Policy-making in Portuguese Television and its effects on Programming

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by

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Dedicated to my parents,

Maria Fernanda Gonçalves da Costa Santos e Joaquim José dos Santos
Abstract

Title:
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This thesis presents a picture of Portuguese television’s recent and current state, placing this picture in the larger context of similar developments in Europe. Although it describes the history of Portuguese television, it is specially focused on the last decade, starting with the privatisation of two channels, in the beginning of the 1990s, and proceeding up to 2002. The last part of this period is characterised by a new phenomenon: “reality” TV.

The research focuses on developments in television programming and the main differences between public and private channels. Being the key actors in these processes, the policy-makers are given special attention. The objective is to find out how they make their choices, why they decide to take certain directions, how they look at the panorama of programming and how they react to their critics.

Since the television scene involves many actors this research also describes and evaluates the opinions of groups of different categories of television viewer: critics of television, academics specialising in this field, members of a viewers association and the minister responsible for the media.

A multi-methodology approach includes an analysis of a number of articles selected from the press, an examination of programme schedules during one week in 2000, focus-group discussions, and interviews. All the quantitative and qualitative data collected is analysed in the context of a broad discussion of the public service mission, the market share, the legal framework, and national investment policy.
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The story of Portuguese television has two main chapters: before and after privatisation (1992). The first part runs from 1957 to 1992, and is characterised by the monopoly of the public station, RTP (Radiotelevisão Portuguesa). Although the second time frame is still much smaller than the first, it can be considered more intense. The “war for audiences” is responsible for it. Both the private channels – SIC (Sociedade Independente de Comunicação) and TVI (Televisão Independente) – have held the position of audiences in the last years. First, it was SIC; now it is TVI.

When I started this work, September 1998, SIC was the most successful channel regarding audiences and it continued to be so until September 2000, when TVI began broadcasting reality-shows, starting with ‘Big Brother’. Until the end of 1999, nobody suspected that the scenario of the Portuguese television would change soon. However, it did change and this research follows those changes (Chapter 6).

The options policy-makers had regarding television schedules were changing. This was something completely new, which eventually involved the whole Portuguese population, and it was a phenomenon that I was very interested in analysing. Also, I was very keen in finding out how different people, including the viewers, were reacting to these changes.

This thesis begins with the revision of the literature about broadcasting in order to introduce the topic. To understand broadcasting activity, it is important to analyse what has been found and discussed in this field. Notions like ‘Public Service of Broadcasting’, ‘public sphere’ and ‘quality’ are essential in this discussion (Chapter 1).

This research also presents an historical perspective of Portuguese television since its inception, in the 1950’s, and examines the process that led to the privatisation of two television channels (Chapter 2). When this research started the broadcasting scenario in Portugal was very clear: the private channels had been on air for six years and RTP, the public television, was having difficulties keeping up with the new trends that were being introduced into programming by new channels, especially SIC. The audiences enjoyed the new style of television, which was very much based on Brazilian ‘telenovelas’, talk-shows, quiz-shows, violent cartoons, and aggressive news bulletins. At least, the audience studies show the interest of the viewers for these types of programmes.

The main objective of this work is to analyse how the policy-makers of Portuguese television choose their options. Why they decide to go in certain directions and what they do to achieve certain goals. So, this piece of research presents the opinions of the main factors of this process (sometimes through interviews, sometimes through press articles) and tries to
compare their policies (Chapter 3).

Because of the recent developments in the story of Portuguese television, this thesis is also the result of something that has been constructed everyday, during a certain period: it is a piece of work that reflects many changes, not only in the broadcasting scenario but also in the political context. The minister interviewed by me for this research is not in the Government anymore. The sub-director of programmes of SIC interviewed by me for this research is now working for the public channel, RTP. So, this research has to be seen as an analysis of a specific moment of Portuguese television.

I was also very keen in understanding if there was a connection between the promises and rhetoric and the actions of the policy-makers. In other words, if what they say has something to do with what they do. So, besides the discourse of the policy-makers, this thesis also presents a quantitative analysis of the schedules during one week of May 2000 (Chapter 4), mainly to find out what types and genres of programmes are the most significant in Portuguese television.

My other main interest was to observe and analyse a particular situation: whether Portuguese television executives combine their interests with all the opinions about programming that is generated at many different levels: viewers, critics, researchers, bodies that rule and control the television activity (Chapters 5 and 6). Special attention was given to the viewers, not only when I listened to them, but also when all the other interviewees presented their opinion. In the end, they all claimed to be concerned with the same general questions: the fulfilment of the missions of the Public Broadcasting System, the quality of the programmes, and the respect for the viewers.

My starting hypotheses were:

1. The public service of television, mainly the first channel (RTP1) is not fulfilling its missions.
2. There is no significant difference between the main content of the public channel and that of the two private ones.
3. The generality of the programmes is chosen to achieve the highest possible shares, which means that the minorities are not well served.
4. The public, the critics and the people with responsibilities are not happy with the results of the policy-making in the television channels.

My work stops at the time when the reality-shows established themselves in Portuguese television, causing the rising up of TVI and the loss of the leading position by SIC. The appearance of the reality-shows, as well as a clear option of the two private channels to broadcast national quality films and soap operas, was the two main changes in the field of programming identified during this research. These two novelties were used as the main
“weapons” in the war of audiences, a fight that had never been so strong. In practice, what TVI did was to use a “sandwich” formula in prime time: a shifting between reality-shows and quality national ‘telenovelas’. As a result, the audiences, attracted by the reality-shows (in this case, it was ‘Big Brother’), were transferred to the ‘telenovelas’.

Methodologically, this research tries to be as varied as possible, believing that different methods have special advantages in different situations.

I revised the existing literature throughout the thesis. Chapter 1 – The analysis of the broadcasting scenario – is especially based on the findings and opinions of many researchers, but I also tried to present the main literature when I was analysing other subjects during this research. Both my theoretical research and fieldwork is supported by the work of many different authors.

Also, the interviews are something that I used when I was looking for different aspects of the topic. To understand the perspective of the television channels, I interviewed the policy-makers of SIC and TVI, the most famous news presenter of RTP (who supports unconditionally the public service), and the psychologist responsible for children’s programming in RTP. To have an idea of how the output of the television channels is received, I interviewed four critics of television, two Portuguese researchers, and the president of the Association of the Consumers of the Media. Because the television activity, especially the public service, partially depends on the Government, I thought that it was essential to have the perspective of the Minister in charge of the mass media. So, I also interviewed him for this research.

Since there are not many publications about the recent years about the phenomenon of the privatisation of the television in Portugal, I decided to do an analysis of the most significant articles published in the press at the time when the Government was taking the decision (Chapter 2). As a way of organising all the opinions that I collected from the policy-makers, I did a framing analysis (Chapter 3). To compare the types and genre of programmes broadcast in the four channels, I used Statistic Programme applied to Social Sciences (Chapter 4). Finally, to ascertain the opinion of certain groups of Portuguese society about television, I conducted focus-group discussions (Chapter 5).

This piece of research tries to give a panoramic view of the problems, tries to analyse what has been happening and tries to confirm, or not, the hypothesis. The result of all these objectives, that I tried to achieve both through a theoretical perspective and through fieldwork, is what follows in the next chapters.
Chapter 1: Analysis of the broadcasting scenario

Introduction

The phenomenon of television soon developed interest among the researchers. The first part of this chapter explains what social scientists think about television, since the 1960s. In this description, television might be seen as an all-powerful medium, with negative effects, or an important medium that meets the needs of a new kind of society. Simultaneously, it analyses the commercialisation of television. The direct implication of the latter is that the viewers are seen much more as consumers than as citizens.

The next step of this chapter is the presentation and interpretation of the first ideas about the public sphere and the role that television has in the present public sphere. Because of this medium, the public sphere is nowadays much more all embracing. To understand the position of television in actual societies an analysis of the concept of “public” and “public interest” is presented. This naturally leads to the explanation of Public Service Broadcasting – to educate, to inform and to entertain – without forgetting its co-existence with private and commercial channels.

Having identified the general grounds where television is settled, the next step of this chapter is to identify its role in the social, cultural, economic and political contexts. Here, one of the first ideas that appears is massification. In contrast, it is also possible to find defenders of television, those who maintain that it can give a good service with respect to different cultural, religious, and political beliefs. This is more obvious in the public channels, but public channels can also have commercial motivations and commercial channels can also have social and cultural concerns (the Portuguese case is one example of this).

The contents of the channels, the diversity and quality that can or cannot be seen on television are other aspects developed in this chapter. After analysing different opinions about the duality of quality/popularity, a quick look at the new technologies that might change the actual scenario where television lives are presented.

1 - Analysis of the broadcasting scenario

Over 30 years ago, there was already a clear consensus of the power of television, as it is stated by Halloran (1970, p.9): “People are concerned about the mass media in general and about television in particular because, so it is said, they feel helpless in the face of what
they see as an all-powerful, all pervasive, manipulating force which is entirely outside their control”. The same author (1968, p.11) also refers to the duality of the consequences generally associated with the mass media, with special reference to television: “Mass communication is alternately blamed for increased crime, violence, immorality and escapism, and praised for its educational achievements and social usefulness”.

In the same decade, other researchers already concluded, “television has altered the world”. Williams (1974, p.11) says “television, discovered as a possibility by scientific and technical research, was selected for investment and development to meet the needs of a new kind of society, especially in the provision of a centralised entertainment and in the centralised formation of opinions and styles of behaviour”.

The negative effects of television have been stressed for a long time, but recently Gauntlett (1995, pp.115-6) clarified his ideas about this topic: “The point of defending television against the changes of its negative impact is not simply to protect a much loved-entertainment medium, but is rather to argue that it is irresponsible to blame important social problems such as crime and violence on the small screen. Television does not deserve to have the complex and deep-rooted troubles of society laid at its door”.

Looking at the phenomenon of television from the perspective of the viewer, there are two words that are frequently used by the researchers: “needs” and “interests”. Frank and Greenberg (1980, p.39) summarise what is behind this idea: “Television viewing reflects an extremely flexible means of individual expression. It can help satisfy an almost endless array of needs in relationship to an almost equally endless array of interests”.

Even if, as we saw, a large part of the audience looks at television as a simple instrument of entertainment, the owners, the producers, the advertisers, the politicians, the opinion-makers, and the researchers know that it is much more than that. The product that arrives to the public is the choice of a minority of people who argue to know the taste and desires of the enormous audience. But even these options have to respect the interests of whatever power rules each channel: the state or private interests, such as the market.

There are different policies behind the options and behind the orientations of the media. Nowadays, there is also another important side of the media. The economic logic and the profits that can be made through television have come to play an increasing more important role over the past two decades (see, for example, McQuail and Siune, 1998). With the commercialisation of broadcasting, the viewers are much more consumers than citizens. In this context, where is the cultural and the educational logic? Is there anyone standing up for these ideals? Should the Public Service of Broadcasting be concerned?

These are not the only questions that need to be asked about contemporary media. Besides these concerns – and I would call them ‘social concerns’ – there are also other important
factors to keep in mind. Namely, the quick changes in the scenario of the media and the
speed that characterises recent developments and the new impact of the new technologies.
Murdock (1993, p.3) calls our attention to this phenomenon: “New technologies create
new opportunities, but before corporations can take full advantage of them there has to be
a change in the political context which extends their freedom of action”.
From the memories of the past and from the analyses of the present we have, then, to go
on to the future. During the last ten years, there has been a good deal of concern about the
impact of the new media. McQuail and Siune (1986), among other researchers, were
aware of this. They argued that several factors contribute to this state of obscurity, quite
apart from the permanent unpredictability of the future. The new century is here. The only
certainty seems to be the velocity in which things happen. What is true now can be
different tomorrow.

2 - The public sphere and the media

If the public sphere can also be seen as a public forum, it is easy to understand that
television has a very important role in the public sphere. It is a medium that allows the
flow of the information in different directions, leading to the construction of an ever-new
knowledge. Television is, probably, the most powerful instrument in the new era of the
public sphere. This idea is assumed by Livingstone and Lunt (1994, p.5): “As television
gives ever more space to public discussion, television itself enters into these (social)
debates, framing the discussions, offering its own perspectives and opinions, moulding the
discussion to meet its own demand and purposes”. But the public sphere finds its roots in a
time when there were no mass media. Even so, it can be considered as the base of the
liberal democracy.
Habermas is the proponent of the concept of public sphere. Besides all the criticisms and
even a new reading of the facts made by him decades after the first approach, his theory is
still largely discussed. In general, he described the role of a new political class that had the
conditions (time and material resources) to create a forum where all the aspects of the
social life could be discussed. It was the development of the press, the libraries and the
universities. With all the resources, this group of people took the mission of keeping one
eye on the state. Even so, they were protected by the state, as they were protected by the
church and by the economic power, that they represented (Habermas, 1997a).
Verstraeten (1996, pp.347-8) is one of the many researchers who clarifies the concept first
used by Habermas decades ago, when he located the public sphere in a ‘bourgeois’
scenario: “the ‘bourgeois public sphere’ refers to a kind of forum which was established at
end of the 17th century, and which is situated as it were between the private sphere (consisting of the economy and family) and the sphere of the public authorities (formed by the state and the judiciary)”.

According to Habermas, this was a high-class phenomenon, which means that common people did not have access to the discussions that took place in the sphere, even though they were supposed to concern everybody and it was called ‘public’. The group of ‘bourgeois’ people were between the power of the state and the people without power. They - those of the high class - did not belong to any of these two categories but their aim was to discuss the civil society and to control the behaviour of the state. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the media also began to play a part in this process. But the same forces that led to the creation of this public sphere conducted to its end. Garnham (1990, p.107) states that “the development of the capitalism economy in the direction of monopoly capitalism led to an uneven distribution of wealth, to rising entry costs to the public sphere and thus to unequal access to and control over that sphere”.

Thompson (1995, p.70) explains the transition to the new public sphere: “The medium of this confrontation was itself significant: it was the public use of reason, as articulated by private individuals engaged in argument that was in principle open and unconstrained”. The new public sphere not only includes the press, but also new spaces that began to appear around Europe in the mid-seventeenth century. The saloons and the coffee houses were the most important examples of this new reality. Later, as Curran (1997, p.131) explains, there were some changes: “But in the era of mass politics, the public sphere was transformed by the extension of the state and the collectivisation of private interests. Rational public discourse was supplanted by power politics in which large organisations made deals with each other and with the state, while excluding the public. The media was an accessory to this ‘refeudalization’ of society”.

Much of the discussion about Habermas’ theory ended in one set of criticisms. One of the authors who expose the weaknesses of this approach is Verstraeten (1996, p.351): “some social groups with less possibilities to express their own interests, are very likely to be absorbed by a so-called overall ‘public interest’ that is not really ‘their’ public interest”. Groups of people like the labourers and women, as Garnham (1986, p.43-4) puts it, had “access to that sphere was in fact far from universal, but was restricted to bourgeois males”. Going on to argue that “this bourgeois public sphere was actively involved in suppressing the development of an alternative and oppositional proletarian public service based upon the radical press, trade unions and so on”. Habermas could also be criticised for placing far too much emphasis on the periodical press of the early eighteenth century, considering that the periodicals used by Habermas “were by no means the first or the most
common of the early forms of printed material” (Thompson, 1995, p.72).

Decades after his first analysis of the public sphere, Habermas (1997, p.168) presented his own criticisms of his own work. Among other reflections, there is one that is pretty clear: “In fine, my diagnosis of a unilinear development from a politically active public to one withdrawn into a bad privacy, from a ‘culture-debating to a culture-consuming public’, is too simplistic. At the time, I was too pessimistic about the resisting power and above all the critical potential of a pluralistic, internally much differentiated mass public whose cultural usages have begun to shake off the constraints of class”.

Not everything in Habermas’ theory is criticised. Verstraeten withdraws from Habermas’ theory three elements that characterise the public sphere and that can be transported to the contemporary life:

“1. The public sphere requires a ‘forum’ that is accessible to as many people as possible and where a large variety of social experiences can be expressed and changed. 2. In the public sphere, the various arguments and views are confronted through rational discussion. (...) At the same time, the media should offer the widest possible range of interpretation frames so that the citizen is also aware of what he did not choose 3. Systematically and critically checking on government policies is the primary task for this public sphere” (Verstraeten, 1996, p.348)

Garnham also finds virtues in Habermas’ analysis of the public sphere:

“Its first virtue is to focus upon the indissoluble link between the institutions and practices of mass public communication and the institutions and practices of democratic politics. (...) The second virtue of Habermas’ approach is to focus on the necessary material resource base for any public sphere. Debate on the relationship between public communication and democracy is still dominated by the free press model. (...) Its third virtue is to escape from the simple dichotomy of free market versus state control that dominates so much thinking about media policy” (Garnham 1996, pp.360-1)

Habermas (1997b, p.182), himself, has recently considered new ideas related to the public sphere in modern times. Focused on the “now current meaning of the term ‘civil society’, which no longer includes a sphere of an economy regulated via labour, capital, and commodity markets”. Now, institutions like churches, cultural associations, independent media, sport and leisure clubs, and so on constitute “the institutional core of ‘civil society’.
And what about the role of the media in this scenario? Atkinson (1997, p.40) explains: “The relation between the public sphere and the mass media is obvious. The media are a major source of information and knowledge for citizens. Apart from the education system, there are no other channels as important as the media as a vehicle for modern culture. The written and electronic media are thus an important part of the contemporary public sphere.”

Besides all the criticisms made of the private/commercial channels, which were accused of being much more worried about the audiences than about the quality of the programmes, these channels contributed to a change in the scenario of the mass media in Portugal, in the early 1990’s (Cádima, 1995, pp.28-9). This led to the creation of a modern public sphere. Citizens were faced with changes in the media scenario, as well as transformations in the way that people generally began to assume their rights. These rights derive not only from two decades of democracy but also from a new range of interests, namely the ones associated with ecology and people’s rights. People are aware of these rights and use the media to exercise those rights. In Portugal, the television has been especially used for these purposes.

When the commercial channels of television were launched in Portugal (1992), it was easy to understand that the panorama of broadcasting would never be the same. The critics condemned the amount of explicit sex and violence, mainly in one of the two channels, the most aggressive being SIC. Cádima (1995, p.71) does see some irony with the new kind of programmes being produced for the first time in Portugal. He describes what he calls the “crime time”, the programmes that practice “tele-justice”. But this channel also played another role, giving to the general public the time and the space to tell their problems. Together with the stories played in the news, this station boasted a daily programme called “Praça Pública” – “Public Square” – scheduled around 7 pm, before the main news.

Júlia Pinheiro, at the time, one of the journalists at that television channel, reported the stories of the people who had no water at home for a considerable number of days, the stories of handicapped people who could not move because there were no ramps in a particular area, the stories of factories throwing toxic wastes close to residential zones, and so on. The victims explained to the nation their various problems. Very often, this was a programme with lots of confusion and agitation. To the normal viewer it seemed that the people finally found a place to expose their problems, and they took each one of the cases as if it was a matter of life or death. Most of the time, the authorities, the organisations or the individuals responsible for the problems reported would find a solution for them. As if it was as simple as magic apparently is. This programme did not last for a long period of time, probably because it was not profitable, although it did not implied large costs. Even
though, it began to be very common to hear the expression “we are going to call SIC” whenever someone had a dispute with powerful institutions that could not be solved through the dialogue between the two parties.

3 - The concept of ‘public interest’

“Public interest” is a problematic term that cannot be equated with what interests the public (Blumler, 1992). In order to understand and clarify the concept of ‘public interest’ it is useful to begin by examining the public and the television audience. Potentially, nowadays, almost every citizen of a developed country can be integrated in this ‘public’ group. Mainly if we consider the rapid spread of the television sets per home and the amount of hours that a ‘normal’ person spends watching television per day.

‘Immense’ is a word that can describe the ‘public’. But it has to be used in addition with three other concepts: ‘diversity’, ‘no sense of group’, and ‘unpredictability’. The first one seems self-explanatory. The latter can be discussed. ‘No sense of group’ because it is impossible to find one common denominator to all the people who belong to the ‘public’, although there certainly are various similarities in the tastes of the majority.

‘Unpredictability’ in the sense that people change. And so do the desires and tastes that each one of us has. What we, today, assume is valid can be different tomorrow. Siune (1998, pp.5-6) stresses this factor: “What will be considered the ‘public interest’ in the future from a theoretical versus a political point of view? Do we speak of the same when we say public responsibility? Can we, today, even in theory, speak of one great mass public interest?”

We should not ignore all the developments of the techniques to measure the wishes of the audiences. But the direct result is that they influence the television channels to broadcast for the majorities. And what about the minorities? Are they not ‘public’ as well? They are, but they have a difficult mission: how to explain to the owners of the television channels (the private interests and, sometimes, even the state) that, at least certain, alternative programmes – which, obviously, are not profitable – can be important to the balance of specific parts of society. Although there are examples of this practice (Channel 4, in the United Kingdom), this problem has to be included in a general context: the ‘public’, in general, do not have channels of expression.

This matter has been pointed out by Syvertsen (1998, pp.5-6) and can be resumed as the capacity that the ‘public’ has to express itself. In her study, she had difficulties deciding “how to ascertain the public interest in broadcasting”. And she explains why: “In contrast to the state, the industry and the broadcasters, which have both the financial and human
resources to engage in continual lobbying and who express their interests as a matter of routine in official publications, comments to broadcasting committees, annual reports and policy-documents, the population at large is not organised so as to be able to coherently argue their views”.

Many authors have distinguished between two ways of conceiving the ‘public’: the citizens and the consumers (see, for example, Syvertsen and McQuail). As consumerism demands a precise and concrete act – to acquire something or to use a service – it is easily measurable. The same does not apply to citizenship; the concept cannot be measured or even observed as a visible phenomena. So, the broadcasters can only try to guess, based on common sense, what are the feelings of the members of the ‘public’ while citizens. In his particular way of approaching the question, Williams (1996, p.2) goes even further. He is referring to Australia but the argument could be generalised: “Yet where is the debate? When was the public asked directly to say what it wants to hear and see from its program-makers now and into next century?”

McQuail (1994, p.135) not only associates the concept of ‘public interest’ to the idea of ‘general welfare’. “This means, in practice, that mass media are not the same as any other business or service industry, but often carry out some tasks which contribute to the wider and longer-term benefit of society as a whole, especially in cultural and political matters, over and above their own ostensible organisational goals”.

Although he acknowledges that the media, sometimes, use this as a pretext to obtain privileges, many other interests frequently are put over the ‘public interest’, when someone argues that knows what this really is. In the recent years, as we shall see later, economic targets have been considered extremely important, perhaps more important than any ‘public interest’. Atkinson is clear about this:

“If television is not accessible to everyone, if it neglects certain genres of certain publics, if it is not clearly identified as having to serve the public sphere by forming a realm of public forum, if it does not seek to get through to the public at large, if it is subordinated to private economic interests or to the political interests of the government, it cannot properly serve the public interest or observe its potential role which is precisely that of providing citizens with the public sphere” (Atkinson, 1997, p.41)

Besides this, it is frequently referred to as the existence of ‘gatekeepers’ of the ‘public interest’. Berger (1995, pp.76-7) does not accept the idea that these people (mainly the media personnel) are trying to change the ideas of the public. But they normally belong “to the same socio-economic class and thus tend to have certain interests in common, certain ideological beliefs and political identifications that they tend to share, even though
their companies may be competing with one another”. Which means that we can be receiving the type of product that these professionals think that we want to see. As the group is ‘immense’ and ‘diverse’, they will be certainly fulfilling the desires of some of us, but not necessarily the needs of everyone.

McQuail (1994, p.135) presents, in the sequence of his ratiocination, one version of the ‘public interest’ that can be seen as “the outcome of a process of democratic debate and decision-making”. But this process has to be analysed with caution, since it deals with ‘specific circumstances’ that can change. In the democratic societies, there is generally a recognised concern about the interests of certain groups, like the children, the elderly, the minority races, and the handicapped people. The aim is not only to give them specific programmes, but also to protect them – as vulnerable groups - from certain types of possible offences (see Syvertsen, 1998, pp.225-34).

Furthermore, ‘public interest’ media counts for little if large sections of the public are denied access to it. Melody (1993, pp.17-9) considers this problem particularly relevant regarding new technologies: “Many individuals and organisations can benefit substantially from the rapid expansion of the information and communication sector, but at least some are likely to be disadvantaged, in both relative and absolute terms, especially if traditional public and social services are displaced, downgraded or made more expensive”. Melody argues that the challenge for public policy is to ensure that this will not lead to deeper divisions.

