribeiro set in the mountains of Beira during the 1940s and 1950s – that aired in RTP and the premier attracted little more than 13% of share and a rating of 4,5%. Biographies of historical figures can achieve critical acclamation and even some kind of success, like the above mentioned *Ferreirinha*, or *Bocage*, a biopic series based on the story of a famous eighteenth century libertine poet, but seldom or never managed to surpass the ratings of telenovelas and prime-time reality or talent shows. On the other hand, original stories like *Conta-me como foi* – even though it is an adaptation of a Spanish series, it was originally developed for television –, *Linhas de Wellington*, *O Processo dos Távoras* – the story of the infamous trial and execution of one of the major eighteenth century aristocratic families at the hands of the Marquis of Pombal – or *A Febre do Ouro Negro* – about the trafficking of wolfram during World War II.

If there is a pattern to be found in period television series is that it represents a risk for television channels, and that seems to be the main reason for networks to prefer to invest in telenovelas or, at best, regard this kind of content as a prestige piece or, in the case of RTP, as a commitment to public service. The standard ratings for relatively successful period television series is somewhere between 6% and 7%, to lower figures for budgets that can easily be very high. The most accomplished period series, like *Equador* or *Conta-me como foi*, can aspire to

higher marks, but the ones that fail dramatically, with ratings little over 1% or 2%, are far more common.

Television series set in contemporary Portugal are very rare. Recently, RTP tried to resuscitate this genre, in the broader sense of the word. The results were modest, like *Terapia* (2016), an Israelite format, with a share between 3% and 6%. RTP tried this approach before and failed or had a very moderate success. *Cidade Despida* (2010), a police-action series, started with 7,6% of rating and little over 20% of share, but lost almost half of its audience in the following weeks. Even RTP's *Liberdade XXI* (2008-2011), the Portuguese version of the traditional court drama, was unable to preserve its audience.

If the adaptation international formats is very rare in period series – *Conta-me como foi* is probably the only example – it is very common in contemporary series. However, this strategy is very far from being a sure bet. SIC aired several series in the 1990s, but once it became all too evident that mainstream audiences were embracing Portuguese telenovelas, this reduced drastically its investment in television series, especially in dramatic or any kind of non-comedy fiction content. Amongst the greatest successes of SIC in the 1990s is *Médico de Família*^{##} (1998-2000) an adaptation of a very successful Spanish format. It is not easy to transport to another country a successful format, at least not in fiction contents, as TVI discovered with *Os Serranos* (2005-2006), a huge success worldwide that was not renewed for a second season.

The production of Portuguese dramatic television series is so low that it is very hard to draw any kind of conclusion. The quantity of period television series that were produced during this period is mostly justified by RTP's bond to public service, even though both private networks also produced this kind of content. The adaptation of international formats seems to play a more determinate role in series set on contemporary backgrounds, but, in any case, this kind of content is so rare that one can't take extract any kind of reliable conclusion other than this: telenovela is the main fiction genre in Portuguese television. It's the only genre that can appeal

to a broader audience and no television series managed to get close to the ratings of a telenovela, be it a literary adaptation, a biography, an original story or even the adaptation of a very successful international format.

The most important argument in telenovela's hegemony seems to be the fidelity it does require from the audiences. As Francisco Cádima (2007) claims, the audience is faithful not only to a product or content, but also to a broadcasting schedule. Unlike weekly episode series, a telenovela owns a time-slot during all week, thus merging with its audience's routines. Even the most successful television series cannot expand its influence to the other days of week. In this sense, telenovelas have a similar role to the one played by talk-shows in the American broadcast programming. They are designed to conquer a specific time-slot during the entire week, and are often used within block programming strategies. The problem with Portuguese television is that, unlike the American, it allowed the telenovela phenomenon to take the entire primetime, even during the weekend, leaving little or no room for any other fiction genre.

4. Conclusion

In the past 16 years, Portuguese television has changed significantly and finally managed to meet what seemed to be impossible: a national production quota of 50% in all fiction programs. This achievement has much to do with the dynamism that the private operators brought to the Portuguese media market. If during the first decade of private television the transformations were felt more heavily in fields like entertainment and information rather than in fiction, that changed in the early years of the new millennium.

However, this change came at a price. In a small market, traditionally open to the exterior and attached to Brazilian telenovelas, the production of home-based telenovelas, capable of addressing national issues and with a Portuguese cast, proved to be very appealing for producers and

networks. Unlike other contents, telenovelas are cost efficient and very competent in ensuring the fidelity of its audience. After 15 years of complete dominance over primetime, and the extensive usage of block programming strategies by the two private networks, telenovelas became fully hegemonic, imposing its narrative techniques, visual style and production model to every other fictional content. The first victim of this aggressive strategy was the dramatic television series or mini-series, that almost disappeared from Portuguese television, leading its viewers to cable television. The specificity of Portuguese Television resides precisely in the overall dominance of telenovelas, leaving little or no room for any other genre.

Today the need for contents that are not telenovelas seems to be an argument in favor of a public broadcasting service. It is true that the private networks have produced very successful non-telenovela dramatic contents such as *Equador* and some of the series and telefilms that SIC aired during the late 1990s. Yet it is also so true that these channels are under constant pressure to deliver results. Hence, they tend to avoid risks, especially highly expensive ones.

The most recent trends in the wider international television market seem to be a convergence model that favours international media conglomerates, the migration of advertisement to the Internet, *asynchronous* television consumption, and the emergence of services like Netflix. How the Portuguese private and public operators choose to address them will unequivocally determine their future.

Nota

1. Produção de Conteúdos Audiovisuais em Portugal: Estudo Estratégico (2016).

2. American productions like *Dallas*, *Dynasty* and *Hill Street Blues*, or British mini-series like *I, Claudius* and *Brideshead Revisited* were very popular in Portugal. One of the Europe Union's main concern was to reduce the market share of American fiction productions. In Portugal, according to Cádima (2007), American fiction represented around 38% in 1985, but fell to 17% by the end of the decade.

3. A Televisão em Portugal: Análise das audiências e dinâmicas concorrenciais do mercado televisivo português entre 1999 e 2012 (2013).

4. A Televisão em Portugal: Análise das audiências e dinâmicas concorrenciais do mercado televisivo português entre 1999 e 2015 (2016:21).

5. This is a RTP's original format that tells the story of a man who escapes from Lisbon to live in a small village in the countryside.

6. Anuário da Comunicação 2015, p.14.

7. Set in the Douro's Wine Country during the nineteenth century, *Ferreinha* tells the story of the matriarch of one of the most notorious Houses in the Douro Valley and the head of a famous Wine Company.

8. <http://www.marktest.com/wap/a/n/id~6a3.aspx>

9. This series, similarly to the Spanish original, follows a middle-class urban family in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Portuguese long lasting dictatorial regime, much like the Spanish, was already feeling the pressure for change – economic, political and social – while facing a violent independence war in its African Colonies.

10. The main characters belonged to the large group of Portuguese who were evacuated after the fall of the colonial empire, between 1974's Revolution and the Independence of Angola and Mozambique in the Autumn of 1974.

11. D. Pedro was a Portuguese prince in the Middle Ages, and later the king of Portugal, who fell in love with a noble woman of a rival family. She was eventually killed under Pedro's father orders. Pedro and Ines are a very well-known tragic romantic couple and they appear in countless poems, tales, plays and novels.

12. <http://www.marktest.com/wap/a/n/id~13ac.aspx>

13. The original series was produced in Spain by Globomedia for Telecinco and, eventually, was adapted in variety of countries.

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