In the past, democratic societies assumed the right to be informed and to have access to the media, as well as the right to reply should a citizen, or a group of citizens, feel the media has unfairly treated them. The question remains about the future. Melody argues that it is fundamental to begin with “the process of redefining the public interest in the information society”. A requirement in this new process “will be to enhance education and training programmes, so that an increasing portion of society obtains the skills and income necessary to benefit from the new opportunities” (ibid. p.29-30).

4 - Public service of broadcasting

“There has never been a generally accepted version of the theory of ‘public service broadcasting’ (as it is widely referred to in Europe)” (McQuail, 1994, p.126) but it now seems that there is less consensus about Public Service Broadcasting’s virtues, and the functions it ought to play. Although a government-appointed committee in Britain (Peacock, 1986) defined eight principles that are considered to be directly connected to the idea of Public Service of Broadcasting (PSB) – “geographical universality of provision
and reception; the aim of providing for all tastes and interests; catering for minorities; having a concern for national identity and community; keeping broadcasting independent from government and vested interests; having some element of direct funding by the public (thus not only from advertisers); encouraging competition in programmes and not just for audiences; and encouraging the freedom of broadcasters” (ibid., pp.126-7). McQuail argues that there are still many “variations according to national priorities and traditions”. But still, he stresses to main factors attributed to PSB: diversity and quality.

In the same line of thought, Blumler (1992, p.32) says that “pluralism of many kinds – regional, linguistic, political, cultural, and in taste values – was a hallmark of public service broadcasting organization and programming throughout Western Europe”. When it comes to consider the criteria of the PSB, he points out the ethic of comprehensiveness, generalised mandates of the heads, diversity, pluralism and range, cultural vocation, non-commercialism, and finally, place in politics.

Many authors have defined the functions and social roles of the PSB. McQuail and Siune (1986, p.49) resume the ideas: “Generally public broadcasting has been largely and widely expected to use its monopoly position to fulfil social functions, which include giving access to diverse voices and reaching the whole public with information, education and culture”. The social functions are also referred to by Humphreys (1996, p.122), when he says that “it should be pointed out that from its earliest days public-service broadcasting has played an important role as an agent of national and societal integration and stabilisation”. And Atkinson (1997, p.50) adds other generalisations: “The missions of public television have traditionally, and virtually automatically, been identified according to the major objectives of providing information, education, entertainment and culture. It must be admitted that these missions have lost a great deal of their meaning over the past few years, partly because they have often been assigned to private channels as well”.

Some researchers can draw a practical view of PSB. Pleitgen exposes his own ideas of what should be the orientation of a public station of television:

“It must introduce order to the information chaos, explain the enormous social changes, reduce fears as well as set journalistic and ethical standards.

In addition, it also has the task, in view of the increasing isolation of the individual, to ensure a sense of community, to guarantee the participation of all citizens in the process of forming the political will and to relate as closely as possible to the citizens in its programmes.

Public broadcasting must stand for reliable information, which calls for authentic reporting. Reporters must be responsible for the truth of their reports. This requires personnel and costs money, but it is a duty to the public and a market opportunity
Golding establishes the different opinions that the people who are in the business might have about the missions of the mass media. First, he quotes a former Director-General of the BBC, Charles Curran:

“It is the broadcaster’s role, as I see it, to win public interest in public issues. The organisation of political consent is more difficult in a complex society than it has ever been before. If broadcasting can arouse public interest it can increase public understanding... Broadcasters have a responsibility, therefore, to provide a rationally based and balanced service of news which will enable adult people to make basic judgements about public policy in their capacity as voting citizens of a democracy”

(Golding, 1993, p.4)

But, then, Golding quotes Chris Moncrief, from the Press Association lobby: “For myself I never yet been able to locate a conscience even if I wanted to struggle with it. We are in the business to write stories to sell newspapers. I think we are part of the entertainment industry at the downmarket end. We do it for money. And if that serves the public at the end of the day –well, that’s a bonus” (ibid.).

Although this statement refers to the press, it could be transported to the television. But being a Public Service Broadcaster does not seem to be easy. Juneau (1997, p.12) shows the two different scenarios that they have to consider: “If, on the one hand, the audience of public television is too small, political authorities may consider them to be an élitist luxury. If, on the other hand, they try to expand their audience by resorting to more lightweight programmes like those offered by private competition, then people question the purpose they serve”. These are questions that began to be raised after the commercialisation of the sector.

Siune and Truetzschler (1992, p.104) show how the nature of PSB has been changing: “In all European countries, dual or mixed systems have replaced the public monopolies which existed ten years ago. Pure public monopolies without advertising no longer exist. Even the number of countries with public broadcasting that combines licence fees with advertising has decreased. The majority of countries now enjoy a dual system whereby public stations have to compete with private commercial one”. One of the implications of this new situation is that the actors on the move also change:

“Different actors are active with regard to developments in national broadcasting; some are in favour of and stimulate new technological and commercial initiatives,
while others oppose them or try to make them conform with the traditional values of the public system. Governments, still the most dominant actors in regard to decision-making, are torn between old loyalties, political and cultural obligations, economic considerations and commercial pressures”

(Siune and Truetzschler, 1992, p.108)

More recently, McQuail and Siune (1998, p.5) concluded that “public service monopolies, with national obligations, have disappeared, and the content has increasingly become internationalised and commercialised”. Another conclusion about the role of the PSB is given by Atkinson (1997, p.74): “There is no perfect television, just as there is no perfect market. A public television channel which is exempt from revenue from advertising comes close to the ideal, but departs from it if it confines itself to providing a programme which does not aim to reach the widest possible audience through the diversity of its content”.

But does this mean that PSB is condemned? In a very relaxed style of research, Williams (1996, p.1) wrote a book called “Normal service won’t be resumed” that begins like this: “This book is not an obituary. It may look like one at times, but my intention is to draw attention to the massive evidence of public service broadcasting’s deep malaise. It is not yet terminal but is on the trolley to intensive care”. This author is not the only one to speak about the crisis of the PSB. Atkinson (1997, p.31) makes a link between this crisis and the ones that can be observed in other public institutions. But this is not only a phenomenon that can be explained by a simple generalisation. It also has to do with expectations. PSB “is expected to do better that the private channels in embodying the public service ideal of which it is no longer allowed the monopoly”. PSB “is expected to be productive, efficient, capable of generating its own income and able to attract ‘consumers’. It is also expected to differ from the private channels in its programming. So it is expected to be similar and different at the same time” (ibid. p.25).

The main threats that PSB has to deal with come not only from the commercial channels, but also from the new technologies. This has financial implications that many would argue show PSB facing a deeper crisis. In Achille’s point of view (quoted by Atkinson, 1997, p.82), there are two more problems – those concerning identity and functioning. “If the identity crisis could be resolved, the financial problem – essentially a question of political will – could then be addressed”. The main problem seems to reside in the functional question. Facing these problems, what will happen in the future? Siune and Truetzschler (1992, p.194) argue that “in the brave new world of market forces and of ‘television without frontiers’, public broadcasting of the traditional kind – national, non-commercial and monopolistic – does not seem clearly justified and is subject to major assaults in some countries and irritating sniping in others, from new as well as old enemies”. According to
these authors, the destiny of the PSB is projected because steps were not taken further in the direction of the new technological, industrial and economic challenges. Raboy (1996, p.5) takes for granted that “national networks, publicly or privately owned, can no longer be expected to be forces of cohesion; they can, however, be highly effective distribution systems of programmes of importance to the communities they serve. For this to occur, we need a new definition of public service broadcasting suitable to a new public culture, global in scope and experienced locally”.

Some organisations have already begun to work in what they want PSB to become in the future. In this case, the model is European PSB. In December of 1994, the Council of Europe’s Fourth European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy “identified the safeguarding on independent, appropriately funded public service broadcasting institutions as essential to the functioning of the media in a democratic society” (Raboy, 1996, p.1). This commission defined a nine-point mission statement:

1) a common reference point for all members of the public;
2) a forum for broad public discussion;
3) impartial news coverage;
4) pluralistic, innovative and varied programming;
5) programming which is both of wide public interest and attentive to the needs of minorities;
6) reflection of the different ideas and beliefs in pluri-ethnic and multicultural societies;
7) a diversity of national and European cultural heritage;
8) original productions by independent producers; and
9) extended viewer and listener choice by offering programmes not provided by the commercial sector
(Raboy, 1996, p.15)

Atkinson traces two different scenarios for the PSB in the future:

“On the one hand, public television might become more and more commercialized, which would justify its privatisation. On the other hand, the image of a television channel which focuses on fulfilling a few traditional public service obligations would suggest the creation of a sort of cultural ghetto which would only draw an extremely limited audience: a public television channel which would merely offer programmes off-loaded by private channels because they are unprofitable”
(Atkinson, 1997, p.28)

And this author admits the possibility of nothing happening, for the following reasons:

“Unless the legitimacy of public television is rethought and restored, the only
factor ensuring their continuity is the force of inertia specific to received ideas: public television continues to exist because it is already there, because people are used to it, because it was predominant in the past, and because it is still an important symbol to which people are attached. Inertia has its limits, however, and does not constitute a very sound basis for ensuring the future of that television” (Atkinson, 1997, p.73)

5 - The coexistence of public and private television channels

If we take into account one of the most studied examples of acquaintance between public and private channels – the British case – we can see that competition is strong. Each station has had to define its space and style of broadcasting in relation to the public and modify its strategies accordingly. In Britain, because of the success of ITV in the mid-1950s, the BBC shifted towards more popular programming (Syvertsen, 1998, p.123). But how can a new station fight for audiences and be profitable? In the case of ITV, “the key to its survival and success was that it made a point of presenting an alternative to the BBC’s style of programming” (ibid., p.123). While BBC was still too formal, ITV presented itself as the “people television”, with popular programmes (quiz-shows and serials) and presenters who were supposed to perform and talk as themselves. Garnham (1978, p.25) stresses the idea that the strengths of ITV are “its diversity, the very real difference in character of the companies and in some cases their strong regional identity”. But it is important to bear that ITV “was not set up outside the Public Service Broadcasting system and was, and remains, a state-regulated network with public service remit” (Scannel, 1995, p.28). One of the reasons that sustain the need to have another channel that “spoke not just to the mass audience of what it labelled ‘the duopoly’, but to those minorities and social groups whose needs, interests, and tastes were not adequately served under the existing arrangements” (ibid., p.30).

Besides the obvious cases of success of the commercial television, Blumer (1992, pp.32-3) is not so sure of the advantages of the new market. “In essence, the West European fear is that the advent of commercial television will shift the emphasis from a principled to a pragmatic pluralism, yielding only that amount and those forms of diversity that are likely to pay. At risk could be the poorly placed segments of the population: the underclass; the less informed; children; elderly; minority cultural interests; and holders of less orthodox opinions”. And Garnham (1986, p.38) even speaks about the “destruction of the public service as the preferred mode of the allocation of cultural resources”, which, in his opinion, results from competition.
The coexistence of public and private channels is a reality in Western Europe, but there is no consensus about the way that these two different forms of broadcast should interact. Raboy identifies the two existing schools of thought concerning the commercial channels and introduces a third one:

“One has it that commercial and public service objectives are wholly incompatible and cannot be combined within a single service. The other view is that they can coexist, and public and private broadcasting can compete in advertising marketplace to the mutual benefit of both. I would like to suggest that there is a third conceptual and structural approach to this question: assuming that certain activities of broadcasting can be financed commercially and others can not, why not redistribute the benefits of the commercial sector to finance the non-commercial sector?”

(Raboy, 1996, pp.7-8)

Raboy (1997, p.84) is now concerned about the new factors that may alter the coexistence of the two types of broadcasting: “Balance has until recently been guaranteed by the distinction between public and private services, but is now threatened by two phenomena: the systemic disequilibrium shifting strongly towards private commercial services, and the effects of commercialisation on public services”. But, still, the differences remain. He clarifies the different aims and objectives that the different channels of broadcasting have:

“All broadcasting, to be successful, must be programme-driven. Public broadcasting, however, is policy-motivated, while private broadcasting is profit-motivated. Public broadcasting is broadcasting with a purpose: to enhance the quality of public life, empowering individuals and social groups to participate more fully and equitably. Profit-motivated broadcasting is only interested in large audiences. Policy-motivated broadcasting is interested in reaching the largest audience the most effectively, in light of the specific objective of the programme concerned”

(Raboy, 1997, p.84)

Portugal is no exception to this scenario (for a more developed analysis of this case, see chapter three). The competition created by the commercial channels pulled the public service towards an historical dilemma: to “reinforce its informative role and taking the risk of serving the minorities or fighting for the audiences, and, then, loosing its cultural specificity” (Traquina, 1997, p.18). Generally, the channels choose to fight, introducing more entertainment giving less importance to cultural and educational programmes. According to Traquina, this is also happening in Portugal, as well as an increasing of the investment of the public television in programmes that attract large numbers of viewers,
such as football (ibid., p.59). However, this costs money, and as we saw before, leads to a financial crisis. Once again, the Portuguese case is no exception. Another Portuguese researcher, Nobre-Correia (1996, pp.227-8), also stresses this phenomenon of the serious crisis that the European public services have in common. And he argues that those stations have two possible solutions: the redefinition of their social function or their simple disappearance.

6 - The role of television in social, cultural, economical and political contexts

During the last few years, the coexistence of the two different systems of broadcasting has established across Europe. What consequences does this change have in the cultural context? McQuail (1986, p.9) argues that the “media abundance”, in general, “holds out a promise of cultural diversity as well as a threat of ‘massification’ of culture”. And he also speaks about a generalised effort in all countries “to preserve and extend some of the social and cultural benefits which public broadcasting has been thought to bring” (ibid., p.10).

There seems to be an agreement about the functions that public television should have in society, mainly when it coexists with private channels: “to educate, inform and entertain” (Achille and Miege, 1994, p.33). Humphreys (1996, p.119), writing about the characteristics of the public service, explains that the bodies that rule these stations have instructions “to supply diverse programming, to respect cultural, religious and political beliefs, to cater to cultural variety, to be objective, impartial and balanced in their reporting, to respect principles of democratic pluralism, and so on”. These are concerns that are directly connected to the idea of respecting society as it is.

Blumler and Hoffmann-Riem (1992, pp.212-3) state: “unlike private television, which is predominantly accountable to the market, public television is rooted in the social system, from which it draws its existence”. In this context, the authors argue that the public service should define itself “as an influential factor in cultural reproduction and renewal”. To achieve this aim, it should provide programmes in “culturally significant areas” and “institute forums of cultural debate” for instance. And the same is said about the social functions of the public service. Public stations should “serve as a trustee for the maturing development, quickening curiosity and educative needs of children and growing youngsters” (ibid., pp.214-5). But the implications of these statements go against the reality that has been proved before: public channels are becoming just like the private ones, without concerns about the specific cultural and educational obligations that the public in general seems to expect from them.

This idea is confirmed by Siune (1998, p.2) when she argues that the content of the media
has changed during the past years: “On television all over Europe we find less educational programming, and more and more entertainment programmes which, furthermore, seem to become more and more alike everywhere”. She asks various questions about the future of this situation, including these two: “Has ‘infotainment’, the combination of information and entertainment, made totally obsolete the educational role which, until recently, was attached to public service mass broadcasting? And what about the media’s role as cultural informant and educator – is it still valid?” (ibid., p.2). As the research goes on, Siune and Hultén conclude “from a national point of view, informative and educational functions are still fulfilled to various degrees by public service channels because they have an obligation to do so, and to a much lesser degree by prestigious national commercial channels” (ibid., p.30). What is important here is that public channels feel the “obligation” instead of feeling what was its original purpose?

But Bakke (1986, p.148) believes that there is a genuine concern about cultural issues in the media, although this researcher thinks that this concern “must be seen as having both economic and political aspects”. McQuail, Siune and Tunstall have no doubts about what is happening: “economic, industrial and market considerations predominate over cultural and social concerns, thus threatening public broadcasting institutions” (1986, p.197). A good example of this is given by Blumler (1992, p.37): “Public broadcasters throughout the world have aimed to provide a goodly amount of educative fare, intended to inform, stimulate and broaden the horizons of children. Private broadcasters have concentrated instead on cartoon programmes, featuring robots, animated and stuffed animals, dolls and a range of animated adventure characters, including space fantasy heroes”.

In the Portuguese case, the commercial channels, leaders of audiences (SIC was leader until 2000 and TVI took the lead from September of that year), show an obvious absence of concern regarding educational purposes. Quoting one interview given by the director of SIC, of those private channels, Traquina (1997, p.115) concludes that, in the view of the private broadcasters, “television does not exist to educate”. The other Portuguese private operator – TVI – understood the importance of broadcasting to children, but this option was made concerning the quantity of cartoons instead of the quality of educational programmes (ibid., p.125). The question that the author asks is if the civil society and the political parties have a genuine concern in terms of having a public television able to defend the “vulnerable values” (ibid., p.145).

At this point, what relationship can be established between the cultural purposes and the aim to achieve profits? Juneau (1997, p.15) argues “marketing is fine” because “we need more trade, more economic activity”. But he reminds us “we also need more and better education, more training, more enlightenment, more understanding of what our world is
all about”. And, in his opinion, the public television has a special role in this mission. Atkinson (1997, p.20) shares this opinion: “At the social level it was argued that broadcasting could fulfil certain roles, but the most important was doubtless its educational role”. And this consists in “educating by alerting the public to certain social problems, educating by broadcasting a wide range of knowledge on a large scale”.

During the 1980s, the policies of the media changed and, in general, they become less concerned with the contents and more interested in profit and finance considerations. McQuail (1986, p.10) explains that “European policy used to focus on the role of the media in democracy, on threats to diversity of opinion and information, on preventing moral or social disorder, on preserving and making available the cultural heritage, on maintaining social cohesion”. But he adds that “these concerns have not gone away, but they seem temporarily in abeyance, as if put on one side until matters of economy and structure are dealt with”. Years later, McQuail (1994, p.163) concluded that “commercial media have to make profits to survive, and this often involves taking decisions which directly influence content”. According to him, “publicly owned media do not escape an equivalent economic logic”.

Humphreys (1996, p.161), shows the interpretation that the Right-wing libertarians have in respect to this “marketisation of broadcasting” as something that “would free the viewer from the old fashioned moral paternalism of ‘nanny state’ broadcasting and deliver genuine consumer sovereignty in its place”. Here the industry would be free “to pursue profits in a much more competitive market for audiences, would assuredly respond to popular preferences”. But Humphreys also elucidates the opinion of the defenders of the public-service paradigm, who “argued that the commercial principle was quite incapable of catering to the full diversity of public informational requirements”. The main certainties of these groups of people are that “the free market was definitely not conductive to the supply of quality programmes”(ibid., p.162) and that “the market would badly serve the need for the culturally diverse, ‘social responsibility’ kind of programming provided in the past” (ibid., p.164). So, we have a dilemma: is the economical logic of television good or bad? Or in what ways might it be good and might it be bad. Much depends on which system is employed.

First of all, we have to bear in mind that broadcasting is not a business like the others. McQuail resumes the characteristics that introduce the difference:

- Media are hybrid in respect of markets, product and technology.
- Media have high fixed costs.
- Media business involves creativity and uncertainty.
- Products can be multiply used/recycled.
- Media tend naturally to concentration.
- Media business is difficult to enter.
- Media are not just any other business because of the public interest aspect” (McQuail, 1994, p.168)

As the media markets from Europe were becoming more demanding, the companies had to find solutions outside their countries. The “increased competition”, the “high cost of programme production and the much lower costs of imports”, and the “insufficient advertising expenditure to fund expensive programme production on the large number of new commercial stations” were responsible for a turn-over on the process: an increase in the imports, especially from the United States of America (Siune and Truetzschler, 1992, pp.76-7). In short, high production costs and low import costs led to fragmented markets.

Another question that is fundamental in the economic logic of broadcasting is the funding of the companies; if they are financed through licence fees (the case of the BBC), they will probably have a “high degree of independence and means that unpopular programmes are not a test of courage” (Pleitgen, 1996, p.13). If they were publicly subsidised, they would have little concerns about profits, unless the Government is pressing them. If they depend on advertising, the audiences will be decisive. As DeFleur (1989, p.138) says, “since the most central media system goal is economic profit, sex and violence or any other attention-getting and attention-maintaining content is functional in the sense that even though it may be of low taste, it maximizes the size of the audience, the more the distributor and producer can charge for advertising”.

Although some authors regret the fact that public television stations are increasingly reliant on advertising, some others think that this is the best way to “enable public television to stay in touch with the viewer demand” and, at the same time, the best form to get “independence with regard to the political authorities” (Atkinson, 1997, pp.52-3). He establishes the main differences between the way that different companies make money: “Television financed by advertising or subscription seeks to get through to consumers; television financed by the public seeks to get through to citizens” (ibid., p.55) so, the big difference is to be found between different conceptions of audience: consumers or citizens? (See also Golding, 1993). The big problem to be solved seems to be the one presented by Dahlgren (1997, p.14): “The immediate policy danger is that, with increased homogenisation, the public will begin asking why they should pay a licence fee for channels that provide an output not significantly different from that of those which are supported by advertising”.

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According to Humphreys (1996), during the last years, the market has been gaining influence against the political strength that used to fulfil some of its purposes through the television. In the beginning, as McQuail and Siune (1986, p.3) explain, “the legitimation for this political control was the limited number of air waves, which made very few channels available for national broadcasting. Formally, public regulation was accepted for technical reasons. But behind most of the regulation was a belief in the power of the electronic mass media and the fear of this power if used for purposes contrary to the establishment”. Portugal was no exception: “Since the beginning, in 1957, the Portuguese television has existed in the shadow of the political power” (Traquina, 1997, p.48).

In the present, the “primacy” of politics is being replaced by the “primacy” of the market (Humphreys, 1996, p.111). “From the 1950’s expansion of mass television onwards, the broadcast media were increasingly perceived to be crucially important for politicians seeking both electoral support and popular legitimacy for their policies”. Even when there was no direct control, politicians had other means of determining the activity of broadcasting. As they were the ones who determined the media policy, they could control the fees, invoke security reasons to censor the broadcasters and use the media to advertise their politics under the guise of public information programmes. (ibid., p.144-5).

Brants and Siune (1998, p.128) remind us that “the official and politically dominant discourse about the political role of broadcasting in most countries of Western Europe saw television as providing the ‘windows’ through which citizens could follow what went on in the world in general and in the political process in particular”. This is considered the “old order” of broadcasting; the politicians had two different ways of being present in the broadcasting. By taking part in the advisory bodies, they could influence the activity of the producers; by having a political activity, they would be shown in the news and other informational programmes.

Even if we agree that “liberalization has diluted the effects of politicisation”, Humphreys (1996, p.195) argues that there still are some remaining signs of the control of the politicians over the public stations. He says: “The public channels continued to remain vulnerable to external political pressure and to internal colonisation. The new private commercial channels were bound to be freer from the kind of direct manipulation. They were also more likely to be generally apolitical and predominantly entertainment-orientated”.

About the vulnerability of the public televisions, Golding (1993, p.12) gives the example of what has been happening to the BBC: “All states seek to promote the best view of their policies and practices, but in recent years the UK media have been under unprecedented pressure to reflect and disseminate government views. The BBC particularly has had a
torrid time defending its editorial independence in the face of the frequent and intense
government hostility”.
But even when there are reports in favour of the effort that the broadcasting companies do
to preserve their independence, there are also researchers who argue that the media,
including the television, are not neutral in the process of democracy in Western Europe. It
is the case of Garnham:
“...In such a society the media of mass-communication clearly play a vital role and
the control of those media is a matter of central political concern. If we believe in a
democratic society, we need to look at the structure of our media and see what
changes are needed to bring them closer to those ideas. We need to analyse the way
in which the means of production of our consciousness are controlled, so that they
can be brought under full social control. Of one thing we can be certain. The media
are not neutral in the struggle for democracy”
(Garnham, 1978, p.14)
Golding’s research arrives at a pessimistic conclusion relating to the recent role of the
media in shaping democracy (1993b, p.100). He states: “the communications media have
failed democracy”, explaining that: “If our ideal but none the less worthy intention is that
citizens should be afforded an opportunity adequately to inform themselves about social
and political process, then the media as currently constituted do rather less than serve this
need”.
McQuail (1998, p.224) also states that “quality of performance of the media in informing
citizens still matters a great deal for democracy”. He reminds us “issues of concentration,
diversity and national cultural and minority integrity are still hotly debated. More
importance will probably be attached to questions of equity in the distribution of access to
the new communication channels, just because we are living in an information society”.

7 - Choices and diversity in the contents of broadcasting

The contents of the media can, according to Bakke (1986, p.133), be studied in relation to
four different characteristics: “identity; quality; balance/diversity; and commercialism”.
“Identity” because “some countries are worried about foreign threats to regional and national
cultural identity” (ibid., p.136). The “quality” aspect will be analysed in the next point of this
chapter and the “commercialism” has already been referred to in the previous one. As for
“balance/diversity”, he explains that these are issues that “are related to either political or
social dimensions in the societies’ social structure”. Which means, for instance, different
ideologies, values or different policies. Bakke argues, “government has been the one type of
actor which has felt most responsible for securing diversity in broadcast content” (ibid., p.140). Although the governments are responsible for the media policy, we should consider this only in respect to public television channels. For the simple reason that, as we saw before, the government has little possibility to intervene in private broadcasting companies. Even though, Raboy (1996, p.12) says that it can be argued that private broadcasting, “can also fulfil public service goals” through the programmes that play. But this only happens when prompted by policy. That is why he says: “This likelihood points to one of the most subtle arguments in favour of public broadcasting: public broadcasting sets the overall tone of the market, acts as a catalyst and serves as an example to all broadcasting services”. But Channel 4, a British commercially funded channel, seems to be an exception to this. Scanell (ibid., p.38) clearly says that this channel “is remarkable proof of the continuing adaptability and relevance of public service values in contemporary society. It is both fully commercial and fully committed to public service goals”. This can be seen through the programmes that this station broadcasts, namely those directed to different races and to other minority groups of the society (for example, the gay community).

In what concerns the public services, Raboy (1996, p.84) argues that a “world declaration” is needed to “situate broadcasting as a public service comprised of different elements which specific structural arrangements and purposes, but all dedicated to the improvement of humankind”. He defends an alteration in the scenario: “it is private sector broadcasting that should be conceptualised as the complementary form, providing services that public institutions can afford to abandon, not vice versa as at present”. Nowadays, in many countries, it is very difficult to distinguish public from private channels, mainly when the public ones also broadcast advertisement.

This reality of providing the same type of products is the consequence of the coexistence and competition between public and private. In order to seduce their viewers, the public services had to modify their programmes. But this new strategy costs money. Achille and Miege (1994, p.31) argue that the competition increased the costs of the public stations, not only when they buy programmes but also when it comes to paying salaries. “The financial crisis that flows from this situation is heightened by the present inability of states to draw more revenue from budgets which are already heavily in deficit”. But the question is: in what way are public channels changing? According to them the strategy of the public channels is to change from “extensive to intensive television”. Which includes a preference for three kinds of programmes: “prestige productions (for example, plays which are high cost and occupy a small proportion of the schedule)”, “essential production (light entertainment, feature films – whose production costs are high and which occupy a high proportion of the schedule)”, and “mandatory productions (education programmes,
McQuail (1998, p.124) argues: “as long as public service television keeps to its remit, as it has in some countries, the expansion of the system could increase diversity”. The problem is that “the more it reacts to competitive pressure by similar programming the more there is a loss of diversity”. But, according to him, this is not necessarily bad. While the public channels may broadcast more entertainment then they used to in the past, the commercial channels may also make an effort to perform “better”. As each of the two different types of broadcasting companies is conducting itself to be more close to the other one, the similarities begin to seem more apparent. This is why McQuail says that “there may have been no substantial gain in diversity as a result of the new abundance, although there is certainly more choice for viewers”.

Again because of the high costs of the productions, both public and commercial channels from Western Europe tend to buy foreign programmes, most of which originated in the United States of America. This all adds up to a closing of the gap between the two supposed different types of television station. In Berger’s opinion (1995, p.76), this process of “cultural homogenisation or standardization of media content” is “particularly dangerous”.

Melody (1993, p.29) stresses that the diversity of sources is “being significantly reduced”: “The diversity in the broadcast programming that now arises from a variety of different national industry structures, ranging from national public service to commercial, is gravitating towards a much more homogeneous international structure responding primarily to the interests of global mass-market advertising”. And Dahlgren (1997, p.13) says that, besides the variation among countries, “it can be said that, generally, the increased commercialisation of television has not augmented the diversity of programming, whether judged in terms of form or content”. He even argues that the opposite is happening: “programming has tended to follow the classic logic of homogenisation and has been aimed at the large, general market, with the output of all channels becoming increasingly standardized”.

Murdock (1993, p.4) examines the relationship between the concentration of financing and ownership of broadcasters, and what he sees as being a reduction in the diversity of programming. He reminds us that “sceptics have been asking how far a communications system dominated by private ownership can guarantee the diversity of information and argument required for effective citizenship”. So, here the problem is not only getting a diversity of choice to the viewers, but also giving them diversity of information.
8 – Quality ‘versus’ popularity of the programmes

As McQuail (1986, p.139) reminds us, “the different actors have separate definitions and interpretations of quality”. “Generally governments emphasize traditional ‘high-cultural’ standards, while actors such as private, commercial broadcasting and liberal (right-wing) parties interpret quality as ‘that which audience likes’, i.e. content which is preferred by a majority, so-called popular content”. This issue of quality has been explicitly stated in the media policy of Great Britain and Italy, but what is quality? According to McQuail, (1994, p.137), “an indirect demand for high quality may be said to be found in regulations banning violence, pornography and blasphemy in video and television programmes”. However, the proliferation of channels also had an impact in this subject: it “led to new fears of sensationalism and lowered informational quality”.

Referring to the work of Ishikawa and Muramatsu, Blumler (1992, p.30) says that the concept of quality in television has “multiple meanings”. One of the interpretations that it has is the one that is “associated with the traditional cultural vocation of public service broadcasting”, where it is included not only forms of culture, but educational and sports programming. One of the fears that Blumler presents is the one connected with the financial crisis of broadcasting: there is anxiety about the possibility of quality being sacrificed because of the easy and cheap access to other products, namely the kind of “fast-food-like” American programmes. At the same time, “the risk-taking for innovation will become less common when every rating point counts” (ibid., p.31). This trend also leaves public stations in one role of mere buyer or sponsor of products, which can lead to the loss of control of the output (Atkinson, 1997, p.62). Analysing the public television, Blumler introduces three possible models:

“By programme type, presuming that if commercial television concentrates on entertainment and topical news, public television should offer documentaries, plays, education, the arts and sciences”; “by audience target, presuming that if commercial – and especially advertising-supported – television concentrates on mass appeal programmes, public television should serve the neglected minorities”; by “qualitative priorities, differing from market-driven television no so much by the areas of programming presented as by the characteristics – of functions, gratifications, standards and quality – striven for in them, as well as by its cultivation of a reputation for accessibility to public concerns and responsiveness to public needs”

(Blumler, 1992, p.208)
Besides any kind of model in which public television should (or not) be integrated, Atkinson (1997, pp.58-9) argues that the challenge of these channels is “to provide a range of television genres and to take account of subjects which can be of interest to the various audiences while producing these genres and addressing these audiences in a form which is accessible to the general public”. The ideal should be to produce programmes of ‘high quality’ that can be understood and enjoyed by everyone. So, what is public television expected to broadcast, having the quality factor in mind?

Atkinson (ibid., pp.61-2) explains that public television stations “are expected to be marked by a social concern based on ethics which differ from those of private enterprise, and they must be objective particularly where information is concerned, or impartial, but critical as regards public affairs”. Even more, this author quotes Tracey, stating that: “the nature of public broadcasting would be that any program offered, whatever the genres, should be the best of its kind, the best it can be”. The problem here is the judgement that is implied, because the concept of quality remains without one generally accepted definition.

So, Atkinson presents one possible solution to the kind of products that public channels should broadcast: “the public should be consulted regularly, using various survey methods, to establish how satisfied it is and what its expectations are”.

The question of comparing alleged quality programmes to alleged low-taste programmes has been especially discussed in the United States of America. DeFleur (1989, p.126) reminds us “many who attack the media want them to stop the manufacture and the presentation of popular culture (low-taste material) and present to the public more art, literature, insightful political analyses, good music, high drama, and other forms of elite culture”. Although these issues have been discussed “in the highest political, educational, religious, and legal circles of the nation”, regardless of the criticisms or the attacks, the American mass media “continue to emphasize unsophisticated presentations, popular culture, and content in low taste”. Once again, European private and public channels buy many of the products.

Taking the example of one analysis made by Traquina (1997) in 1993 and 1994, we can conclude that, in Portugal, both public and private channels broadcast high percentages of entertainment. Only the second channel of the public television (RTP2) presents less than 60 per cent of these kinds of programmes (Traquina, 1997, p.108). Besides that, the big option of the strongest commercial channel at the time (SIC) was in the information, taking advantage of the fact that the public television was too close to the political power (ibid., p.115). Although in the beginning of the private channels in Portugal some differences were visible in the scheduling, as the time went on, the similarities became bigger and bigger (ibid., p.68). Like the majority of European countries, Portuguese
broadcasting can also be described as homogenised.

9 - The new media and the new opportunities

As we have already seen, during the “old order” of European electronic media there was subordination to the public service goals, as well as subordination to the political power. There was also a kind of submission to the national values. Then, the broadcasting system began to be confronted with some challenges, as time and the technological evolutions went on. Now there are no more reasons to protect the public service with the argument that there are not enough frequencies. According to McQuail, Mateo and Tapper, there are many factors that contributed to the downfall of that “old order”:

“A decline in the legitimacy of the monopolistic arrangements which support public broadcasting systems”; “a vogue for market solutions and deregulation in communication matters, coupled with a measure of consumer dissatisfaction with a restricted supply of television”; “moves to harmonize rules for broadcasting within the EC and the wider Europe”; “the widespread desire to gain national and European profit from developing hardware and software industries associated with the new technologies”; “popular dissatisfactions with the old ‘official’ cultural regulation and national ‘establishment’ control”

(McQuail, Mateo and Tapper, 1992, pp.10-1)

First of all, in general, economic objectives became stronger in the broadcasting industry and “have gained primacy, creating uncertainty about which or whose culture should be protected, how and by whom”. But besides which, they point out the fears and uncertainties that have been surrounding public television:

“Public broadcasters have become less confident and more uncertain about their role. There has been talk of dangers from new kinds of private monopoly, especially where ownership can cross media, as well as national boundaries. Defenders of cultural quality are alarmed, and the supply of impartial information to service the political system and feed democratic participation and opinion forming is thought to be in danger. A new fear has been added to older anxieties about cultural decline, by the increase in transnationalization and the possible decline of national cultural identity”

(McQuail, Mateo and Tapper, 1992, p.11)

Meanwhile, the new technologies began to destabilise the scenario, in the way that created more opportunities, and “new orders” appeared. As Atkinson (1997, p.22) says, “several commentators in fact consider that the improvement and development of distribution
technologies, of cable and satellite technologies, played a very major role in destabilizing the old television regime”. By developing new infrastructures there is also a development of economic opportunities.

In the logic of the new media, Siune, Roberts and Rolland also considered a range of old and new actors, as well as their aims in the system:

“The media industry (technological goal and economic benefits); the political system (a potential support for the system); the ministries (concerns with commerce, culture, industry, economy, etc); the interdepartmental institutions (coordination in order to carry out a coherent media policy); the political parties (the logic of some parties correspond to the logic of the industry, some are concerned with the cultural policy, some are concerned with employment, some are concerned with the general public); organisations specifically related to mass media (national telecommunication institutions concerned with the monopoly); associations of publishers, advertisers or new agencies; labour unions (expectations of employment); transnational actors (EC, Council of Europe, Unesco, EBU, for example. Aim the political integration, the economic growth and the cultural logic); local and regional actors (local radios, for example. Aim the decentralisation and local democratisation)”

(Siune, Roberts and Rolland, 1986, pp.17-24)

Besides the new actors the new media has created another difference: the need to regulate or coordinate the flow of programme content across national borders in Europe. Patersen, Hirsch and McQuail (1986, p.27) explain that until the early 1980’s it was assumed that each national state could operate it’s broadcasting entirely as it wished according to widely varying cultural and political norms. And they assume that “the question is much more than a matter of technological innovation”, because both the powerful media groups and the governments realised the financial opportunities of the new spectrum.

During the 1980’s the number of European cable television channels measurably increased: “Cable was seen as an essential component of the ‘information age’; it was widely viewed as vital to the development of a modern information technology and telecommunications industrial sector” (Humphreys, 1996, p.164). But this landscape was not only about cable and satellite. Murdock (1993, p.2) presents the whole scenario: “The ‘digital revolution’ which allows voice, sound, text, data and images to be stored and transmitted using the same basic technologies opens up a range of possibilities for new kinds of activity and for novel forms of convergence and interplay between media sectors”. There are many opportunities but also a new context that politicians will have to reframe.
More than ten years after the first approach, McQuail wrote again about this new reality of the media, that now is not so new:

“In the new model, there will be a framework of fairly loose regulation, developed out of existing national legislation and the present European directive, with some new provisions expected in relation to structure, ownership and competition. The model will accommodate various public service requirements and also contain some protected enclaves for particular social needs, especially for politically relevant information, culture, education and the claims of various special interest groups, including the regions. The size, scope and functions of these enclaves will depend on local (i.e. national) political influence. Political deals will be made to neutralize open partisan influences in the new arrangements”

(McQuail, 1998, pp.219-20)

McQuail (1998, p.220) states that the new model of television “ will be a mixture of public and commercial providers with a continuing effort to maintain at least one public channel with a significant share of the audience and not primarily dependent on advertising revenue”. This researcher also believes that “subscription on a programme or channel basis is likely to develop as a significant alternative source of funding to the licence fee, advertising or sponsorship”. McQuail regards the licence fee in its present form to have “only a limited life, but no obviously superior and politically acceptable alternative has yet emerged”. Ferguson (1993, p.27) argues that the changes in general “may become even more significant to the development of national and international economic growth than any of the major transport expansion eras of the past, including canal, rail or highway”.

Chapter 2: The Portuguese Television

1 – History of Portuguese broadcasting

In the 1950s, Portugal was changing from a rural society to a society that included agriculture but also services, commerce and industry (Reis, 1992, vol.4, p.173). In 1953 the Government created the first group to analyse the possibility of a Portuguese television channel. In 1954 the group concluded that there should be given only one frequency of television used by different institutions. This was suggested having in mind the big costs involved in such a medium of mass communication (Teves, 1998, p.25).

At the end of 1955 it was created a company by the name of Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (RTP), divided in three shares: one belonging to the State; one belonging to the private companies of radio diffusion; one belonging to the general public. This company, to which was given the responsibility of fulfilling the public service of television, was “assisted” by a representative of the Government. He had the right to interfere in the decisions of the professionals of RTP whenever he felt that those decisions were illegal or inconvenient to the public interest (Teves, 1998, p.30). This was, probably, the first sign of the interference of the Government in public television, a phenomenon that continues to this day (Público, 30 August 1999).

When the act of the creation was formalised, the minister of Information, Marcello Caetano, said: “Television is an instrument of action, benefice or malefic, according to the criteria that is applied in its utilisation. The Government hopes that the leaders of the new public service will know how to use this instrument as a medium of moral and cultural elevation of the Portuguese people” (Teves, 1998, p.31).

With little equipment and little experience, RTP’s first transmissions were planned only for the area of the capital of the country, Lisbon. In fact, the inhabitants of the city could also see for themselves the first experimental emissions. It was in September of 1956. The idea was to get the people used to the new medium and to train the professionals. In the inaugural speech, the president of the General Assembly of RTP, Monsenhor Lopes da Cruz, stated: “Other nations did this (emissions of television) earlier. But it is undeniable that we are going faster and better than many of them” (Teves, 1998, p.41).

At the end of these transmissions, the general public was not showing enormous excitement; they were waiting for the “real” emissions, to see if it would be worthy. In a text published in the press, RTP said that these experimental programmes would have to finish because of the
costs involved. Besides, this was also the reason given to excuse the company for not having gone to do the same in other parts of the country.

In December that year RTP started the pilot-transmissions to the Lisbon area. The majority of the programmes were movies although the first news bulletin was presented around this time. Then, in February of 1957, the professionals faced their first big test: the visit of Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain. RTP was expected to give this trip complete coverage. The different stages of the Queen’s visit were shown to the viewers a few hours after taking place. In that time, it was estimated the number of viewers almost reached half a million. This occasion was also important for RTP to test its ability to send images to foreign countries. The company responded according to the expectations (Teves, 1998, p.64).

These pilot-transmissions went on, almost without interruptions, until the date when the company started to broadcast officially: 7th March of 1957. It was this date that, for the general public of Portugal, television started (Verbo Enciclopédia Luso Brasileira de Cultura, p.1239). In that time, Portugal was under the dictatorial system led by Salazar. It was a regime known as “Estado Novo” (New State). The fascist Government was facing internal protests, mainly through the students in the universities, who were fighting for liberty and democracy, and through the workers, who were fighting for better salaries and better working conditions. The Government was also facing external pressures, namely through United Nations, which were criticising the Portuguese political attitude towards the African colonies. In the meantime, the first emission was broadcast. Just like it had happened with the radio, the public channel (“Radiotelevisão Portuguesa” – RTP) was used by the Government of Salazar – in a direct or in an indirect way – as an instrument of propaganda (Rodrigues, Nunes et al, 1994, p.355).

Even if it was used for political purposes, RTP also gave the Portuguese people the opportunity to have information about other countries. Besides the limitations, this instrument contributed to the development of minds. It has to be kept in mind that, during this period of the History of the country, access to information and culture was difficult. The existence of this new medium of communication was also important in changing the habits of the Portuguese people (Reis, 1992, vol.5, p.203).

In the year of its foundation, RTP scheduled one and a half hours per day (one hour on Sundays). Two thousand television sets were bought and after one year on air the channel already covered 44 per cent of mainland Portugal continental and reached 58 per cent of the population. Besides the news, the transmissions included live sports, entertainment, theatre and music. Although there was censorship, the most important events and political changes were made known to the Portuguese people through RTP. Two important examples are the independence of Congo and the moon -landing (Reis, 1992, vol.5,
In October of 1958, the Administration of RTP instructed the professionals to give priority to the production of advertisements. Like many other internal rules, this one was ignored (Teves, 1998, p.87). Mainly because the employees thought that the commercial sector was not the most important; they were more concerned with the contents of the programming. Even though, the advertisements on TV started to be different from the ones that people were used to seeing in the cinema as live commercials were performed on TV. The commercials could well be the solution for the high costs of television. Besides, in the beginning of the same year the television tax started to be charged.

The studios of RTP in Porto were opened in October of 1959. During that period, the transmissions of the channel were mainly filled with live entertainment and news. But there was also a strong component of sports and culture. The theatre had a considerable space in the programming set and there were some shows that are still remembered by the older viewers. Teaching correct Portuguese, giving information about agriculture, and teaching how to cook were formulas of success in those days (Teves, 1998, pp.92-3). In that year, 1959, RTP conducted a survey among the viewers about the programming: 400 000 questionnaires were distributed and 82 227 answers were received. Here are some of the results: in Lisbon, 77 per cent of the respondents watched television at home and 23 per cent in public places; in Porto, 65 per cent of the viewers watched at home and 35 per cent watched in public places; in the rest of the country, 19 per cent of the viewers watched at home and 81 per cent in public places. The people showed a clear preference for entertainment programmes (96 per cent), theatre (95 per cent) and quiz shows (82 per cent), followed by the news and the actual programmes (Teves, 1998, p.104).

In 1960 the station began to show an interest for foreign series. At the same time that Salazar was trying to avoid the war in the African colonies, RTP was showing De Gaulle in negotiations with the Argelians for their independence. The sixties were also the decade when a new generation of musicians began to appear on Portuguese television: The Beatles and Elvis are the best examples. This was also the decade of the birth of educational television. The live emissions began to be replaced by the taped transmissions, with the exception of the news, which continued to be broadcast live (Reis, 1992, vol.5, p.204).

In 1967, the tenth anniversary of RTP, the Pope John Paul VI visited Portugal. This was the moment that allowed the channel to demonstrate its ability to broadcast live. An educational role for television was already a reality and the second channel was being planned. At the end of 1968 RTP2 was launched but with little innovation in terms of programming, although the initial intention was to give a different choice to the viewers (Teves, 1998, pp.105; 136; 151; 152).
When Marcello Caetano, minister and then president of the Council of Ministers, arrived in power, he began the “Lessons in family” programme using RTP as an instrument of his Government, airtime was given over to explain his own politics and options. At the same time, his visits to the country and to the colonies were always reported on television. Caetano soon realised how useful the new medium could be to the regime, in opposition to the man who before him, was the symbol of the system: Oliveira Salazar. Salazar was adverse to new technologies including television. He was not a speaker. In contrast, Caetano showed an awareness of the power of television and he knew how to use it. Years later, in 1977, he even admitted that the television was a strong medium in the rapport he established with the people: “I knew, since the beginning, that it was the ideal tool for a Government to become popular... if deserved” (Cádima, 1996, p.35-6).

During the years of the regime, the Government developed censorship in the media, to eliminate any opinion contrary to the “status quo”. It was a weapon to defend the instituted power (Cádima, 1996, p.88). But there was some balance, in the sense that some events against the Government also had repercussions on television. One programme, “Zip-Zip”, had cleverly managed to exhibit the new cultural values, whilst simultaneously giving hope for the change in the political system. In 1972 the emissions arrived in Madeira, one of the Portuguese archipelagos, and three years later to the other archipelago, Açores (Reis, 1992, vol.5, p.205). Also in 1972, the number of people who were paying the tax for public television in mainland Portugal was more than 500,000 (Teves, 1998, p.180).

Between 1957 and 1974, RTP, transmitting informative programmes, was presented as a “pedagogical” medium but it was mainly a system to support the totalitarian ideology that ruled the country. The workers of this station were chosen by their loyalty to the only legal political party in existence. In this context, the society represented by public television had no conflicts of ideas. What was shown was a passive society that was told to behave in the same way (Cádima, 1996, pp.15-6). One good example to show how public television was used to serve the Government was the news broadcasted on the day man first stepped on the moon. This event was only reported after 14 other daily national news items, including all the visits of the government ministers responsible for the different departments (ibid., p.228).

In 1974 RTP was one of the first institutions to be occupied by the troops in the military movement that established a democratic system in Portugal (Teves, 1998, p.200). Three days after the revolution, a document with the new intentions of RTP’s activity became public: to give to different opinions the same possibility of expression in this medium of communication (ibid., pp.208-9). As a consequence, the programming began to change: entertainment was giving way to debates and political interventions. The directors, in this period, did not stay for long. One, Augusto Casimiro Gomes, only held office for two and a half months but he
extinguished the Commission of Programmes and nominated Ramalho Eanes responsible for the sector. He created departments for different kind of programmes: Cinema; Entertainment; Politics and Social Economic Affairs; Children and Young People; Sports; Specials (Teves, 1998, p.213).

In 1976 the new head of programmes, Carlos Cruz, created a new schedule, highlighting the values of the national culture. Special importance was given to the children. He said in an interview:

“For us, the child is a citizen with full status and it is a permanent national investment. With the advantage that the child can give to us many lessons with his or her sense of justice, imagination, humour and critics. So, the child should have elements to judge the society where he or she lives, to understand it and, if necessary, to judge it. In what concern television, this has to be connected with the real participation of the children in their programming, independently from the programmes of basic formation that we have to broadcast”

(Teves, 1998, p.235)

After some years of consolidation, in March of 1980 the first colour emission was put on air. After ten more years of monopoly, in the new decade the scenario was changing. In the last days of 1990, when the social democrats were ruling with majority, the Council of Ministers approved the privatisation of two frequencies of television (Rodrigues, Nunes, et al, 1994, p.462). In January of 1991 the Television Tax was abolished, which meant that the financing of RTP became completely dependent on the Budget of the State, and the profits from advertising.

On the 2nd of April 1991 three candidates presented their projects to the private television companies: Francisco Pinto Balsemão presented SIC; Proença de Carvalho presented TV1; people connected to the Catholic Church presented TVI. The Government asked for the help of the High Authority for Mass Communications since there were three candidates for two channels. But, on the 8th of August, the High Authority considered that they were in equivalent technical circumstances, not excluding any of them (Reis, 1992, vol.6, p.280).

On the 6th of February of 1992 the same Government attributed two frequencies of private television: the third Channel to SIC and the fourth channel to TVI. In the 6th of October, SIC started broadcasting. On the 30 of January of 1993, TVI started broadcasting. The war of audiences began to be a concern, namely among the High Authority to the Mass Communications (Rodrigues, Nunes et al, 1994, p.465). The Government’s choice of SIC and TVI ended a long and polemic process but it still created many doubts.
2 – The Portuguese law concerning broadcasting

In order to establish the context of a social phenomenon, it is important to understand the rules and norms involved. Deacon et al (1999, p.14) states that, when researching contemporary communications, and besides all the different methods available, we should also not forget what is already done. Namely, “the voluminous official records produced by state agencies, courts and legislative bodies”.

In the case of television, the law defines the general boundaries and some other documents specifying the functioning of the system(s). Although, as it was showed, the system is older, what is presented next is the recent legislation (see Mendes, 1993). Indeed, this is the one that is needed to understand the recent developments of the phenomena.

2.1 – Regime of the Television Activity

In 1990 the Portuguese Parliament approved a new law (law number 58/90, revised through law number 194/97) to regulate the television activity, known as the Regime of the Television Activity. The social-democratic party was in the Government and, following the examples of many other European countries Portugal was opening the sector to the private initiative. Through the new legislation both public and private operators could exercise terrestrial broadcasting. (article 3). The State, as it did until that time, assured the existence and function of one public operator. As stated in this Regime, broadcasting through the medium of hertz waves (the terrestrial channels) required a licence, which was obtained through public contest. Nevertheless, the public service broadcaster RTP required no such licence.

The rules to participate in the public contest to win a private frequency of television are also clearly stated. No private person, individual or collective, can, directly or indirectly, be entitled to shares of more than 25 per cent of the social capital of any company which is a candidate for the licence, neither can they participate in the social capital of any other candidate (article 9). The licence for each one of the two private channels is given in accordance to four factors: technical quality and economic viability of the project; duration and scheduling of the broadcasting of cultural, fiction and informative programme; duration of the broadcasting dedicated to national and European production; ability of the candidate to fulfil the diversity of interests of the public service. The license is granted for the term of 15 years, renewable for equal periods.

The need of assuring the independence of the broadcasting operators is obvious. The document states that political parties, political associations, associations of employers, associations of professionals, local governments or associations that represent these
organisations cannot either be involved in broadcasting or support financially this activity (article 3). But the independence of the broadcasting companies is even stronger, according to this law. When the aims of broadcasting are defined (article 6), it is clearly stated that this activity must ensure the pluralism, the straightness and the objectivity information and programming, in such a way so as to safeguard their independence from the Government, the Public Administration and other public powers. In one other point of this Regime (article 15), it is also written that the broadcasting is independent and that the public administration or any sovereignty organ, with the exception of the courts, cannot impede or impose conditions on the transmission of any programmes.

Besides this aim of independence, there are some others that are listed in the same article: to contribute to the information and the advancement of the public, and to promote and defend the cultural values that express the national identity, as well as to modernise the country; to contribute to the formation of a critical mind, stimulating the creativity and the free expression of thought; to contribute to the entertainment and promotion of the education of the public, having in mind the diversity of age, occupation, interest and origin; to favour the mutual knowledge and the interchange of ideas between Portuguese and foreign citizens, mainly with those that use the Portuguese language and others who have with Portugal special ties of co-operation and common interests.

The Regime also defines the rules negatively seen in terms that cannot be broadcast. There is one article (article 17) by the title of “forbidden programmes”. Here it is stated what is not permitted: pornographic or obscene programmes; programmes that incite violence or programmes that incite the commission of crimes; or programmes that generally violate the fundamental rights, freedoms and guarantees. There are rules for broadcasting programmes susceptible to negatively influencing the personality of children or adolescents, or to impressing other viewers, particularly those who are deemed vulnerable, through the exhibition of scenes particularly violent or shocking. These programmes must be forewarned by express warning, accompanied by appropriated classification and must always be scheduled after 10 pm.

A clear concern of this Portuguese Regime about television is, obviously, with the Portuguese language. This defence is stated in article 19, when it is said that the transmissions should, if possible, be scheduled in the Portuguese language, without prejudice of the eventual utilisation of any other language. There are exceptions to the rule, namely the programmes that derive from certain needs of the informative type, the programmes whose aim is the teaching of foreign languages and the transmission of cultural, musical and fictional programmes from other countries. On a monthly basis, broadcasters are instigated to assert the transmission of 10 per cent of in-house production and of 40 per cent of programmes
originally of Portuguese language. More than this, the Regime states that, whenever possible, the broadcasting operators should assert that the execution of the percentages mentioned is not done during the times of reduced audience.

Besides the concerns with national culture, there is also a concern with other European cultures. The operators are told to incorporate, whenever possible, a major percentage of products qualified as Community European or from European origin in its programming. They are also told to present, during the periods of emission, regular news services, assured by professional journalists.

One of the main preoccupations of those who wrote this document is about advertising and sponsorship. The first paragraph of article 26 states that the general norms that regulate the commercial advertising are applicable to television. But in the specific case of television, the advertising diffused through television must be easily identified as such, and clearly separated form the programmes, by optical or acoustic means. Besides, it has forbidden the latent advertising and it is interdict the clandestine advertising (article 27).

Regarding the percentage and insertion of advertising, the time of broadcasting given to advertising, whatever its nature, must not exceed 15 per cent of the time of the daily emissions or be more than 20 per cent of any hour (article 28). Concerning the restrictions to advertising through television, the regime presents a list: products harmful to health, as specified by law; objects with pornographic or obscene content; parties or political associations and trade unions, professional associations and associations representative of economic or employers activities (article 29).

2.2 – Television Law

After almost eight years since the publication of this Regime, the Portuguese Parliament approved, in July of 1998, another document in the same field: Television Law (law number 31-1/98). In the general dispositions, the types of channels are clarified: the channels of television can be generalist or thematic and of limited or non-limited access. The finalities of the generalist channels are enumerated in article 8: to contribute to the information, formation and entertainment of the public; to promote the right to inform and of being informed, with rigor and independence, without obstructions neither discriminations; to promote the creation of habits of acquaintance appropriate to a democratic State and to contribute to the political, social and cultural pluralism; to promote the Portuguese language and the values that express the national identity.

One of the topics where the Television Law goes further when compared to the Regime is in what concerns the public service of television. This service is given to a concessionaire and
the financing is assured by a yearly amount included in the General Budget of the State (article 47). The general obligations of this service are unequivocal. The company must ensure programming that satisfies the cultural, educational, and informative and entertainment needs of the different specific audiences, being obliged to:

a) Ensure the pluralism, rigor and objectivity of the information, as well as its independence, before the Government, the Public Administration and the other public powers.

b) Broadcast an innovating and varied programming that stimulates cultural formation and valorisations having especially in mind the young audience.

c) Prioritise the production of original materials in Portuguese, namely in the domain of fiction, documentaries and animation.

d) Diffuse one programming that reproduces the cultural and regional diversity of the country and that has in mind the specific interests of the minorities.

e) Ensure the news coverage of the main national and international events.

f) Broadcast regular programmes specially dedicated to the Portuguese people who live outside Portugal and to the people of the countries that have Portuguese as the official language, including programmes provided by the private channels (article 44).

In the summer of 1992 the Portuguese Parliament decided to transform RTP, E.P. (“Public Enterprise”) into RTP, S.A. (“Anonymous Society”). Besides the fact that all the contracts done by the old RTP had to be fulfilled and all the patrimony was transferred to the new RTP, the obligations of the public service also had to be respected. This new legislation also implied the revocation of the old statutes of RTP. This document stated that the society may proceed to the advertisement activity on television, may commercialise products connected to its activity (such as programmes and publications), may develop technical support to other enterprises, and may commercialise films and videotapes. The responsibility for the selection and content of both programming and information belongs, direct and exclusively, to heads of departments.

2.3 – Contract of Concession of the Public Service of Television

One of the consequences of the law is the application of a Contract of Concession of the Public Service of Television. (7 September 1990). It is an agreement between the Portuguese State and the Radiotelevisão Portuguesa (RTP), S.A. One of the most important articles of this document is the definition of the mission of public service. This determines that the channel will be:

- A reference television, assuring quality in the field;
• A national service, that produces and transmits programmes addressed to the whole Nation;
• A television of social utility, that fights all forms of cultural, social, religious, ethnic and sexual exclusion;
• A channel with aggregated programming, factor of social cohesion and inter-regional, accessible to the whole population, resident or non-resident in the national territory;
• A television of public freedom, warrant of pluralism, rigor and impartiality of information and of respect for the diversity of the sources;
• A service that generates products of fiction of recognised quality – namely, original series, or adaptations of pieces of literature – that remain as witnesses of the national imagination;
• A television that promotes the national artistic creation and the knowledge of the historical and cultural inheritance;
• A television of international expression, dedicated to the diffusion of the Portuguese language and culture;
• A service of responsibility and rigor in the selection of the news and images, for their own utilisation or for the transfer to the international market, namely its European partners;
• A channel with ethic obligation, that will be shown in the refusal of programmes that go against fundamental moral values and the instrumentalisation of people, namely through violence, emotions and sex;
• A television that produces and divulges its programmes of entertainment in conformity to criteria and scheduling that have in mind the interest of the viewers and that pursue to a social and cultural extra value, as well as extra values in innovation and in the search of standards of quality.

To fulfil all these demands the concessionaire is given the diffusion of two programmes, alternative and complimentary, of national coverage and programmes of international diffusion addressed to the Portuguese people who live around the world and, in general, to those who express themselves in the Portuguese language. The two different national channels must constitute one reference of quality, according to the following principles:

a) One, corresponding to the actual RTP1, aimed to serve the whole of the population, with an eminent generalist character, with a congregating vocation and with the mission to form, inform and entertain, in the respect for high and rigorous standards of quality;

b) Another, complementary to the first and corresponding to the actual RTP2, mainly aimed to serve specific audiences, integrating, among others, cultural, educational and
informative programmes, in the areas of the Arts, History, Cultural Patrimony, the Defence of the Environment, in Research, in Debates and in General Knowledge.

According to the Contract, the concessionaire has the duty to fulfil, in general, the mission of the Public Service and, in particular, to broadcast a programming that respect the following objectives:

a) To contradict the tendency to the uniformity and to the massification of the output of the television, providing programmes not directly dictated by the objectives of the commercial exploitation;

b) To have quality in a diversified programming – cultural, educational, documentary and informative and entertaining.

c) To promote the disseminate Portuguese Cinema, Theatre, Music, Dance, Literature and Painting;

d) To correspond, according to the values mentioned in paragraph b), to the aspirations of the different specific audiences, without any form of social, political, religious, ethnic or sexual exclusion;

e) To find a balance in the programmes in order to correspond to the uses, traditions and interests of the populations of the different regions of the country;

f) To proceed to the divulgation of sports, amateur or professional, promoting the adequate programmes, giving special salience to the events where Portuguese athletes or teams are represented;

g) To assume a programming schedule that contributes to the formation and development of the taste and that stimulates the artistic creation.

h) To ensure the production and diffusion of the programmes for children and young people, with educational and entertainment purposes, in appropriated times in the scheduling;

i) To support the national production and co-production with other countries, especially the ones of the European Union and of the Community of Countries of the Portuguese Language, namely in the domains of fiction and documentary;

j) To ensure a balance between self production and independent production, stipulating to the last one a percentage never inferior to 10 percent of the budget to the programmes;

k) To ensure complementary programming between RTP1 and RTP2;

l) To provide impartial, rigorous, independent, clarifying and pluralist information, in opposition to the information-entertainment or the sensationalist information;

m) To submit to an ethic of broadcasting that clearly refuses the easy violence, the exploitation of sex or that which goes against the dignity due to the human being;

n) To contribute, through the international emissions, to the particularisation of the national identity and its cultural values, to the diffusion of the language and to the enlargement of
the solidarity and the co-operation with all the other people of the community of countries where the Portuguese language is spoken;
o) To promote the co-operation with the entities that, in the Space of the European Union, perform the Public Service of Television, aiming, namely, at the interchange of experiences and the joint production of programmes.

As for advertising, the concessionaire cannot have, in RTP1, advertising that lasts seven minutes and thirty seconds in each hour of transmission and cannot have, in RTP2, any kind of commercial advertising.

Besides these rules that RTP has to follow, it is also obliged to fulfil certain specific services. Namely to give time for the broadcast of the official messages, communications and notes, to give time of emission to the political parties and to the trade unions, professional associations and others representing economic activities with rights of accessing the antenna, to give time for the practice of the rights of the Government and of the opposition, to give up to 60 minutes per month to the Public Administration for the diffusion of programmes of general interest about hygiene, health, public safety and similar.

The internal production should privilege the long-term programmes (known as “stock”) in opposition to the ephemeral (known as “of flux”). And it is one duty another duty of RTP to produce and diffuse daily programmes that fulfil the transmissions addressed to the Portuguese Communities abroad and to the countries that have Portuguese as the official language, aiming the preservation and diffusion of the Portuguese culture and language.

3 – The television, in the recent years, in Portugal, through the press

In order to understand how the two private channels of television appeared in Portugal and how the public station (with its two channels) reacted to the development, here it is presented an analysis of a group of articles published in the Portuguese press. The articles analysed are not supposed to be all the articles written about the topic; they are a selection made by the people who work in the archives of the newspapers and by myself, considering the large quantity of texts. As happens with any personal choice, it can be criticised. However, as the idea is not to compare approaches of different newspapers, what was selected was one article for each of the events that, all together, constitute the history of the inception and the first years of existence of the private television in Portugal.

The criteria chosen for this analysis was to focus on the articles that allowed the writing of the story of this new episode of the media in Portugal, avoiding the little quarrels and only quoting opinion when it is clearly identified. The aim is to use the articles to write the History of the first years of the life of the private television and Portugal as well as its relations with
the public television. For this reason, the period chosen begins when the topic began to be the subject of attention in the newspapers until precisely five years after the second private channel (and the last one in the general context) was launched. This means that the analysis starts in the beginning of January 1990 and ends in the end of January 1998, which makes a total of eight years and one month. There are 86 articles involved.

The majority of the articles used in the chapter were produced and published by Público, a quality daily newspaper established in 1990 through the initiative of a group of journalists – who used to work in Expresso – and financially supported by one of the strongest economic group, Sonae. Independente appeared in the same era, and it is part of a group with other interests in the media. Published weekly on Fridays, it is known by the revelation of scandalous situations. Sábado was a news magazine that took form in the same period, but had a short life. Expresso is a quality newspaper published on Saturdays, older than all the others, much associated with politics and owned by a group led by Pinto Balsemão, a politician (former prime-minister) and an important man in the world of the private media, namely in the strongest private channel of television. The traditional newspapers, with decades of life, are Diário de Notícias and Jornal de Notícias. The first was owned by the State and privatised in the 1990s, being bought by the group that owned the second. The second, which has a popular approach, it is the title that sells more in Portugal, but its readers live in the North of the country. The first of these two is disputing the quality battle with Público. Not so often, they also use articles of Comércio do Porto, a regional daily newspaper with traditions in the North of the country, Lusa, the Portuguese agency of news, and Se7e, a cultural newspaper.

### 3.1 – Interpreting the articles

The interpretation of meaningful phenomena can be done through different types of analysis. Thompson (1990, pp.21-2) develops “depth hermeneutics as a general methodological framework for the analysis of cultural phenomena, that is, for the analysis of symbolic forms in structured contexts”. This author divides this analysis of the symbolic forms in three steps: ‘socio-historical analysis’; ‘formal or discursive analysis; and ‘interpretation (or ‘re-interpretation’). First, through the specific social-historical conditions where they are produced and distributed, using empirical, observational and documentary methods. Second, through the study of the meanings that represent something, signify something and say something about something. Third, through the creative explication of what is said or represented by a symbolic form in a process of construction of a possible meaning.
As it happens, generally, with all the topics in the Portuguese press, we can see that in some newspapers or magazines the journalists who write about the media are specialised in the field. This means that the discourse and the way the matters are presented show a relative knowledge of the topic. The main advantage that results from this situation belongs to the readers. Although the same people normally transmit the messages, the way the readers receive the messages is not unique.

The understanding of how the readers receive and interpret the articles can be done by means of interviews or other kinds of ethnographic research. Besides the fact that this process of interpretation “is necessarily risky, conflict-laden, open to dispute” (Thompson, 1990, p.290), the idea here is only to analyse the articles in an historical perspective, as a contribution to write the major chapters of the History. In Thompson’s words: “Symbolic forms are meaningful constructs which are interpreted and understood by the individuals who produce and receive them, but they are also meaningful constructs which are structured in definite ways and which are embedded in specific social and historical conditions” (ibid., p.280).

To analyse the articles of the time of the privatisation of the Portuguese television, it is fundamental to understand what type of press the country had during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Fernandes, director of Público, explains in the pages of that newspaper (6 October 1993) the inception of the private channels of television was the culmination of a process, started by the Social Democrats, when in Government. This Government, led by Cavaco Silva, promised to privatisate the area of the mass media. This policy allowed not only the appearance of two private channels of television, the development of the local radios and the creation of a national radio station based on information. This policy also allowed the birth of two strong newspapers: Público and Independente. Fernandes reminds us how different life was in Portugal before these media existed.

Instead of analysing the articles only reflecting about the messages – as a general practice used in the past – it is important to understand that these articles were written in a scenario of a free market, where the most important limits to the activity of the journalists seem to be imposed by their code of ethics.

As seen before, besides the social-historical analysis, there is also a formal or discursive analysis, where Thompson includes semiotic, conversation, syntactic narrative and argumentative analysis (1990, p.281). In the way that this author exposes this theory, not all the steps can be adapted to an analysis of articles published in the press. But some of them can. In the syntactic analysis Thompson presents the choice of the grammar used as an important factor. For instance, the option for words like ‘might’, ‘maybe’ and ‘possibly’ indicates the degree of uncertainty (ibid., pp.287-8). Another possible analysis has to do with the narrative structure: a sequence of events told as if it was a story.
In this kind of analysis it is important to remind the first ideas written about semiology – also known as semiotics –, a science which birth is attributed to Saussure. A resume is made by Berger (1991, pp.3-4). He describes semiology as “the science of signs”, concerned, primarily, with how the meaning is generated in ‘texts’. He explains Saussure’s approach, and the division that he made between two components: “the signifier, or ‘sound-image’, and the signified, or ‘concept’”. Berger explains, “Semiology has been applied, with interesting results, to film, theatre, medicine, architecture, zoology, and a host of other areas that involve or are concerned with communication and the transfer of information”. The press seems to fit perfectly here. In this analysis, it is important to bear in mind the main criticism done to semiotics: “its concern for the relationship of elements and production of meaning in a text, it ignores the quality of the work itself” (ibid., p.27). Although “its basic concepts have entered into the general currency of analytical language in the media and cultural studies”, the practical relevance of some of the theoretical considerations associated with semiotics is “fairly minimal” (Deacon et al, 1999, p.135). This is the reason why, even respecting the value of this type of analysis, it will not be used in the present work.

There are some other analyses, developed more recently, that can be more useful in the analysis of the news that follows. The methods and techniques presented by the critical linguists are still in a process of improvement but it is already possible to use some of them (Deacon et al, 1999, p.146).

For a start, why are some articles published while some others are not? Bignell (1997, pp.85-6) says, “The pattern of inclusion-exclusion differs form one paper to another and from one news cycle (usually one day’s news) to another”. He concludes, “News is neither found nor gathered, as if it were already there. It is the product of professional ways of thinking, writing and composing which are all codes of behaviour learned by news workers”. More over, “what is reported is the selection of facts assumed to be significant. But it is obvious when looking at a group of newspapers that what counts as most significant for one newspaper is often quite different from what counts as significant for another newspaper”.

Van Dijk presents some possible explanations for the criteria used to select news, besides the obvious “novelty” factor. Including the “relevance” and the “deviance and negativity”. About “relevance” he says:

“In general, information is preferred about events or actions that are relevant for the reader. This information provides models that may be used for the interpretation of other discourse or for the planning and execution of social action and interaction. Interest for large groups of readers, thus, is both a cognitive and a
social constraint on news selection. Apart from the many other criteria that select social and political news, relevance criteria show how events and decisions may affect our lives. (...) For one, there may be many different groups of readers, with different interests and expectations. Hence, relevance must be defined in terms of large powerful groups. Minority relevance is much less emphasised. Second, relevance is also determined by the interest of those who control the social system” Van Dijk (1988, p.122)

About “deviance and negativity”, van Dijk says: “Psychoanalytically, these various forms of negativity in the news might be seen as expressions of our own fears, and their incumbency to others both provides relief and tension by proxy participation. (...) In more cognitive terms, we might say that information processing about such events is like a general simulation of the possible incidents that may disrupt our own everyday lives” (ibid., p.123).

When approaching the analysis of the media, van Dijk (1985, p.20) presents four dimensions of the mass media discourse: ‘existence’; ‘importance’; ‘values’ and ‘relationships’. These four dimensions respond, in order, to four questions: ‘what is available for public attention?’ ‘In what context or order of importance?’ ‘In what light, from what point of view, with what associated judgements?’ and ‘in what over-all proximal, logical, or causal structure?’ In another level, these four steps are also associated with four terms of measures: ‘attention: prevalence, rate, complexity, variations’; ‘emphasis: ordering, ranking, scaling for prominence, centrality or intensity’; ‘tendency: measures of criticism and differential tendency; qualities traits’; and ‘structure: correlations, clustering; structure of action’.

Regarding the structure of the news, van Dijk (1985, p.85) presents a formula common to this genre. He calls it the “news schemata”: “Whatever the contents, and therefore independent of local and global meanings of news discourse, we assume that there is a fixed, conventional schema, consisting of categories that are typical (at least in part) for news discourse”. According to this author there are categories that provide different functions of information in news reports. The ‘headline’ and the ‘lead’ are presented as obvious categories and together they function as a ‘summary’ for the news discourse. Then he presents the ‘main events’ or the ‘story’, with the ‘background’ (‘context’ and ‘history’). The ‘comments’ lead to the ‘conclusions’ that lead to ‘expectations’ and ‘evaluations’ (van Dijk, 1988, pp.55; 178).

Deacon et al (1999) add the factor that “news schemata are conventionally influenced by the salience of particular news values in a particular type of story, as well as by journalists’ rhetorical priorities of facticity and objectivity, rather than being determined
by concern for chronological order”. These authors distinguish two sides of a textual analysis: a thematic structure and discourse schemata. “A thematic structure helps to make a media text cohere – it orients a text around a central theme or strand of related themes running throughout a story. Without thematic structures, media texts would be fragmentary and narratively dissolute”.

“Schemata group information and circumstantial detail into sequentially and hierarchically ordered categories and units of meaning. In news discourse, data are structured in a functional order of narrative disclosure, which is specific to its particular mode of story telling. This entails a patterned movement from the headline and lead paragraphs through episodes or statements by witnesses and commentators, which are ranked in an implicit order of priority (...)

(Deacon et al, 1999, p.169).

In this textual analysis, special attention will not be given to facts like the importance given to the text in terms of first page of the position in the page for the reason that the main objectives are centred in the content itself. Regarding the structure, it is important to have in mind the organisation of the news, as proposed by Deacon et al (1999, p.170): who did it; events; circumstances; outcome; comment. More, in this structure, the nucleus plays a vital role; it “summarises the underlying thematic structure of the text, and fulfilling this function it enables readers to apprehend at the outset the basic thread that will run throughout a news article without having to trace it for themselves through all the sentences and paragraphs of the text, as they would with a fictional crime narrative”.

According to Bignell (1997, p.81), “one of the most common codes in the media and social life generally is the narrative code”. Fairclough (1995, p.91) explains that “one obvious reason why narratives are so prominent in the media is that the very notion of reporting centrally involves recounting past events, i.e. telling the story of what happened, and much of media output consists of or includes reports”. But this author also clarifies that the social purposes of journalism are complex: “journalists don’t only recount, they also interpret and explain them, try to get people to see things and to act in certain ways, and aim to entertain”. In the analysis of the discourse, Fairclough follows the terminology of Halliday to distinguish between the ‘congruent’ and the ‘metaphor’. “A congruent application is the use of a discourse to signify those sorts of experience it most usually signifies; a metaphorical application is the extension of a discourse to signify a sort of experience other than that which it most usually signifies” (ibid., 1994).

As Deacon et al (1999, p.171) state, after answering the main questions – who; what, when; why – the journalist introduces “various satellite elements” which consist of “subsequent back-up in the form of factual data and quotations from ‘interested parties’
which elaborate the story in different ways, weaving the narrative around different sources and different ‘voices’.” These authors even argue, “Quotations from these sources are used strategically to provide collateral for the ‘side taken’ by the paper in terms of the narrative schema”. As a result, the newsworthiness of the sources is “routinely prioritised, and their institutional credibility hierarchically ranked”.

Deacon et al (1999, p.177) resume the types of sources normally used by the press: “Journalists often report events and developments without being direct witnesses; that is, without constituting the source of news themselves. Generally, their material is derived from other sources, other discourses, such as eye-witness reports, official statements, interviews, documents, press releases, press conferences, press agencies, and other news media”. In the particular case of the interviews, some techniques and some violations have been studied. In the first case, it is frequent to find interventions of the interviewer that, instead of being questions are summaries of the answers and even clarifications of the answers (Fairclough, 1995, pp.22-3). This author quotes the work of Greatbatch to exemplify one violation to the rules of the interviews: when the person who is answering avoids the question by saying something else.

Besides the sources used, it is also important to notice how the words are chosen. Deacon et al (1999, p.178) consider the lexical choice “an important feature of news discourse”. For instance, it can suggest “certain ideological beliefs and values”. Fairclough (1995, p.83) argues that the choice of one particular verb instead of another may well imply a different meaning. And he gives one example: someone “said”; or someone “claimed”; or someone “made out”. The power of the words can also underline a certain position of the newspaper where the article is presented, and this is one of the reasons why objectivity is questionable. Bignell (1997, p.90) sees objectivity as a “mythic meaning for news discourse”. “Since journalists narrate news using the codes of news value in general and of their newspaper in particular, the news discourse which they produce cannot be the ‘natural’ way of understanding news or an ‘objective’ account of facts”.

Among other aspects, van Dijk (1988, pp.81-2) also considers relevant, in the analysis of the news, to identify the style in which the text is written. This can normally be divided in aggressive or mild, according to the selection of words and the tone used. It is also important to observe if there is opinion in the articles (ibid., p.56). This would be the opposite of objectivity. Deacon et al (1999, p.173) explain that the news objectivity “include, for example, the appearance of offering an even-handed presentation of both sides in the dispute and mainly quoting from sources as reported speech rather than paraphrasing or summarising what has been taken down at the news desk after a series of telephone calls to potential sources”.
It was in the late 1980s that the Portuguese press began to publish articles about the announced changes in the television field although it was not until the early 1990s that the press were covering this area more regularly (see chronology in page 231).

A weekly newspaper localised in the area of culture (literature, cinema, theatre, media) – Se7e – published, on 4 January 1990, an analysis of the re-formulation of the body of 260 directors and sub-directors that was nominated by the Administration of RTP to face the new-coming reality of the private channels of television (article 1). The journalists denounced the connections between these people and identified the ones who were set apart deliberately. This was only the beginning of a “war” of names, schedules, commercial strategies and policies.

Article 1 of this analysis is full of opinion: it even criticises the options made by the Administration of RTP. For instance, when explaining the professionals chosen to work in the new team of RTP the paragraphs end with adjectives. One of them is “doubtful”. These options are the basis of the article but the journalists go further than what they are supposed. Giving their opinion about the facts, the authors of the article are also disrespecting the code of ethics for Portuguese journalists. One possible explanation for this behaviour is the style of the newspaper. At least in this article, the style is clearly aggressive.

The name of Francisco Pinto Balsemão has been associated with the phenomenon of the private television since its first days. In March 1990 a newspaper that had a short life, just like some others in the 1990s – Liberal – dedicated one whole page to one of the first polemic topics in this field (article 2). The title states: “Balsemão promised TV to the Church”. According to the journalist, the promise was made in January 1982, when Balsemão was prime minister of Portugal. Although the Church won a channel, it was “given” by other prime minister of the same political party (the social democrats). The irony was that the other private channel was “given”, ten years later, to Balsemão, himself.

Because the topic of article 2 is about a promise made years ago, there are no quotations. This is the relevant aspect of this article. Like the majority of the articles of the press, this one is told as a story. The article begins by saying: “It was Pinto Balsemão and not Sà Carneiro who, formally, promised to the cardinal one channel of television”. The second paragraph follows the line of the story: “Now a days the scenario is different”. The third paragraph does the background: “The first time that the social democrats and the Church talked about television was in an informal meeting”. In what concerns the present facts, they are related with a political tone. The journalist even uses a little bit of speculation about the future, when he says that if the prime-minister would create a third channel and give it to the Church, he could delay the appearance of the private channels before the elections.
As soon as the Television Law began to be discussed, the polemic started. One of the first topics of debate was the percentage of the possible participation of foreign money in the enterprises candidates to the private channels. The law defined 10 per cent of foreign participation but some people argued that it was irregular, according to the article published in *Expresso*, 16 June 1990 (article 3). The argument was that there should be free participation among the Economic European Community. The same article states that Balsemão was against the limitations. The representative of another group candidate to the private television – Joaquim Reis, from Sonae – said that it would be inevitable that one day the percentages would have to grow to 25 per cent. They did. The other representative – Proença de Carvalho, from Edipress – accepted the rules as they were, on the grounds that since the space for television frequencies is so small, it should be preserved to the national capital.

Article 3 has a structure that can be considered typical, according to van Dijk’s point of view: the main event (the limitations of the participation of foreign people in the private channels), the background (what has been defined in the Law of Television about the topic), the quotations (example: “The problem is the applicability and the control of the restrictions”) and the comments (example: “pernicious effects”). It can be seen as a complete article.

The fourth candidate for a television channel was the Catholic Church. On 29 June 1999, the daily newspaper from the North of the country called *Comércio do Porto* announced the intention of this institution to be candidate for a private channel (article 4). According to the newspaper, this happened because the Government withdrew to this Church the right to broadcast in RTP2 for two hours daily, while the Church wanted four hours in prime time. More than this, the Government said that all the religions would have a space in the public television. The Catholic Church wanted the space to be given according to the size of domination of the different religions.

In opposition to article 3, article 4 is only constituted with the main event (the Catholic Church assuming that is candidate to a private channel of television) and with the description of how the actors arrived to that decision (for example: the negotiations happened with “calm and serenity”). A possible explanation for this fact is that the first of these two articles was published by Expresso, a weekly newspaper that always gave considerable importance to the phenomenon of private television, and the second one was published by a regional newspaper, *Comércio do Porto* that has, naturally, other priorities.

According to *Público* (article 5), a national daily newspaper owned by Sonae, this group gave up of the process of fighting for a channel when the group realised that “other” interests besides economic viability and quality were being considered in the concession of frequencies of radio and television. One article of this newspaper published on 5 July 1990 states that the
group would transfer the money dedicated to the project to other initiatives because one radio station of the group lost a contest to another, although they had better results in audience shares.

The basis of article 5 is a document produced and distributed by one economic group that initially was candidate to a number of private channels. So, in the production aspect, the source is not a direct one, in the sense that the journalist did not interview any actor of the process. Instead, the text was built over another text. What is implicit is that the work done by the journalist was to transform the original document into a text where the most important comes in the beginning and written in the informative way that the readers are used to see in the newspapers. First the journalist writes that Sonae, the economic group, took one decision and after that he says that this information is based on a document made public in the beginning of the night of the day before.

The same newspaper reported days later, on 11 July 1990, the position assumed by the Catholic Church towards the problems that Government was creating to keep the promise made years ago (article 6). The major representatives of this Church presented a document where they stated that the Catholics did not want privileges compared with other religions but that they needed the mass media to spread their message. They made clear that the institution would never present itself as candidate to a private television channel, but they accepted that groups of this institution could do so.

Just like article 5, article 6 is based on a document produced by a non-journalistic source. As seen by the researchers, the usage of different types of sources is normal among newspapers.

On 13 July 1990 the Portuguese Parliament approved the possibility of the private enterprises to have a private television channel. According to the national news agency, Lusa, the deputies were happy with the decision (article 7). The new law also contained the limitations of access of the Catholic Church to public television. The majority of the deputies of the same political colour as the Government voted for the law because of the rules of the party, although many of them said that they were against it, explaining that the social democrats should keep their promises.

Because it is a text produced by Lusa, the Portuguese news agency, article number 7 is necessarily telegraphic. The intention is to be used by all the other media and it is supposed that each one of them will treat this “raw information”. That is why there is no special concern over the presentation of the style.

The Independente, a weekly newspaper known as the one that prefers the hottest news, published an interview with Francisco Pinto Balsemão, on 7 September 1990, about the project that the group that he created (involving firms of press, printing, cinema, etc) had to have a channel of private television (article 8). He made many criticisms, including how the
Government protected public television. In the opinion of Balsemão the new law was not positive to the private initiative. With regard to the project itself, it was presented as a commercial television, based on two big strengths: news and ‘telenovelas’. With regard to the professionals, he admitted that he had contacts with some of the people who were known through the public television but he said that the politics of the new station – SIC – would be to present new stars of television, as well.

Until this point, all the articles used in the research can be considered as news, in the pure sense. A different one is article 8: it is an interview. So, the difference is the category. It can be said that, although the journalist has a line of questions that is followed, there are also some interrogations that derive from the answers. For instance, the journalist uses expressions like “in that case” and wants more explanations when he asks “in what sense”.

As one of the major problems of the candidates was the cost in terms of the infrastructures, all the groups seemed to agree with one proposal of the Government to create a common enterprise to do that, involving private and public investment. The Expresso published, on 22 September 1990, the positive opinions of the representatives of the strongest groups in (article 9). Besides that, the article explains the doubts of all the candidates, considering that the rules of the contest were not clear enough at that time.

Article 9 has a simple structure: main event (the candidates to the private television fear the costs of the activity) and reactions (for example: “Any cost that will be the same or superior to the installation of a brand new net does not interest us”). No background and no possible consequences are presented.

As a possible consequence of the new phenomena of the private television in Portugal, the public channels – RTP1 and RTP2 – were reorganised. On 1 October 1990, Diário de Notícias, a national daily newspaper, published one article about the division of the enterprise in two and about the definition of the tax that the channels would have to pay for the use of the infra-structures necessary to diffuse the television signals (article 10).

Article 10 is even simpler than the one before: it is only the announcement of an event, without any step of the structure presented by van Dijk. The only remarkable aspect to consider in the journalistic practice is that this article respects the order of importance of the information: first, what is more important. But we still have to keep in mind the fact that the importance given to each fact depends not only on the journalist but also on the orientation of the newspaper in which the article is published.

On 24 November 1990 Expresso announced the possible dates of the contest for the two new private channels of television (article 11). According to this newspaper, the contest would be open in two weeks, the candidates would have 90 days to present the projects and the Government would decide in the middle of the following year. After that, the winners would
have 15 months to start the broadcasting, which meant that in summer 1992 Portugal would have private television in action. At this time, there were only three groups still interested: SIC, with Pinto Balsemão; Rádio Renascença (the radio station of the Catholic Church) with Magalhães Crespo; and the group of Proença de Carvalho and Carlos Barbosa. Three have given up already: Sonae, Telecine and the group of the daily newspaper Jornal de Noticias. The only one of these three that was still thinking about the possibility was the group Sonae. At this time, the rules were being clarified. For instance, the article already stated the amount of money that the candidates would have to give as a caution. According to this newspaper, the candidates were not happy with the distribution of the fourth channel around the country and two of them argued that they would not want that frequency.

The most important fact about article 11 is that it is signed by a journalist who is not new in the approach of the privatisation of the television sector in Portugal: Ana Paula Azevedo. This is a clear sign that in Expresso, but not only in this newspaper, there is a tendency to the specialisation of the journalists. The result is obviously a high degree of confidence and certainty in what is written, with clear advantages to the readers.

The rules of the contest were formerly known at the end of the year. On 26 December 1990 Público published one group of two informative articles and one opinion about this process (article 12). It is explained that after the approval of the Government, the High Authority for Mass Communications would give the final judgement, according to the technical quality and economic viability, the scheduling, the quantity of national and European production and the diversity of programming capable of fulfilling the interests of the general public. But, even by this date, the newspaper says that the doubts were not yet clarified. In addition to the details about the enterprise that would rule the air waves, Balsemão also wanted to know about the way that the public television would be financed by the State. In the opinion article, José Manuel Fernandes is clear: “Here we are, before one more process of doubtful transparency and less independence”. This is based on experience of the past. According to this director of Público, political and governmental interests ruled the criteria used to give licenses to the radio stations –in a similar process—.

In the articles used, the first one that has opinion in a separate and identified space is article 12. As it happened frequently after this point, there was also an opinion article written by one of the directors of Público, José Manuel Fernandes. The importance of the matter also justified three different articles, in the same edition of the newspaper, about the topic. The division was between opinion, main event and reactions. There are, obviously, differences in the way these texts are produced: in the opinion article a position is clearly assumed (and it can be seen through expressions like “polemic choice” and “all the doubts are legitimate”) and in the other two there is a mere description of facts (for example: “The Council of
Ministers approved yesterday the regulation of the contest for the attribution of the frequencies of the private channels of television”.

Two days later, Expresso presented the reactions of the strongest candidates to the prices defined by the Council of Ministers to the use of the enterprise that is responsible for the distribution of the waves (article 13). Both of them said that the costs were too high.

*Article 13 is a follow-up of article 11, written by the same journalist and based on the new events, with reactions but without background. These kinds of articles that follow a story are very common when the topic is about an event that has new episodes almost every day. In these cases, it is impossible to explain what happened before in all the articles. Besides, journalists assume that the interested readers know the background.*

As it was written before, Sonae was thinking about the contest again. On 3 January 1991 Público printed one article saying that the group formalised the constitution of the enterprise “TV Nova” (article 14). It did not mean that it was a candidate but that it was studying the proposal.

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*With a simple and direct style, article 14 is incisive (examples: “Soane formalised, a few days ago, the constitution of the enterprise, TV Nova”; “The group (...) is only executing what it had said”). It is information based on a quotation of a direct source, that member of the group but that is not identified. This is a normal procedure used by journalists and understood by the usual readers. Just like van Dijk argues, it is a relationship where both journalists and readers know the rules. In the last paragraph is presented a small amount of background intended to inform the readers that do not always follow the process, but, as seen before, there is not always space for this.*

The weekly magazine Sábado published, on 4 January 1991, a resume of the positions of the candidates (article 15). While the groups of Pinto Balsemão and Carlos Barbosa were presented as serious candidates to the contest, the Catholic Church was said to have difficulties in finding a partner. Mainly because the economic groups approached already had ideas and politics of broadcasting that did not coincide with those of that institution.

*The main characteristic of article 15 is the style. Like others before, it is presented as a story using such expressions as “initially” and “in that time”. In addition, there is a linguistic question: first the journalist uses the past and then she uses the present. About the future – which means who has the project that will be a winner - she ends with a question: “Who has it? The question is in the air”.*

According to Público, on 30 January 1991, Balsemão was planning an “intelligent but popular television” (article 16). He admitted that the Portuguese market for advertising was not as big as in other European countries, but he was sure that it would grow and that the profits would be enough for everybody. Balsemão believed that his eventual television channel would only
find the economic balance in the third year of existence and that it would start to be profitable in the fifth year.

*Article 16 is only based on the direct information of the actor. Each paragraph is about one topic, where the journalist presents the opinion of the candidate to private television. In terms of style it is direct, just like an explanation of the doubts that could still be in the air. Clearly, this is one of the missions of the press: the “relevance” of the information to the elucidation of the readers.*

Besides the number of candidates, *Expresso* was sure, on 9 February 1991 that the fourth private channel would never exist (article 17). The article of the weekly newspaper quoted governmental sources as well as candidates to state that even if the frequency were given, the group would never have means to fight the powerful public television.

*Instead of being a story, article 17 is an episode of the story. Even if it is not an opinion article, it is based on one opinion of the sources. It can also be argued that is even more than this; it can be considered as speculation. The sources foresee a difficult existence for the fourth channel and the future denied this prevision. This fact proves that, sometimes, the articles that are given importance can be risky.*

While on 16 March 1991 *Público* was writing about the partners of SIC, the channel proposed by Balsemão (article 18), three days later, the same daily newspaper was announcing the name of the channel proposed by the Catholic Church: TVI (article 19). Through the same article it was possible to understand that this candidate was looking for partners, although it already had 70 per cent of the necessary capital. Seven days later the same newspaper explained the organisation of this project, led by the one of the most important people in the Catholic Church, D. José Policarpo (article 20).

*Article 18 is a brief article, with a size that is normally used in other types of matters. This situation about the television in Portugal was frequently described in longer articles, because it was a complex event, involving many actors and different aspects. In this case, the title is a good resume of the information.*

*The title of article 19 is a good example of one sentence, which may be difficult to interpret: “TV from the Church Monday”. Probably because on the available space, the title does not have a verb. It can be argued that the meaning is implicit but, grammatically, it can promote doubts. The information is that the candidate channel of the Catholic Church is going to be constituted as an enterprise. The article is a formal description of the details of the future enterprise. In the reader’s point of view, it is possible to argue that this is one episode with little “relevance”. Article 20 was a better version of the former article, written with more interest. It has to be said that it is written by a journalist who is specialised in Catholicism*
and by another one that, in this newspaper, would start to be the one writing about this process of television.

According to Expresso, on 23 March 1991, the involvement of the high figures of the Catholic Church in the process of the Portuguese private television channel was suggested by the organisation of the Catholics in Rome, alleging that it would be important for this Church in the European Scenario because there was no Catholic Church in this continent (article 21). The strongest relations were with the local churches, the Catholic University and “Rádio Renascença”, the radio station of the Catholic Church. In fact, the latter was the institution who first showed interest in private television, in a process conducted by Magalhães Crespo.

Article 21 is based in different sources of information: direct discourse of the actors, a bulletin and the result of a meeting. Although this article is quite objective in the style that it presents the news, once in a while are used words like “unexpected” and “failure”. But these specific situations do not seem to alter the general tone of the article.

On 26 March 1991, one week before the deadline to present the projects to a number of Private television channels, Público presented three groups of candidates: TVI, from Renascença; TV1 from Proença de Carvalho and Carlos Barbosa; and SIC, from Pinto Balsemão (article 22). At this time, TVI had RTL, from Luxembourg, as a partner but Magalhães Crespo assured that this station would never broadcast “certain images”, in a clear reference to erotic programmes. The same article refers to the new rules of the public service, since the tax paid by the viewers would be replaced by one amount of money given by the State. Once again, the private candidates are told to be afraid of an unfair competition between the public television and them.

Once again, Público produced a complete report – article 22 – of one more episode of the story of the private television channels in Portugal and puts a reference in the first page. Two and a half pages, five photos and three articles explain everything. It is by this time that this newspaper, just like Expresso had done previously, began to have one journalist specialised in these matters: José Fragoso. In the main text, the journalist explains, in a direct way, the events. In the second text that he signs, there is an explanation about the media groups that were growing. Again, the style is simple and direct, with no opinion subjacent. A different way of writing is presented by the journalist who signs the third article of the group, the specialist in the matters of the Catholic Church, António Marujo. He is more daring in his discourse, although he is only describing institutions and people associated with the process. For instance, he says that one certain bishop is said to be “one of the most cultured and open bishops of Portugal”.

The Independente, on 28 March 1991, resumed the information available about the process and wrote that both SIC and TVI were planning to increase the amount of investment in each
Besides the financial situation, SIC was going to explain to the Government the guidelines of the project in terms of programming: news every hour and alternative products, namely adults’ programmes. According to this newspaper, this channel, winning the frequency, would not fight news with news or movies with movies. The option was to fight for audiences with different products. In the first year of broadcasting, SIC aimed to be on air for 52 hours a week and to produce more than it was necessary of in-house, national and European products.

*Article 23 has the peculiarity of anticipating what is going to happen. This is a risk taken only by certain newspapers, namely the ones that are always looking for something really new before all the others, even if sometimes the information is not completely precise. So, the main event is presented as an announcement: “The Group SIC, from Francisco Pinto Balsemão, already has its project of television, that is going to be presented next week to the Government. “Independe” reveals the guidelines of this project (...)”.

The *Expresso*, on 29 March 1991, published one article assuring that the group with the Christian inspiration (TVI) was considering the hypothesis of getting together with the group of Proença de Carvalho (TV1) (article 24). First of all, because the two projects did not seem to be very different, and second, because there were only two frequencies for three candidates.

*There is nothing particularly notable in article 24: it gives the information, it is written in a direct style, with quotations, background and some elucidation.*

The possible alliance with two of the three groups did not work out and, in the last day of the contest, all the three candidates presented their projects. *Público*, on 2 April 1991, explained, once again, the characteristics of each one of them (article 25). The day after it was published the article (article 26) confirmed the official presentation of the projects: TV1, TVI and SIC. The article also stated that the decision would be given by the High Authority for the Mass Media and that the money that the State would give to RTP – the public television – would be defined by the Parliament.

*In two days, publishing two articles (25 and 26) occupying one whole page each gives the dimension and the relevance to the readers that Público gives to this matter. In both of them, the readers can actually learn everything about the three projects that want to win a frequency of private television, and this really matters to the public.*

On 5 April 1991, *Independente* announced the guidelines of the project of TV1: a proposal that included emissions starting at 8 o’clock in the morning (article 27). It was supposed to be a popular channel with a strong component of national production and with programmes for all tastes and age groups. Besides this article, the newspaper also published a table comparing
the characteristics of the three candidates and another article saying that the Government ordered one insurance company – with public funds – to leave the project of SIC.

*In its style, the Independente uses anticipation (article 27): “All the details of the project in one exclusive”. This was probably the most decisive time for the candidates and all the newspapers understood it, as well as the importance for the future. The interest the directors of the press assumed the decision had was such that, in the case of this weekly newspaper, a new space in its pages was created: “Special: Private TV”.*

By this time, the press started to notice the reaction of the public television to the eventual threat of the private television. *Público* published on 6 April 1991 one article saying that RTP was preparing itself to the opposition and that was looking for partners in Spain (article 28). The idea was to keep the agreements of production and programmes. RTP signed a document with the public television of Spain –RTVE – of co-operation not only about products but also about technical mutual support.

*Article 28 is only a description of a meeting. There is no particular characteristic in this text, except the clear and direct style, typical of a quality newspaper.*

Also according to *Público*, on 10 April 1991, one director of RTP received money after being dismissed and RTP itself received a large amount of money (article 29). Against what was said in other newspapers, this one confirmed that the money was not to compensate the end of the tax paid by the viewers but to pay for activities confined to the public service, namely the broadcasting to the islands and to the Portuguese ex-colonies. The same article quotes another one published in the Spanish newspaper, *El Pays*. According to this press, the administrator of RTP argues that the Portuguese Government should compensate the public television for the appearance of the private channels, if it does not want to see RTP transformed into a commercial channel.

*After finding one event (the director receiving money after being dismissed), Púublico goes for the reactions (article 29). This can be seen as an example of investigative journalism. One of the reactions is illuminating: “If it is true, such an agreement is a scandal”. But when listening to the party that did the agreement, the journalist reports a different reaction: “Everything is legal”. So, the readers the information and different points of view, being able to judge for themselves. The journalist, Adelino Gomes, never gives his own opinion.*

The following day, *Público* began another article saying that the war between public and private television had started (article 30). The candidates for the private frequencies were not happy with the position of the Government giving more money to the public television. The private candidates wanted to know what the rules were regarding the relation between the state and public television.
Article 30 is fundamentally one perspective of information that is given (the negative reaction of the candidates to the private television to the subsidies that the State is given to the public service). But, as it was something that was previsible, the article is based in many situations of background. For example: “The candidates to the two private channels available – TVI, TV and SIC - showed, in various occasions, their fear that RTP might get some privileges comparing to the private channels.” or “The publication of the Statute announced in the Law of Television continues without a definition of a calendar.”

On 2 May 1991, Público announced that in the end of July the High Authority for the Media would give its opinion of the three private candidates to the two available television frequencies (article 31). But the final decision would belong to the Government. Article 31 is a description of how a decision will be taken: the dates and the procedures, in a neutral style.

D. José Policarpo, responsible for the project of the Catholic Church – TVI – explained in an interview with Expresso, published on 11 May 1991, that he would change his voting allegiance in the following elections if the Catholic Church would not get a channel for the private television (article 32). At the same time, he clarified that the Catholics had not given up of the space in the public television that belongs to them by law.

This interview, article 32, was conducted in a fearless manner. The questions of the journalist show some positive aggressiveness. For instance, when they say: “In a year of elections, the non concession of a channel to the Church would be problematic to the Government....”.

Another aspect of this interview is that the journalists ask the things they want to know more than once, in a different way, if the interviewee is avoiding the topic.

At the same time the process of the private televisions was being studied, the Parliament was discussing the status of the public television – RTP. Público, on 18 May 1991, announced the confrontation between the Government (with a Social-Democrat majority) and the Social Party (article 33). The opposition wanted the end of a political hierarchy in RTP and the Government wanted more freedom in the administration of RTP. According to the newspaper, the differences in theory were not so big. But each one of the parties wanted a different system to rule the public television. Both of the proposals were accepted by the Parliament in order to be transformed in one (Público, 23 May 1991 – article 34 - and 24 May 1991 – article 35). The debate was much more centred in the interference of the Government – in the past and in the present – in the public television.

The structure of these three articles (33, 34, and 35) is narrative, in the sense that they tell the different developments of the discussion that is the main event: the debate that the parliamentarians are having over the public service of television. The event is told in a chronological order: “Arons de Carvalho opened the debate (...)”, “As a reply, the counter-
attack came in showers (...), “The independent Jorge Lemos intervened in the debate” (...), etc.

In an interview with the Independente, on 19 May 1991, Balsemão was very sure of the capacities of the project that he was leading (article 36), because it had been prepared for a long time and the team had the know-how. Although he admitted that the technical characteristics of the projects would be important in the contest, he also agreed that the decision would also be political. About the programmes that he was planning at that time, Balsemão said that his channel would avoid violence, especially at those times when children were awake.

Without something that can be considered particularly new, this interview (article 36) serves to clarify the opinions of one of the most important actors of the private television. This kind of article is considered good especially to those readers who do not have the patience or the time to follow all the articles published about the topic.

On 6 July 1991, Expresso compared and contrasted the policies and visions of the three candidates. Only the ideas of Pinto Balsemão and Proença de Carvalho, since that D. José Policarpo, representing the channel associated with the Catholic Church did not answer the questions (article 37). Among many other questions, the main ones are as follows:

- SIC says that it is a project of professionals and that no particular group of the society will be represented; TV1 says that the group is formed by independent individuals with no connection with political parties.

- SIC sees the television (as all the other mediums of mass communication) as a form of counter-power; TV1 sees its eventual activity ruled by independence;

- With regard to the public service of television, SIC says that the BBC system is the ideal; TV1 says that if the Portuguese system is financed by the State, it should not have advertisements;

- SIC was prepared to present 41 per cent (in the first year) of national products; TV1 was prepared to present 56 per cent;

- None of them admitted to cut scenes of series or movies;

- Both of them admitted the possibility of having a programme about sexuality, a campaign of condoms and advertisements with visible female breasts.

Article 37 is presented in quite a rare style: it was made into an inquiry, the same questions to the people considered as the most important actors. In this case, this means the four responsible for the four channels of television. Each question has an illustration and each interviewee has his photo published. The answers are given in a table. This way of presenting information is very useful for the reader because it is easy to absorb. As one of the actors
answer the questions, all his columns show up empty, a fact that also has a clear effect towards the reader.

Prior to the information being transmitted that the Government was planning to avoid a decision about the winners of the frequencies of private television before the elections, Crespo and Balsemão invited Proença de Carvalho to join them in lobbying the Government to do that, but the representative of the TV1 project did not agree and the other two gave up the idea. According to Independente, on 19 July 1991, the prime minister was keeping a distance from all three candidates (article 38).

All the information given in article 38 is constructed on the information collected through non-identified sources. In one case, the journalist says that the source of information is “people close to the candidates” to a frequency; in another case, he (or she) quotes “high responsible people from the Government”. This is one of the cases that the reader has to judge the credibility that he (or she) has in the newspaper. In this article, there is no possibility of doing that through the credibility of the journalist, since it is not signed. Besides the fact that it is published in one of the newspapers that started the habit of signing the articles and besides the fact that it is one article that fills one whole page.

On 31 July 1991, the president of the High Authority for the Media assured Público that the delays in the analysis of the process had nothing to do with political reasons (article 39). He explained that the process was taking more time because of the discussion of the projects.

The author of article 39 begins with a fact – there is a delay in the process of choosing the winners of the contest for the frequencies of private television – and looks for an explanation: he interviews the person responsible for that delay. Almost all the article is presented with quotations, a style that is more evident to the reader, in the sense that he (or she) can know the exact words used by the source of information. The last two paragraphs are purely informative: the constitution and the judge.

For the first time, on 3 August 1991, Público announced the first conclusions of the report made by the commission responsible for the analysis of the projects, constituted by two people connected with the social-democrat party (article 40). The results were that SIC and TVI should be the winners of the contest. TV1, the third candidate, led by Proença de Carvalho, did not accept this first signal; although he called the attention to the fact that it was only a provisional document that had not been discussed yet. The director of the newspaper wrote an opinion article saying that the process was transparent, as it should be.

One whole page of the newspaper is given to the topic of article 40. It is the main text of the section “Society” and it is accompanied by an opinion, written by the director of the newspaper at that time. The space given to the opinion is bigger than normal in the Público, a fact that reveals the importance given by this newspaper to the matter. The director, Vicente
Jorge Silva, follows his own style of writing, with no mercy when he denounces what he thinks is wrong. And he clearly condemns the process, calling it a “scandalous farce”. For him, the decisions were made before the contest, for political reasons and not for the quality of the projects. The style is very aggressive and the choice of the words used implies a strong feeling of revolt.

The Expresso, in the same day, presented the conclusions of the document arguing that it was a "volt-face" (article 41). Mainly because the project that until that time was considered as the poorest one – TVI – appeared now in the second place, with the right of having a channel. TV1 is now accused of having a project very similar to RTP, the public channel.

Although this article 41 is not an opinion article, it uses a style that is similar. The journalist is supposed to present the facts with the possible objectivity but as soon as in the first sentence he does not avoid a comment: the conclusions of the document “constitute an enormous surprise”. The use of many other adjectives and the confidence that is obvious in the entire article certainly has to do with the fact that Balsemão, the man who had the best project for the private channels of television, founded the Expresso.

On 8 August 1991, Público wrote about the analysis of the commission again, this time to reproduce the results of a new document (article 42). At this time, TVI and TV1 were said to be in similar conditions to get the fourth channel. According to this article, this was the perfect solution to allow the Government to assume a political decision. The final text with the analysis was presented one week later. Público, on its edition of 10 August 1991, explained that the document did not present the candidates in order (article 43). Which led to the Government all the chances for choosing. Some of the members of the commission made public their position against the way the process was conducted. And everything would be postponed to months later.

The simple fact that Público published articles of considerable space almost every other day reveals the importance of the topic for the newspaper. Articles 42 and 43 have the signature of the same person, a journalist that, at this time, was specialised in the subject. More, the director writes again. Although newspapers seem to avoid stories through episodes, this theme is a clear exception to the rule.

The announced transformation of the public television – RTP – was beginning to grow. On 6 December 1991, Público explained that the Parliament would discuss the entrance of the private capital in the sector (article 44). The new presentation of the public television would include Council of Opinion, a group of twenty different people from all sectors of society. Their mission would be to analyse the programming and the relations with the countries where the Portuguese language is spoken. So, the intention of the Government was to create a "court of opinion”. Another novelty would be the Contract of Concession, valid for periods of
15 years. This document would also define the amount of money that the State would have to
give to the public channel of television. The Government wanted transparency in the process,
mainly because of the expected criticisms of the future winners of the frequencies of the
private channels.

*Article 44 tries to find out what was going to happen in the future. It is a type of text that
began to appear with the media born in the early nineties in Portugal. The idea is to go
ahead, although this option has its risks, namely when the sources are not trustworthy or
when the provisions change.*

On 17 January 1992 the *Independent* presented SIC and TV1 as the most likely winners of the
two frequencies, based on the preferences of the minister of the sector, Couto dos Santos
(article 45). The solution presented for TV1 was to share RTP2 with the State.

*Article 45 is also a prediction about the future. But, this time the risk did not pay off. As the
future revealed, the prediction was wrong. The winners were SIC and TVI and not SIC and
TV1.*

The importance of the process of attribution of the private frequencies of television was such
that the prime minister decided to present the results himself, according to *Público*, on its
edition of 6 February 1992 (article 46). This newspaper presented the three options that the
Government had at that time, with all the positive and negative political consequences.
According to this article, SIC was a definitive winner; the doubt is between TV1 and TVI.

After months of delay, on this day, the Government finally decided.

The day when the decision was going to be known, Público presented one article (46) that
occupied more than one page but was easy to read. There was a big summary, the main text
was clearly divided in the three possible scenarios of the result, and was illustrated by a
cartoon: three television sets (each responsible for three projects) running around two chairs).
Probably with the intention of reminding the reader the characteristics of each project, the
article is completed with this description. This is an article that was obviously prepared with
time. In a daily newspaper, this is only possible when the journalists know in advance that a
decision is going to be presented on a certain day. The design of the page shows more
attention than normally is possible to give to a story that shows up only in the day.

The following edition of *Público*, on 7 February 1992, dedicated the first four pages to the
process of attribution of the private channels of television (article 47). According to this
article, TV1 lost because they presented a proposal that would be impossible to make real.
The Government ensured that the result was not based on political issues, but on the
economic viability, the characteristics of the programming and the ability to fulfil the
needs of the public interest. So, the Government chose the “balanced” proposal of SIC and
the “modest” proposal of TVI, rejecting the “fearless” proposal of TV1. The adjectives
were given by the High Authority for the Media, in the analysis of the proposals of the three candidates. The director of Público disputed the option of giving two more channels, arguing that the commercial sector would not provide enough advertisements to make all the channels economically viable.

On the day of the announcement of the results, four journalists participated in the writing of article 47. The topic was given the first four pages of the edition of Público in that main, meaning that it was the most important subject of the day. Besides the main text where the results of the contest were announced, there were two opinion articles (one by the director of the newspaper and other by the co-ordinator of the audio visual sector), many reactions (including political parties and the looser), one article about the eventual future distribution of the advertisement and a chronology. It is possible to say that these texts were decided and written in advance.

The Expresso, on 8 February 1992, stressed the option of the Government for a solution that would arrive to the public as consensual (article 48). This newspaper presents a description of what happened in the meeting where the decision was finally taken, assuming that the results were decided in the eve and that no minister knew what was going to happen.

The style of article 48 is a narrative, where the story is told but without a chronological order. The story is told by episodes and goes further or back according to what the journalist thinks is more important. There is, also a hierarchy in the facts presented. There are many quotations, mainly when the idea is to present reactions to the decision. To advance practical information to the reader – also a potential viewer of television – Expresso publishes the first schedule of the new private channels.

In an attempt to recuperate the time lost, the Government nominated a new Council of Management and announces RTP- International, as it is written by Público on 11 February 1992 (article 49). The secretary of State responsible for the mass media emphasised that RTP was no longer an enterprise with economic difficulties and stressed its “quality” to say that the State was proud of the public television.

Article 49 is a very simple text, based on one of the possible sources of information: the results of a meeting. The photo used is one taken at the time of the event.

As was foreseen, the private channels started to question the amount of money that the public television channels received from the State. In the edition of 29 May 1992 the Expresso quotes responsible people for both private channels (article 50). Besides the subsidies, the SIC and TVI also criticise the money that RTP was charging when they wanted to use the archives of the public channels.

The topic of article 50 is presented in an obvious narrative sequence. After answering the
questions “who” and “what”, the journalist explains “why”, explaining the criticisms made by the private channels about the subsidies the state were giving to the public channels. Expressions like “they began to talk with”, “they also tried”, “until now there are no results” exemplify the structure of a story telling. Then, the conclusions are also introduced in a clear way: “They conclude: using the money of the State to pay 150 million escudos for two hours of emission is an immorality”.

The situation of RTP towards the new scenario where the public channel is no longer the only one is related in the beginning of a long article published in the magazine Expresso, on 26 September 1992 (article 51). It is said that a commercial channel was built over a public channel and that, because of the private channels, RTP was receiving even more money, besides continuing to sell space for commercial purposes. The only weapon that the private channels had was to create a schedule capable of finding loyal viewers. Good programmes and good professionals were needed. The article presented the different options.

This entire article is written in a straightforward style, in colloquial language. The journalist even asks questions about possible situations and answers “yes and no”. The “open” style is in such a form that the author of the article even comments on the title he gave to the text: “Is there room for one more?”. After describing all the scenarios and forces that were being tested in that time, he concludes, “it is not completely impossible that both channels (RTP and SIC) will prosper (and who knows if TVI as well)”. He goes on: “If so, maybe the title of this article will make no sense”.

One of the consequences of the privatisation of the television was the appearance, with more frequency, of programmes with explicit sex and violence. On 29 October 1992, Público published one article about this topic, where it was said that the Secretary of State of Culture, Santana Lopes, wanted to produce a law with the restrictions to impose to the television channels (article 52). Although SIC was directly attacked, the truth is that years before, RTP had broadcast different polemic movies, as it is stated in the article.

Article 52 starts in an original way. Before anything else, the journalist gives situations in contrast: “Some call it censorship; others simply good taste. Some claim that it is eroticism; others scream that it is pornography” and so on. After three paragraphs of examples, she presents the story, in this case, one movie that was very polemic in the beginning of the 1980’s. This can also be considered an historic article, in the sense that it presents all the cases of programmes or movies that have been criticised for being considered too “heavy”. Another characteristic of this article (that is three in the whole: two informative and one of opinion) is the titles: the choice is for known expressions adapted to the situation. So, instead of “The times change, the wills change” the title is
“The times change, the censorship changes”. Instead of “The box that changed the world” the title is “The box that provoked Portugal”.

The Independente, on 30 October 1992, published one article with the details of the law that was being prepared to classify the movies and the programmes shown on television (article 53). The main objective of this project of law was to protect the young and the vulnerable viewers. This document proposed that not only the movies but also the series and soap operas should be presented with the age group addressee. Besides, it was proposed that the movies classified for people older than 16 should only be broadcast late at night and that each channel should announce which would be the days of the week when those kinds of programmes would be scheduled. For cases of breaking the law, the fines presented were heavy.

*The particularity of article 53 is that it begins to be based on a single person – a woman that is fighting for “decency” on television – to go to the broader rules of the programmes. Then the journalist uses what is considered to be one of the best triumphs of the field: she first reveals the details of the rules.*

The head of the National Secretary for the Mass Media, António-Pedro Vasconcelos, published an opinion article in Público, on 23 November 1992, about the role of public television (article 54). He criticised the behaviour of the public channels in Europe, considering that, copying the private channels, they not only do not present an alternative but also make life difficult for the private channels. Because fighting for audiences, the public television also fights for advertisements.

*The style of article 54 is obviously not the style of a journalistic text, in the pure sense. The author starts to say, “Everybody knows...” In the middle of the article he uses expressions like “I would say...” or “I will try to explain myself...”. This is almost an intimate approach to the reader. In the spaces dedicated by the newspapers to the opinion, almost everything is possible. In this case, the author not only gives an opinion through the use of many adjectives (“pathetic example”, “genial movie”, “vertiginous multiplication”, etc) but he also speculates about what is going to happen in the future.*

The question of the RTP-International was not easy. The Independente, on 24 December 1992, explained how polemical the solution was: the Portuguese emigrants would have to pay to receive this channel, because the only way to broadcast it was through cable television (article 55). The question is, once again; is the money that the Government gives to the public television not yet sufficient?

*Article 55 is written without quoting the sources. The journalist uses expressions like “as far as Independente knows” to support the information. Even though, the information is given with a certain degree of certainty: “Even if it looks strange, RTP International is*
not going to be a free service for the Portuguese communities in America”. The other important factor of this article is the novelty that it implies: it is a decision that goes against what was defined. So, besides being a novelty, it also has the surprise factor. Both seem to be very important regarding newspapers, namely the selling of them.

On 4 February 1993 Público mentioned a study ordered by the Government on the public service of television but the conclusion was not positive: this service is more costly than what the Government wanted (article 56). The internal crisis of RTP, namely because of the place for a president, was alive, according to Público, in the same edition (article 57). The choice was announced and Jornal de Notícias, edition of 5 February 1993, presented the profile of the new director of RTP, Freitas Cruz (article 58). According to Público, this was a political choice to maintain the “status quo” of RTP and to try to solve the financial problems of the channel (article 59). According to Independente, on 12 February 1993, this was the first sign that RTP might be privatised (article 60), because the new president was also a man that led a big group of mass media, Lusomundo.

This group of articles (56, 57, 58, 59 and 60) are a clear example of how the same information can be given in different ways. It has to be noted that Jornal de Notícias only gave the profile of the new director of RTP (article 58). He used to be the director of this newspaper and, besides this fact; it is not the type of newspaper that would give interpretations about information like this. Just acting in the opposite way, Público interprets the choice of the man a political option (article 59) and Independente sees it as a possible privatisation of the public channel of television (article 60).

Article 57 is represented in the most important space of the newspaper Público: the first pages. This fact is enough to justify the importance of the subject. But, besides this, there are a considerable number of journalists involved: twelve (eight reporters; two correspondents – in Paris and in Madrid; and two photographers). The work presented has three photos and six articles in three different styles. The main article starts with guesses about the future (who is going to be in charge in the public television?) and goes on with an approach in the story style. One example of the first way of writing is the sentence “The new president (...) should have the profile of a manager, like the previous one” and one example of the second one is the sentence “In the last days of the Lemo’s domain (...)”. This main article and five others are presented in the classical format of this newspaper. One of the others was put inside a box, to call the attention to a special fact. In the case, the content of one letter was considered important in the process. One other article is presented as the profile of the important man of the event and, in the top of the text, it is clear that the text is about the protagonist because it is identified like that. Article 58 is only the profile, although it is not presented in a special format but as if it
was a “common” article.

One association of ideas is the basis of article 59: the journalists defend the existence of an evident link between the proximity of the regional elections and the option of the Government of not taking risks in the choice of the new director for the public television. Although it is not an opinion article, the author questions the level of RTP’s debts. Once again, Público presents different approaches in the style: one traditional article; one article entitled the ‘protagonist’; one opinion article.

Article 60 is based on rumours: “The rumours are getting bigger and bigger and someone close to Marques Mendes (the Secretary of State) does not deny them: in some time, channel two of RTP can be privatised”. Although the article is based in what politicians and responsible people from RTP think and did, there is not even one direct quotation. Everything is written based on non-identified sources.

On 13 February 1993 Expresso published one article based on the inquiry to RTP ordered to the ex-president (article 61). The document proved a deficient financial management. As an example, the movies bought outside the country have been cheaper than what was stated in the internal reports. Another example is the huge amount of money used to buy the rights of the emissions of football. Even worse, millions of escudos were used to pay movies that never were broadcast, states Expresso, in a different article in the same edition (article 62).

Article 61 is based on “internal sources” of RTP but also on internal documents and contracts already signed. There is a little box where the style used is different: the journalists reproduce direct speech and comments of the president of the institution.

The title of article 62 has the ingredients of a scandal: “RTP spent 1.5 millions (of the national currency) in movies that were not show”. The criteria seem to be obviously the novelty but also the negativity, although this one is not very frequent in the articles about this topic. Public and private television is a topic that is mainly about negotiations and political options; it is not about scandals, except if they involve money. The article is not big but it was given a space in the front pages.

Not surprisingly, on 12 March 1993, Público published one article with the title “Government wants to ‘moralise’ RTP” (article 63). The journalist even says that, in the war of audiences, the RTP has been the most wild of the commercial channels. The Government wanted to stop this, through the Contract of Concession that would be signed days later. This included the intention of giving to RTP a more cultural image. The stimulus of national productions of quality, through a scheduling that would not be ruled by the war of audiences, by the transformation of RTP2, by the co-operation with the African countries where Portuguese is the official language, among others. Before all the
accusations, the Government said that what was needed was transparency in the management of RTP.

Not surprisingly, the negative aspects of RTP (including the money spent on movies never seen) were used to support the new information: “The Government is going to ‘moralise’ RTP”. The second step of article 63 was to explain the contents of the contract that RTP was going to sign with the State, including the obligations and the rights. The style is clear and direct, without opinion. However, it has an air of anticipation, in the sense that explains the contents of a document that was not yet signed.

On 17 March 1993, in Público, Roberto Carneiro, social democrat, ex-minister of Education, and president of TVI wrote an opinion article about the public service of television in the era of privatisation (article 64). He questioned why the RTP was receiving money from the citizens through the taxes when it was the television channel with the biggest share of advertising. He also questioned why the rules of television were not the same for all the channels, no matter if they are public or private: all the four channels had the same duties, normally associated with the public service: to inform, to entertain, to educate.

Article 64 is presented in an enunciating form. Each idea has a number and, in the beginning of each paragraph, there is the main idea that is explained in the following sentences. The ideas presented have a chronological order. After explaining what happened recently and after describing the present, the author introduces his vision of the near future.

During the signature of the Contract of Concession it was announced that the economic situation of RTP would be inspected twice a year, according to Público, on 18 March 1993 (article 65). The contract also obliged RTP to have alternative programmes in the second channel. Público, on 19 March 1993, confirmed that sports would be on RTP2 (article 66). Although the ceremony of the signature of the Contract of Concession of the public service of television was not supposed to have any news – because the journalists had access to the document before and had written about it in the day before, anticipating almost everything – there was a new element added to the story, that justified this article. This is why article 65 tells about a “revelation”, presented by the Secretary of State during the ceremony. So, in this case, the journalist collected the information directly in the place where it was presented, without needing to use sources or intermediaries. Apart from the new information, the journalist reproduced the opinion about the contract of different people involved in the process that were at the ceremony.

In opposition with the last article, article 66 is exclusively based on the information given by non-identified sources. It is an article written in a style suggesting, “what is going to
happen”. There is also a little bit of background, when the journalists use information already given in other articles about the Contract of Concession and also when they reiterate the words of one of those responsible for RTP in a recent interview.

Going against what the prime minister said – that television is worse since the private providers started broadcasting – two representatives of the two private channels argue that there is more quality and a real alternative to the public channels. Both of these directors consider competition. This information is given by Diário de Notícias, in its edition of 26 May 1993 (article 67).

The title of article 67 is a conclusion: “The television became more critical”. After reading the title, the reader easily understands that this conclusion is based on the opinion of two men, because their pictures are obviously associated with the content of the text. The way the article and the photos are presented allows this association. The article itself uses the technique of the enunciation: “There is a bigger range of programmes. There is a bigger critical sense in the analysis of the information. The ‘yes minister’ that many people were used to was questioned. In conclusion, television is better say SIC and TVI”. At this point, everything is definitively clear, the reader should have no doubts. The essential information is given until this stage and only the very interested readers would go on. Because it is well structured, bearing in mind the people who want to be informed but who do not have the time to read all the articles in full.

On 2 October 1993, Expresso presented the balance of one year of co-existence of public and private television in Portugal (article 68). The general idea was that the news improved but there was also an increase in sensationalism. Besides the bigger offer, there are also more programmes without ‘quality’. In an inquiry into the quality of the Portuguese television by critics, politicians and representatives of associations of viewers, SIC won in the news, TVI won in the movies, RTP2 won in the culture and RTP1 won in the ‘telenovelas’.

Article 68 is a comparison between the expectation held one year before and what happened in reality. The comparison is about a scenario of exclusivity of the public service of television and the co-existence of public and private. The journalist gives examples, refreshes the memory of the reader, to arrive at a conclusion: “If the information is a winner, so it is the sensationalism; if there are opportunities of choice, there are also more programmes without quality.” It is obvious that there is opinion implicit, although the article is not presented as opinion. It is a review of one year of emissions of co-existence between public and private television. In this article, Expresso presents an interesting format of information: three critics give grades to the performances of the three channels in the different areas (news, movies, series, culture,
national production, sports, etc). This is shown in a graphic style, which implies an easy way of transmitting the opinion involved. The evaluation of the first year of transmissions is concluded with the opinion of another critic, in a normal text.

The main conclusion that *Diário de Notícias* arrived at, in its edition of 4 October 1993 (article 69) is that the performance of the politicians began to be much more “controlled”. The private stations invested a large amount in the information sector and that included a better view of the political arena, in contrast with the alleged control of the public television by the party that was on the power. The other conclusion was that RTP was still in the leadership in what concerned shares of audiences.

*Instead of being illustrated with a photo, article 69, that occupies one whole page, is illustrated with a graphic. It is an option used very often when the idea is to transmit the results of a survey, as this is the case, since the shares of audiences are presented. Besides this, the newspaper also decided to pull the three main ideas that are a consequence of the analysis of the article and put them in a box, using the bold in the characters. Just like many other articles in this analysis, the style used is similar to a story.*

In the edition of 5 October 1993 (article 70), *Diário de Notícias* presented the version of the Government that is facing all the criticisms about the way the public service is shaped. The Government, through one adjunct to a minister, said that it was happy with what happened in the television scenario: as promised, they allowed the privates to go into the field. The problem, from the Government’s point of view, had to do with the violations of the law, namely in the concerns regarding the rules about advertising.

*Article 70 is an interview with one member of the Government who is responsible for the television sector. The title is strong enough to be attractive: “Nobody respects the Television Law”. As the idea is attributed to the responsible, it can be polemic. But this is of the most important ingredients of the mass media. The interview, itself, shows that the journalist is used to writing about the topic: the questions are pertinent and she insists when she is not getting answers to her questions.*

The same balance was made by *Público*, on 6 October 1993 (article 71). The conclusions of this newspaper were that RTP was keeping three quarters of the audience. But SIC already had more viewers than RTP2, except when the second channel broadcast sports. TVI was growing slowly but it had a specific public, while the viewers of SIC did not have a specific characteristic. According to the journalist, the quality in the news improved but there was also an investment in cheap products of entertainment and – what was new in the Portuguese television – in talk shows copied from the American format. Pinto Balsemão, interviewed in the same edition of the newspaper, said that RTP was not
respecting the Contract of Concession. He also recognised that SIC had less viewers than what he expected and more financial problems than what he expected. But he was sure that SIC would solve the problems within two years.

Six pages of this edition of Público are given to article 71. It is a journalistic work that covers almost everything that could have been done to analyse one year of private television. It is obvious that the product presented by the newspaper was prepared with care and in advance. There is a big lead that resumes the most important information of the different texts included; and a cartoon and a graphic illustrate it. The main text is an analysis of the programmes scheduled by all the channels during that year and all the conclusions are explained. For instance, the journalists say “there is more violence on television now” and enunciates the series that contributed to that.

Besides this analysis of the programmes, there is space to publish the ideas of the directors of the three channels. But there is a significant difference: while the president of RTP, the public station, and the president of TVI are given space to write an opinion article, the president of SIC, the private channel in ascension, is interviewed. The difference of space can be criticised but the journalistic criteria is easy to understand: SIC is the phenomena, the novelty. Besides, there is an interesting note written by the journalists who interviewed Pinto Balsemão, the president of SIC. They say: “Pinto Balsemão, with some kilos more, seemed to be an happy man. But nervous. Later, he would be irritated with some of the questions that were being put. His sense of humour would vanish, as if it was magic.” During the interview, they put forward a question two times and Balsemão never answered. On the third time, the journalists asked: “Do you mind to answer the question?” This is something that was almost impossible in the past in Portuguese journalism: the description of what happened in the margins of the interview and the reproduction of a scene of journalistic aggressive style. This is also a sign of the changes in the approach of the new media.

Using the newspaper that he founded, the president of SIC published in Expresso, on 8 January 1994 an opinion article (article 72) about what he considered to be “disloyal competition”. Besides questioning all the money RTP is getting from the State, Balsemão also criticised the public channel for not fulfilling the criteria inherent to a public service. He gave the example of channel 2, which is supposed to broadcast for the minorities and which was broadcasting football matches and soap operas.

The most important reference that can be done to this article is that Balsemão writes in the newspaper that he founded. The attack on the public television is the intention of the article. It can be seen much more as a letter to the Government and to the Administration of RTP because it is too specific and too detailed.
Different opinion makers were bringing up the question of the economic survival of the four channels. Manuel José Homem de Mello was one of them. He presented an opinion article (article 73) in *Diário de Notícias*, on 16 January 1994, where he explains that the money from the advertisement is not enough for all the channels and he even questions if it would not be preferable to have only one private station.

*Article 73 does not start with what is crucial in all the opinion. It starts with a general vision of the press and the media, going as far back as Gutenberg, in 1440. Then he explains the appearance of the phone and the radio, and so on. To arrive at a conclusion, the author makes references to many details. This is only possible because it is not a journalistic article.*

The result of a study done by the Portuguese Association of Viewers about the quality of television through the analysis of one week of programming is presented in *Diário de Notícias*, on 25 April 1994 (article 74). One of the positive aspects of this study is that there is plenty of national news in the information programmes. The most important negative note is that programming is subordinated to the fights for the audiences.

*Analysing one study produced by the Portuguese Association of Viewers, the article starts with the main conclusion of the document. And it is a simple article constructed over what is said in the study, with the necessary quotations.*

On 19 February 1995, in *Público*, Arons de Carvalho, a deputy from the Socialist Party (who, late, would be Secretary of State for the Media), wrote an opinion to say that RTP was a company that belonged to the public but that it was not a public service (article 75). He even argued that RTP could not be distinguished from a normal commercial television.

*Article 75 is basically the answer given by the Arons de Carvalho to the public declarations of the president of the Association of Viewers of Television. It is a space within a private newspaper given to the Government. This proves the open character of the new media, prepared to allow everybody the right of expression, when it is considered important to the readers. This opinion obviously coincides with that of the directors of the newspapers, which can be criticised.*

After an exhaustive discussion about the role of RTP in the dual system of television in Portugal, the presenter of the news of the second channel accepted the invitation to be the responsible for the channel, with the mission of creating a real public service. *Público* described this, in the edition of 15 December 1995 (article 76). Everybody was pleased with the solution, not only inside RTP but also the private channels.
Article 76 is simply the announcement of the new director of public television, but implies the consequences of the choice and explains the differences with the past. So, it also has analysis, which is different from opinion and, so, it is allowed in a journalistic article.

Four years after the appearance of private television channels in Portugal, on 6 February 1996, Público presented a new balance (article 77). Basically, the journalists watched television during a Sunday with the intention of analysing the programming. Besides the fact that, by this time, the three most seen programmes belonged to SIC, the journalists concluded that there still were violations to the law. In that particular day, the only channel that seemed to fulfil the requirements of the advertising law was RTP2.

As many other articles observed in this analysis, article 77 is constructed with the story style. The article includes a different way of writing about television in the press: eight journalists watched, in pairs, one day of emissions of the four channels and they wrote about what they saw in that day. It is not an opinion, but, as it is a personal view of the programmes, it has a little bit of opinion.

One opinion-maker, Manuel Villaverde Cabral, clarified his open fight the idea of the public service of television, in Diário de Notícias, on 1 April 1996 (article 78). He gives the example of the United States of America to explain that no democracy needs a public service of television. He says that nobody needs the public service to watch soap operas, football matches, quiz shows, news or even advertisements. One of his conclusions was that RTP was never a public service of television, considering that what the viewers get from it could be given by any other channel: escapism from daily problems.

The author of article 78 presents a link between the systems of television and the political options of the countries. After the general analysis, he presents the Portuguese case, in a straight way of writing, as if he was talking. He even uses questions to show his doubts, but he also answers many questions. He also presents a direct criticism to the opinion article that the Arons de Carvalho wrote in Público. The provocation and answerback, using the newspapers, is common among the people who write opinion articles.

Now as Secretary of State for the Media, on 28 March 1996, Arons de Carvalho wrote an article in Público defending the solution for RTP, could never be privatisation, as some people were saying (article 79). In the same newspaper, the same politician, on 26 January 1997 criticised the easy way that people used to talk negatively about RTP (article 80). He explained all the money given to RTP by the State, regretting the end of the tax, in 1991. Arons de Carvalho reminds us that throughout Europe the State pays the public service of television and proves that each French citizen pays twice for public television than the Portuguese. In Finland, Sweden and Germany people pay even more.
Arons de Carvalho organises article 79 in an ordered structure, giving opinions and explaining his reasons, ending with a clear conclusion. In the point of view of the analysis of the content of the article, it is important to note how the author started: “RTP and even the television in general constitute a topic of permanent debate among the Portuguese people. There is no need to present big theories about its tremendous influence to understand the origin of this fact”. The author not only writes about the phenomena, but he also analyses it. As it is normal and allowed in the opinion published in the press, this article uses adjectives: “very heavy debts”, “a big mistake”, “a silly thing to do”, “extreme governamentalisation”, and so on.

The style of the opinion makers is easily known, as each one of them has their own way of writing. Arons de Carvalho starts article 80 almost in the same way he had started the article analysed before, commenting on the general debate that has been done about television before giving his own opinion: “The debate around RTP and the public service of television has not been full of arguments and rigour”. This is not an article about ideas but also an article giving explanations about the money involved in the public television. It is more like information given to the public.

After some suspicions that RTP-Porto (second city of Portugal) could be arriving at an end, on 26 February 1997, Jornal de Notícias gave the warranty of the opposite (article 81). The director of that nucleus said that the public service in the North of the country would not be extinguished. To prove this, he mentioned the programmes that were being produced.

Article 81 is a clear example of the proximity factor. Jornal de Notícias has more readers in the North than any other newspaper has in all the country. This explains the importance given to information that has to do with that part of the country, namely with the city of Porto. So, even if this newspaper did not involved itself so much in the topic of the privatisation of the television as other newspapers did, it gives a considerable space to one article that is about television in Porto.

To commemorate the 40 years of television in Portugal, Público, in its weekly magazine, on 2 March 1997, published an historical dossier (article 82). José Manuel Fernandes writes: “Sociologically, the private televisions did what RTP never did: bring the people inside the screen. (...) Side by side with the new stars, it is very frequently the simple people looking for a moment of glory that gives life to the programmes with more shares”.

Article 82 is more a dossier than an article published in the daily pages of the Público. It analyses different perspectives of the phenomena (politics on TV, advertising on TV, soap-operas on TV, reality-shows on TV, types of TV sets since the 1950s, the privatisation, the future, the people and the programmes who contributed to the story of television in Portugal,
a chronology, an interview that is know as The Critic of the Portuguese television). There is a big concern in the choice of the photos and also with the design of the pages.

On 24 May 1997, Expresso published a series of interviews with public figures of different sectors that had an opinion about the phenomenon of the Portuguese television (article 83). For instance, Maria Barroso, wife of the later President of Republic, stressed her opinion: “The fundamental values, like solidarity, humanism, the right to be different, are completely ignored by the television”. Other critics were presented in what concerns an excess of violence and a lack of quality. In the same edition, an article was published about the audiences: there were more people watching television but for less hours per day. One possible explanation was that the channels were giving more of the same.

The main concern of article 83 is diversity. It is obvious the option to transmit the opinion of different people, from different sectors of society. Curious is the fact that in the point of view of the illustration there is a concern of being homogenous: all the interviewees are photographed close to a television set and the reader is allowed to think that it is their own television set.

The question of the interference of the Government in the news of the public channel was analysed by Eduardo Cintra Torres, a television critic, in one opinion article published in Público, on 9 June 1997 (article 84). He clearly argued that the actual prime minister of Portugal (just like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton) was using the public television as an instrument to achieve his objectives.

Article 84 is critical of the Government. The author explains how the Government “uses” the public television to reach their goals. He uses the comparison to present the differences between the actual Government the one before. Cintra Torres also uses quotations of researchers to analyse the phenomena of the audiences.

All the questions concerning the public services of television were debated in a conference in Lisbon and this event led one of the journalists who normally wrote about television in Público to do an interview, published on 28 June 1997 with the president of RTP (article 85). This journalist criticised the way the private channels compete with the public ones, announced a big investment in equipment and gave a positive opinion about an eventual re-birth of one tax paid by the viewers to the public channel.

This interview (article 85) seems to be have been a difficult one. For instance, the interviewee uses the technique – condemned by some researchers – to avoid the question: when questioned about the privatisation of the public service of television he speaks about the impossible privatisation of the public hospitals. And he also uses one metaphor, very common in the Portuguese language, to avoid answering one of the questions.

To mark the fifth anniversary of the private channel SIC, Público published, on 5 October
1997, a group of articles (article 86) that goes from the informative one, to the opinion of
the director of the newspaper, the opinion of the secretary of State responsible for the
sector, the opinion of one opinion-maker, an analysis of the new style of the channel (with
a description of the most important “faces”), one article with the consequences of the
existence of this channel from the point of view of the public channel, one article about
audiences and one article about the financial situation of SIC.

In the main text of this group of articles (considered as article 86), the authors resume the
opinions about SIC of opinion-makers, sociologists, and journalists. It is basically
constructed over quotations that contributed to the story of the station. Some of the people
quoted agree that when SIC started it seemed like a breath of fresh air but then turned out
to be to sensationalist. The arguments in favour of the channel come in the end of the
article, as if the article wanted to underline the negative argument, as it is the one that
comes first and occupies more space.

A second text of this group that deserves analysis is the one that points out the famous
“faces” of SIC, for good and bad reasons. The structure is different from a journalistic
text. Instead of having a narrative sequence, it is a kind of nomination. The journalist
selects the figures that she considers, for example, the best news presenters, the popular
hosts or the worse professionals (but also famous). The text is not presented as an opinion
but the point is to judge the work of the people mentioned. This is why there are
expressions like “image of respect and credibility” or “the worse of the worse”.

3.2 – Framing the articles

After analysing the articles, the research method that seemed most appropriate to develop
was the framing analysis, bearing in mind that the purpose still was to write the recent
history of the Portuguese television channels.

The first question that has to be asked is: what is a frame in the context of social science
research? Many authors have dedicated time and work to this question. A possible starting
point to construct a resume of these ideas can be found in the work of Gitlin (1980, p.6):
“Frames are principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit
theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters”. Specifying the process of
selection, he says that “media are mobile spotlights, not passive mirrors of the society;
selectivity is the instrument of their action” (ibid., p.49). Frames are presented in the
media and directed to the audiences: readers, viewers and listeners. So, they “organize the
world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on
their reports” (ibid., p.7). Scheufele (1999) defines this dichotomy as “media versus
individual frames”. Because, even at an individual level, we all organise and label our life experiences (see Goffman, 1986).

Quoting Goffman, Gamson et al (1992, p.384) say, “The concept of frame maintains a useful tension or balance between structure and agency. On the one hand, events and experiences are framed; on the other hand, we frame events and experiences”. These and other authors (see, for instance, Wolfsfeld, 1997) agree that the process of using frames has to do with the understanding of what are the relevant events and suggesting their importance, establishing the issue. In this way of defining the process, Wolfsfeld (1997, p.36) explains that “frames are used to organize events into a meaningful pattern and while some aspects of narrative fit are culturally specific, others are universal”. And he argues that “there is no such thing as a correct frame; there are always alternative frames that can be applied to an event”. The variables can depend, for instance, on the point of view. Wolfsfeld gives one example: “A leftist militant hijacking an American plane to Cuba will be framed as a terrorist in the American news media while a Cuban hijacking a plane to arrive in America will be framed as a hero” (ibid., p.53). In any case, “frames should not be confused with positions for or against some political measure” (Gamson, 1989, p.2). But they can have a strong political power. Gitlin (1980, p.72), referring to the Vietnam war, recalls that “Johnson, like Nixon after him, understood that any coverage of the war that stretched outside the official frame, even if it didn’t directly contradict that frame, was likely to damage the war effort through its weak link: American public opinion”.

In Entmans’s perspective (1993, pp.52-5), “frames highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience”. They “call attention to some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements, which might lead audiences to have different reactions”. And they do this in such a way “to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”. According to Ryan (1991, p.53), “framing is more than a process of interpreting selected events; it is actually the process of creating events, of signifying, from the vast pool of daily occurrences, what is important”. And, as in any act of creation, it is subjective.

The question now is: how do journalists construct these frames? One fundamental way is the process through which they reach the information. And this is done through the relations that they establish with the sources. Here the problem is: who has access to the journalists? Wolfsfeld (1997, p.47) presents a possible answer: “Groups whose members appear to come from the elite, whose goals are more reformist than revolutionary, and whose actions fall into what the news media regard as reasonable dissent, will find it much easier to promote their frames to the media than those who violate these norms”.

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What are the elements that contribute to the construction of the frames? Wolfsfeld (1997, p.41) takes the case of a conflict and identifies three major elements: “The nature of the information and events that are being processed, the need to create a good news story, and the need to create a story that resonates politically within a particular culture”. But not all the issues have to have reflected opposite positions. Not all of the issues are conflicts. One of these cases is presented by Beckett (1996, p.57): The case of Child Sexual Abuse. She clearly says, “there is no ‘pro-child abuse’ lobby”. In the case that I will analyse further, there is not also a lobby against the privatisation of television in Portugal: the framing is not presented in an opposition scenario (see 3.2).

Having said this, it is important to realise how the different authors present the frames. The proposal presented by Gamson (1989) seems to congregate consensus (it has been followed by authors like Ryan, 1991, and Wolfsfeld, 1997). This approach presents five framing devices (metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images) and three reasoning devices (roots, consequences, and appeals to principle). And this will be the package that I will use in the analysis of the articles of the Portuguese press (see 3.2).

One aspect that is frequently referred to by the authors is the idea that issues change over the time, and so do the frames. Analysing the way the organisation Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was portrayed in the American press during the 1960s and 1970s, Gitlin (1980, p.32) concludes: “The New York Times’ frames for the New Left shifted in the course of 1965. At the beginning, the Times set out a respectful exposition of SDS activities and goals; then it proceeded to trivialize and denigrate the movement. By the fall, unflattering themes had become prominent: SDS was now viewed as extremist, deviant, and dangerous. Though there was no straight-line evolution from respect to hostility, there was a definite tilt in the emphasis and proportions”. Later, the author concludes that this shift corresponds to something real in society. The movement was also changing, and in the same direction that the press was framing. Another example of changing of the frames over time is given by Gamson (1989, pp.1-2), when he uses the topic of the nuclear power to illustrate this situation: “There is an ongoing discourse that evolves and changes over time, providing interpretations and meanings for relevant events”.

As it happens with other social sciences methodologies, the construction of frames has been criticised. Scheufele (1999, p.103) is one of the authors who, quoting previous works, presents doubts about the process: “Entman (1993) referred to framing as ‘a scattered conceptualisation’ (p.51), with previous studies lacking clear conceptual definitions and relying on context-specific, rather than generally applicable operationalisations. Even if it can be criticised, the framing methodologies has the great advantage of resuming what construction of the reality that has been sent to the public. So, I have decided to use it.
What follows is a table with two of the possible frames that can be constructed through the analysis of the articles. These frames represent what the key actors (the people responsible for each of the services: public television and private television) think about the privatisation of television in Portugal. The table shows their opinions and their doubts, known by the general public through the press.

| 2. 1 Frames built over the process of the privatisation of the television in Portugal |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| **Meta Frame**                  | **Public channel’s perspective**  | **Private channels’ perspective** |
|                                  | The end of the monopoly.          | The liberalisation of the market. |
| **Core Frame**                  | **Public channel’s perspective**  | **Private channels’ perspective** |
|                                  | Who are going to be the competitors? | Which groups are going to win? |
|                                  |                                  | What pressures were stronger? |
| **Core Position**               | The public television will have to prepare itself for the “war” of audiences, creating new strategies. | The winners of the private frequencies will have to attract each viewer, through innovation. |
| **Catch-Phrases**               | “More TV is better TV?”           | “One more process of doubtful transparency and lack of independence” |
|                                  | “Competition is good but not a pure war of audiences” | “Polemic choice” |
|                                  |                                  | “Scandalous farce” |
| **Roots**                       | The monopoly led to the governamentalisation of the public channels. | Promises made by the Government to give a private channel to the Catholic Church. |
| **Consequences**                | The public channels had to go through changes in the internal structure and in the outputs. | Private channels did what the public channels had never done before: brought the people inside the screen. |
| **Appeals to principle**        | The will of keeping the subsidies of the State, to maintain the notion of public service. Objectives: big audiences (RTP1) and happy minorities (RTP2). | The need of respecting the free market, to allow a fair competition. Objectives: the highest possible shares and the highest possible profits. |
1 – Changes and new rules in the broadcasting set

In recent years new elements have been introduced into the research on broadcasting. Very often, authors and researchers write about “changes” in the scenario, “new rules”, “new policies” and “the future”. What do they mean? A possible clarification is what follows, as well as the interpretation of the phenomenon in Portugal, based on the opinions of the direct actors. Their opinions, that follow, were collected through two different ways: articles published in the press and direct interviews, conducted by myself, in November 1999.

The interviews include: the sub-director of programming of SIC (private channel) at the time, António Borga; the general director of TVI (private channel), José Eduardo Moniz; “the face” of RTP1 (public television), José Rodrigues dos Santos (at the time of the interview he was news presenter; later he was promoted to director of information); and the psychologist who was working in the department for children’s programmes of the public station, Noémia Macedo, since the public channel in Portugal did not have, at that moment, a specific director of programmes. This lacuna was only fulfilled in January 2000, with the nomination of Manuel Medeiros to be responsible for the programmes of RTP, under the direction, at that time, of a general director, João Grego Esteves. The opinions of those responsible, as well as of the administrator of RTP, Brandão de Brito, are presented in this work through the testimonies given in a group of articles published on the press, that I collected through a systematic search and with the help of the archives of the newspaper Público. In this group of articles there are also present the ideas of other people who have or had responsibilities in the Portuguese channels of television: Pinto Balsemão (president of SIC), Emídio Rangel (at the time, director of SIC) Maria Elisa (ex-director of programmes of RTP). I have decided to present these opinions because the analysis becomes broader and richer.

The first step for the new age of television was in the 1980s: the decade of the changes in the technologies and economics of the broadcasting in Western Europe. Dyson and Humphreys (1988, pp.1-2) explain “at the heart of these changes stand the new communication technologies of satellite and cable as well as the availability of new terrestrial frequencies”.

The consequence was obvious: “Under the impact of technological change, and related economic, cultural and political issues, broadcasting has become of mounting commercial and political significance”. But these authors argue, “the broadcasting and new media revolution is not simply technology-driven”. Other factors – like the “erosion of the public service” and
the changing family structures and social habits” that “have expressed themselves in demands for more ‘home-based leisure and greater consumer choice” (ibid., p.11) – have also been influential.

One of the biggest changes within the scenario of broadcasting activity was privatisation. “From different starting points, and at different speeds, Europe’s broadcasters have reached an increasingly homogeneous position, a position dictated by global consumerism” (Coleman and Rollet, 1997, p.19). This is explained by the disappearance of state monopolies and the growth of private channels. The idea of privatisation, according to Wolton (1994, p.29) was “to set the television apart from the politics and from the State, trying to make it ‘free’, while the private money was appearing as bigger warranty of freedom as the public money was”. This new way of thinking, characteristic of the 1980s and 1990s, is something that the researcher considers an illusion: “The hostility towards the public model signified an amnesia about the disadvantages of the private money”.

Franklin (1997, p. 179) pointed out another problem with privatisation. This researcher reminds us that in the late 1980s “critics argued that one inevitable consequence of introducing market forces into the broadcast system would be a reduction in the range of programmes”. Even if the private channels of television promised to give more variety of programmes, it was an “absolute lie” (Piedrahíta quoting Leguina, 1994, p.128). Piedrahíta, a Spanish researcher, argues that what is dominant is the uniformity of very bad products. In the Spanish case, “another myth that fell down with the privatisation was the label that many people had put on TVE (the public channel) of being a very bad channel”. Piedrahíta says that, besides all the negative aspects (such as political dominance and irrational business perspective), “TVE goes on being the best television channel in Spain”.

2 – The Portuguese new scenario

In the Portuguese case, the two private channels that appeared in the beginning of the 1990s (SIC and TVI) promised to be different from the public channel (RTP) (see table Ap.2.1 p: 238). António Borga, sub-director of programmes of SIC, the channel that, in November 1999, was the leader of audiences (this scenario changed a year later), explained that this channel presented itself, since the beginning, as “a popular and intelligent television”. Being a generalist channel, this means that the aim is “all the audiences that watch television at each time of the day”, giving them all the “existing television genres”.

The sub-director of programmes of SIC added that another innovation of this channel is the democratic component: “It is an open channel”. The implication of this is that “everybody can watch it, with no other costs except the ones of having a television set and conditions of
reception of the waves, made by one antenna”. In this sense, Borga explained that SIC is a mass media typical example: it broadcasts to an “aggregation of audiences”. But this theory can also be applied to the other three terrestrial channels in Portugal, since there is no licence fee.

Being accessible to everybody is the strategy of this station. The sub-director of programmes of SIC gave one example of how things happen in a daily basis: “When we discuss the fusion of the atom at eleven p.m., we try to make it in a way that everybody that is watching television at eleven p.m. will be interested in it. And not in a way that would only interest a very small minority that knows about the topic and that is worried with the fusion of the atom”.

Borga did not have any kind of doubts when he says that the appearance of the private channels in Portugal only brought advantages (see table Ap.2.2 p: 240): there are now “more programmes to watch and higher standards in the national production”. He defended that, “now a days, in the private channels, we are producing fiction with one thousand times more quality than that fiction that we watched when RTP had the monopoly”. In January 2000, this station presented the first film made specifically for television in Portugal. It had 2.4 million viewers, in a population that does not reach 10 million. Even if the second film, shown one month later, was not such a success, it still meant that there was an interest in producing films for television. As a result, a few weeks later, RTP, the public channel, announced a new era of film production as well. Besides the films and the popular programmes, a strong component of SIC is, without doubts, the news and information sector. Since the beginning, this was also a strong challenge. After that, the director of the public channel at that time, João Grego Esteves, also announced (Diário de Notícias, 20 January 2000) the creation of a news channel, although this was not actually created until the middle of 2002.

In the same article Esteves was questioned about the performance of RTP concerning the missions of public service. The director of the public channel was clear: “RTP is not performing the public service; it is trying, everyday, to perform more public service”. At the time of the interview, RTP was presenting a new team and a new schedule, after some time of internal problems. As for the new schedule, he insisted that the basic principle inherent was that “what is important is not if we lose audiences but why they are lost”. The future did not seem to be a problem to the director. This head still believed that “there is space for the generalist channels”. But he added that “the public service has more ability to be comfortable in both areas, because it is generalist and smoothly thematic”. One day later, the administrator of RTP at that period, Brandão de Brito, was quoted in one article published in Público (21 January 2000): “The essential mission of RTP is to guarantee the public service of television”.

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And he explained what he meant, with no fears of giving a straight definition: “A television of proximity, polite and familiar”.

In November 1999 the “war” of audiences in Portuguese television seemed to be fought between SIC and RTP. When the sub-director of programmes of SIC, spoke about the other private channel, TVI in my interview, he did not show concern: “Our main competitor still is RTP”. This was said in a time when the shares were clear: SIC had 49 per cent; RTP had 29 per cent (both RTP1 and RTP2); and TVI had 17 per cent. He said that “TVI is a station that was born in the wrong way, it was born with many problems and mistakes and it is still looking for a way to go”. Also, the director of RTP was not worried with TVI. In the interview he gave to Diário de Notícias, 20 January 2000, he is asked what would he do if TVI gained better shares than RTP. He simply replied: “Nothing. And I do not believe in the possibility”. But the future had a surprise, as we shall see.

José Eduardo Moniz, who was a respectable journalist and interviewer in RTP for a long period, is now the general director of TVI. In the interview he gave me, he explained that this channel was trying new moves, a change for the better, meaning a higher percentage of shares. He reminded that TVI “started to be a generalist channel with a Christian inspiration” and “many choices were made in terms of programming that did not result very well”. Because of this, “it went through difficult moments that led to successive reformulation and to an accumulation of debts that were only covered last year, thanks to various operations”.

The director of programmes of TVI explained that, during the year of 1998, this station gave up on the idea of being generalist to have in mind the audiences of the A and B segments, broadcasting mainly series and films of good quality. In fact, this is the opinion that the viewers generally have towards this station. For the near future, the choice would be to reformulate all the structure of the journalistic sector. In this task of looking for more viewers, it broadcast fiction and entertainment “never after 10 pm”. This means a special interest for the audience who watches television mainly at the prime time. In the director’s words, “TVI is going to work towards the segmentation of the audiences”. The aim was to define who is mainly watching television at a certain hour and try to satisfy that majority. In the period of the interview, TVI was reaching shares never reached before. The director of programmes said that, “although there are some oscillations, some days are very good”.

Months later, from the end of August (week 35) until the middle of October 2000 (week 42) the surprise that TVI was preparing was visible. Even if the following information also includes the shares of video and other channels, the truth is that the differences among channels became smaller.
3.1 EVOLUTION OF THE SHARES DURING EIGHT WEEKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Week 35</th>
<th>Week 36</th>
<th>Week 37</th>
<th>Week 38</th>
<th>Week 39</th>
<th>Week 40</th>
<th>Week 41</th>
<th>Week 42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
<td>22,9</td>
<td>20,0</td>
<td>25,7</td>
<td>24,2</td>
<td>24,8</td>
<td>23,0</td>
<td>23,2</td>
<td>21,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>6,9</td>
<td>6,0</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>5,8</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td>5,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>43,5</td>
<td>42,1</td>
<td>40,7</td>
<td>41,8</td>
<td>39,8</td>
<td>39,8</td>
<td>38,5</td>
<td>36,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>19,2</td>
<td>23,2</td>
<td>20,5</td>
<td>19,4</td>
<td>22,5</td>
<td>23,9</td>
<td>26,2</td>
<td>30,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video/Other</td>
<td>7,6</td>
<td>7,7</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>6,7</td>
<td>6,3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(Source: AGB/Marktest)

And this was only the beginning. The station that the others did not fear was preparing something big. This change in the share began with a new strategy of programming, which had the programme ‘Big Brother’ (a reality show known in some European countries) as the most important stimulator. Weeks later, TVI overtook SIC and made this station change its own politics of programming. Although SIC’s head of programmes criticised TVI for broadcasting ‘Big Brother’, he had no choice and he bought something similar: ‘Chained’. RTP stayed as ever, without financial capacity to enter the competition and without a stronger leadership.

The privatisation and the competition introduced new factors in the process, but there were still many options to take. As we have partly seen already, both the public and the commercial channels are looking for a way to go. In the case of the public service, should it “seek to remain ‘universal’” or it should “narrow their focus and concentrate on ‘what they can do best’, namely documentaries, news, current affairs and ‘quality’ drama”? Dyson and Humphreys (1988, p.6) put forward this question more than ten years ago but the answer does not seem to be found yet. From what I can see through the work that I am developing, a similar situation is arising in Portugal. Currently, politicians, policy-makers and a special commission are looking for the “ideal” public service.

There are some attempts to find a future for the public service of broadcasting. Swales (1997, p.33) writes about the British case, but her words could be transferred to other countries: “Former public service ideals which by large have driven issues of regulation and accountability will give way to competition, efficiency and consumer demand. Such developments will increasingly threaten high standards of programming, wide access, provision for minority interests and impartiality. Also, they will introduce inequalities in television viewing, not the least of which will be that those who are able to pay will receive the better service and greater choice”. Portugal is not an exception: while the terrestrial
channels are becoming more like the others, the cable and satellite channels are winning viewers, mainly in the cities.

Piedrahíta, a specialist in public television, says “it is obvious that the public television, contrary to what happens in private television, should not guide itself through criteria exclusively commercial, when it is programming” (1994:53-6). The Spanish case is such that where the public service offers “a television that only in a few portion or even in none at all is different from the commercial television”. Piedrahíta even quotes an opinion-maker who said, “The only reason why the public television is ours is because we pay for it”. I would not go so far, in the analysis of the Portuguese situation, but most of the times it is difficult to distinguish between what is public and what is private television in Portugal (see interview with the director of programmes of TVI, who had a place of responsibility in the public television for many years).

3 – Missions of the Portuguese television channels

The private channels in Portugal do not seem to have the intention of giving to the viewer’s education and culture, normally associated with the public service. At least, that does not seem to be their main concern. Traquina (1997, p.113). quotes one interview with Emídio Rangel, the head of SIC, the private channel that is the leader of shares in Portugal: “What is the problem of producing entertainment with the only reason of entertaining?” How do the broadcasters of the commercial channels see their relationship towards their viewers? If SIC never kept quite about the desire of being a popular channel, with lots of entertainment and a powerful news production, TVI failed to fulfil the promise of being a channel of Christian inspiration spoken almost always in Portuguese. The channel promised many programmes produced in Portuguese but it ended up making the good international series (mainly American) as its trademark. Traquina (1997, pp.122-3) proves that the exhibition of national programmes in TVI was far from what it promised. However, this can be explained by the change of options available to this station, as its director of programmes explained to me, in an interview.

The point is: is there a difference between the public and the private service of television in Portugal? This question was put to the directors of programmes of the private channels in the interviews I conducted. José Eduardo Moniz, from TVI, argued that one of the implications of the privatisation, is that “the role of the public service has to be re-thought”. Considering a scenario that includes private terrestrial channels, cable channels and international channels caught by satellite dishes, “wanting the public service to answer to this diversity is something like a chimera”. Facing an imaginary situation, he agreed that, if a foreign person would
arrive in Portugal and if he would start watching the four channels of terrestrial television with no previous information about them, he would probably not be able to distinguish between RTP1, SIC and TVI. The only exception could have been RTP2.

In what concerns the Portuguese law, there are no differences between the activity of the public and private operators of television (see chapter one). Something similar happens, for instance, in Greece: “The law stipulates that licences (to private channels) are granted in the public interest and their use amounts to a public function. It is stipulated further that licensees have a duty to provide objective reporting, plurality of opinion, and to promote cultural and artistic programmes” (Syngellakis, 1997, p.106).

One of the most delicate questions around this matters – that becomes even more complicated when we realise that the definition of public service is something still not established --, are the private channels giving any public service as well. The most peremptory answer that I have got is the one given by the news presenter of RTP1:

“If you tell me: the private channels do public service because they have at least one programme that pleases everybody... I say: it is a lie. The private has the logic of being profitable. So, they have a programming for the majority, which is not for everybody. Although they say that they have programmes for the minorities. And if we ask them about it they say: we have a documentary. And at what time? Three in the morning! I am sorry but you are joking with me! We broadcast documentaries in prime time. They do not... That is not public service of broadcasting. They can say what they want and deceive who ever they want. But they do not deceive me!”

(José Rodrigues dos Santos, RTP1)

Obviously, the directors of programmes of the Portuguese private channels have different opinions. In the interview that the director of programmes of TVI gave me, he said that the private channels “end up doing some public service, in the sense that they use an instrument that is public and in the sense that they agreed with certain missions defined in the public contest that they applied to”. He added one example to prove what he argues: “When they produce good fiction, when they provide good products to the people, when they organise debates, they are basically doing the same as the public station does”.

The sub-director of programmes of SIC, in the interview that I conducted, explained his opinion: “Everything that is in the public interest and that interests the people ends up being public service. It is evident that all the channels perform public service: a good news daily programme is a public service that is performed”. Just like the director of programmes of TVI, also the sub-director of programmes of SIC gave one example, although this last one goes beyond the pure broadcasting activity. For him, SIC also does public service when it promotes the theatre, by supporting the companies, making people go the theatre. And, at the
same time, transforming the plays to make them possible to broadcast, instead of showing them on television just as they were on stage. Because the time, the lights, the sound, and so on, have to be different.

Sousa (1999, p.122) explains that, in the Portuguese case, “all of those who take part in this activity should have as aim of watch over for what the legislator understood to be a public good or the public interest”. But the author concludes that, no matter what the legislator had in mind, the channels do not follow the law. One of the reasons presented is the non-existence of mechanisms to make sure that the law is respected. The non-fulfilment of the public service is one example given by the author to illustrate disregard for the law. Besides the criticisms of the researchers, who argue that the public service is giving more entertainment than education and formation, the sub-director of programmes of SIC has a similar opinion. He argues that instead of producing quiz shows, the public service should be spending the money in buying quality programmes from the independent market. More than this, in his opinion, RTP should be using the national archives and institutions to produce what it is obliged by law (see chapter one).

Just as one could expect, the public service also accuses the private channels of not fulfilling the law, but in different ways. When I asked the news presenter and now also director of information of RTP1 about this, he replied with another question: “The balance in the news in the election periods is mandatory by law and does not create exception to the private channels. Do any of them respect this?” Although he admits that, “in some cases, the law is unrealistic”, he also says that the private have no problems in breaking the law, because the justice in Portugal is too slow and because the fines are insignificant. He explained:

“Any violation of the law takes too much time to be given a punishment and, then, they are ridiculous. For instance, the private channels, according to the law, are compelled to cede, to a certain price that is fixed, the football games that are their exclusive, for RTP International, for the benefit of the emigrants. And the private channels do not accept this. They prefer to pay the fine, because it is very small. The other thing that the private channels did many times was to announce the results of the elections before the urns were closed... They paid a very small fine and that was it! And now? The punishment should be much bigger. In the matter that the sovereign institutions think that are not law-breakable, the punishment should go until the withdrawal of the licence”

(José Rodrigues dos Santos, RTP1)

One of the criticisms that the Portuguese television channels have to face very often has to do with the space given to the commercial advertisements (see table Ap.2.5 p: 243). In the interview that I conducted with the sub-director of programmes of SIC, he assured that, in his
channel, the advertising fully respects the law and adds that, now, the fines are not so small as they use to be. Another accusation that SIC had to face in recent years, concerning breaking the law, had to do with the transmissions to other countries, with the aim of reaching the Portuguese emigrants who live there. This can be seen as a direct competition to RTP, which has an international channel where a selection of the programmes scheduled in Portugal are sent to the ex-colonies in Africa where people still speak Portuguese and to the countries where there are big communities of Portuguese people working. SIC is now trying to win the attention of this emigrants, namely in European countries. Although SIC does not have a licence to broadcast outside Portugal, they explain that what they are doing is not a live emission but they are selling packs of taped programmes. So, in the edition of 26 November 1998 of Público, one head from SIC explains that, despite all the doubts of the critics, what the channel is doing is legal.

4. The options about programming

The programming is the facet that reflects the options available to the channels. But it also has another function, as Hartley (1999, p.154) explains: “Among audiences, public and consumers in all known countries, it is television programming and television culture, not new technology as such, that attract attention”. Wolton (1994, pp.112-3) argues that the options that each channel choose concerning the programming will decide their status: if there is a menu with many different programmes we have a generalist channel; if there is a list with programmes of the same gender or about the same topic, we have a thematic channel.

In the case of the British public service, Morgan (1986, p.27) says that the “BBC has survived by providing something for everyone in its programming, by appealing to each majority and minority groups and to every combination of them all”. This means, for instance, that “there is a bit of intellectualism, a bit of pseudo-intellectualism” and even “a good deal of anti-intellectualism”. And all this seems to be made accordingly to the old definitions of public service: “Public service broadcasting is a service that puts its programmes together according to certain principles, or, for example, according to a mandate to ‘inform, educate and entertain’” (ibid., p.73).

What difference can new channels make? When the fourth channel of television was launched in the United Kingdom, Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, stipulated what was expected from it: “There must be programmes appealing to and, we hope, stimulating tastes and interests not adequately provided for on the existing channels” (Goodwin, 1998, p.26). And the reality was that Channel Four, which began broadcasting in November 1982, did just that. At least in its early days. For example, it “pioneered the treatment of gay, black and feminist issues in
factual programming, entertainment and drama; a rather less narrowly ‘balanced’ treatment of current affairs; television support for feature-film production, much of it ‘art’ films; access programming; a wide variety of experimental approaches across all genre; and some new devices for scheduling – for example, ‘themed’ evenings” (ibid., p.31). Another aim to be different had been defined in the beginning of its existence by the IBA (Independent Broadcasting Authority). This institution proposed that, among other things, the new channel should “provide opportunities for a wider range of programme supply, since, for the first time a channel will be looking to independent producers for a significant part of its output” (ibid., p.27).

This is something that both the two Portuguese private channels are trying to do now. In the interview that the director of programmes of TVI gave me, he explains why this station is looking for products in the independent market of production:

“We want to work with the market. We do not want to create a big internal structure of production. We want to have the capacity to conceive projects and to follow their execution. But we want the market to do most of it. Inside TVI we produce mainly informative programmes. (...) I think that the market has a huge capacity to offer. It has so many means. It has a multiplicity of sources to answer to the solicitations that the channels address. I think that it can be dangerous if a television channel decides to compete with the market of production. What the channels have to do is to organise themselves in order to have the best schedule as possible for the less possible cost. (...) I do not have the pretension to say that all the creativity is inside a television channel. This is a concept of the past. This was a concept typical from the public service some years ago: ‘we are the good ones and the others know nothing about this’. The market has a huge capacity, a huge creativity. We just need to know where are they”?

(José Eduardo Moniz, TVI)

Although TVI still uses its studios as much as possible to save money, the in-house production is almost limited to the information and news programmes (see table Ap.2.6 p: 244). This does not mean that the professionals do not follow the productions when they are prepared outside.

SIC has a more ambitious perspective, although the basic logic of investing in the creativity of the market is the same. In the interview that I conducted with the sub-director of programmes, he argues that this station “wants to be fed by the independent production”. But “the existence of an industry of production is not possible if only one channel is buying. We, as a general station, cannot ‘feed’ ten independent producers. It is needed that the other stations would buy and would demand quality”. These possibilities created by the independent producers will, according to him, allow new programmes to appear. “It is essential the existence of
experimental spaces, where new languages can be created. Then, the main stream language will develop itself and it will increase the standards of quality that are addressed to the big audiences”.

Facing this new reality, what can the public service do in terms of programming? In the British case, Franklin (1997, pp.187-8) argues that the BBC must confront a complex policy question: “What is the appropriate role for a public-service broadcaster in the new circumstances of multi-channel television broadcasting? Should the BBC try to compete with the expansive new commercial services or try to define a distinctive programme identity?”

According to this author, in May 1993 the BBC, rejecting the idea of becoming “a cultural ghetto on or to retreat minority areas”, confirmed the “policy of providing a broad range of quality programming”.

Achille, quoted by Lopes (1999, p.59), presents four different strategies that the public service can adopt when it faces the competition of the private channels: immobility (when there is no money or no innovative spirit); confrontation (when it tries to behave in the same way as the private channels, fighting for the same public); opposition (when it tries to find a specific area of actuation, different from the one of the private channels); identification (when it copies what the private channels do). The third option seems to be the best, although the fourth can also be acceptable regarding copying the good products.

The news presenter of the public channel explained to me the perspective of the Portuguese public service of television takes according to what the different sections of the public want: “a housewife thinks that public service is there to watch ‘telenovelas’; a football lover wants to see football everyday; an intellectual wants to see cultural programmes”. For him, “public service is a channel that, in the case of Portugal, is partially paid by the tax payers and they have the right to see on the public television at least one programme that interests them. The implication is that there has to be ‘telenovelas’ to please the housewives (...). The same happens with a workman, an engineer, a doctor, a teacher, a person who writes critics about television on the newspapers. All of them have to have a programme that interests them on the public television”.

The situation in Portugal is not very different from the rest of Europe (see table Ap.2.3 p: 241). According to Santos (1998, p.62), “the public service has bigger difficulties to justify itself”. This is because “even in terms of programmes, the competition created an effect of flattening the differences between public and commercial is what makes difficult their actual distinction”.

Cádima (1996a, pp.160-1) explains that different sectors of society recognised that the public television is not performing according to what was expected: the programming does not “constitute a real alternative to the products of the private channels”. The strategies were
identical in everything. The same author compares the Portuguese case to others in Europe when he says that RTP, like other public channels, only broadcasts the minimum of products associated with the public service. This is basically seen through the time given to the political parties and to the religious groups. “Nothing, absolutely nothing, in what concerns to incentives to the production of fiction”. Four years later, this situation regarding the production of fiction started to change.

Programming is something that is directly connected with the budgets. The Portuguese public television is frequently accused of having too much money for the product it offers (see number 8 of this chapter). What about the private channels? When I questioned the director of programmes of TVI, about the budget, this was the answer I got: “I will not tell you concrete numbers, I am going to tell you that the budget is considerably smaller than the budgets of either of the other two channels”. Everything is a matter of what each station wants to achieve. He explains, “For the objectives that we stipulated for this year (1999), the budget that we got was adequate”. But TVI is a station that wanted to improve and, “for the objectives that are being stipulated for the next year, it is obvious that the budget will have a substantial growth”. Now we know that what he was planning was to buy ‘Big Brother’, as he did, with the consequence of completely transforming the shares and the ideas about his channel.

According to Traquina (1997, p.19), the competition that characterises the new era of television led to a significant increase of the budgets for programming. With more channels, everything starts to be more expensive, including films, the talents and the rights to retransmit. The researcher argues that the consequence of this situation is that “the enterprises adopt a policy of replacing expensive products (namely original fiction) for other cheaper ones, quiz shows, talk shows or light-entertainment”. In the Portuguese case, the solution was not only the north-American series, but also the ‘telenovelas’ from Brazil and Venezuela. This has implications at the level of the national culture. Even if the Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ are spoken in Portuguese, they reflect a society different from the Portuguese one.

A specific interest of this work and of the interviews that I conducted is to discover more about the policies of the Portuguese television channels regarding broadcasting for children (see table Ap.2.7 p: 245). Not only the specific programmes for their age groups, but also considering that children watch television at different times of the day and that they also watch all the other programmes, namely the ones meant for adults.

The sub-director of programmes of SIC was proud to tell me that the viewing shares of this station are remarkable concerning children as viewers: “In what concerns viewing shares, SIC is the leader, in general terms we have 50 per cent of the audiences. In the case of the programming for children, it is leader with a quota that goes beyond the 70 per cent. So, it is
obvious that we attribute importance to children’s programming”. Although this station does not have a specific department for this type of programme, he admits, “It demands a specific know-how of production”. Explaining that in Portugal there was still the lack of in-house production and of independent production regarding programmes for children, the director said, because of that, this type of programming in SIC was “still very based on programmes that we buy outside the country”. For instance, this channel has “agreements of preference with BBC” and also with other producers, namely American.

Questioned by me about the diet that SIC gives to the kids and young viewers, the sub-director of programmes of this channel explained that the policies that the station uses to choose all the other programmes are the same that it uses for children’s programming: “It should be a programming suitable with the tastes and interests of the children. And, obviously, it should obey to the rules of the sound sense that all the programming should obey to”. In fact, the director added that “the only limitation and the only criteria has to be the sound sense: no free violence, no inadequate programming inside this rule”. The sub-director turned the topic of violence on television into a relative one. For him, the solution is not to abolish violence from the screen. Because, “if a child is brought up in a world where he or she is artificially taken from all the types of violence, whatever they are, it is obvious that he or she not only does not sublimate but also becomes potentially aggressive”. So, for this responsible, showing the violence of the real world can prevent violent behaviours.

The type of programming for children that the country was used to before the appearance of the private channels, the sub-director of programmes of SIC explained, “People were used to the television of the State, that was completely apart from the innovation of the television that was happening at the international level”. So, he concluded that it was an amateur and artisan television, with old fashioned concepts, that only attracted children because there was no choice”. The proof that children would prefer a different concept of programming is, according to the sub-director of programmes of SIC, the option that they were doing towards not only this station but also towards the thematic cable channels for children.

TVI also does not have a specific department for children’s programmes, although the director of programmes admitted, in the interview he gave me, that new structures will be created in the reformulation that the station is going through. At the time of the interview, there was only “half of a dozen” people working in the department of programmes for TVI but the idea was to become bigger. When he took the leadership of TVI, one of the challenges was to improve children’s programming. The main reason was because he believed that the area of programming “was mishandled by the Portuguese channels of television”. And he added: “We are having good results with this and we are going to bet on this segment of audience”.

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Even if “the products for children are not the easiest ones to sell”, TVI wanted to have them especially in mind. The director of programmes thought “the investment that we do in programming for young people has a lot to do with an investment that we are doing in the future”. So, “if we decide to be long distance runners and if we do not only have short time objectives, it is obvious that we will be building the audiences that we want to have tomorrow. This is the logic that we want to follow: to win the fidelity of generations as much as possible”.

Just like it happens with the other types of programming, the director of programmes of TVI thinks that the products that the public television broadcasts for children are “not very different from what we see in the other channels”. About the old question of violence, he said, “we cannot give to television the responsibility for some of the things that happen nowadays”.

And he went on:

“It is easy to say that children do this or that because of what they watch on television. This is not true. In my opinion, everything depends on the framing that they have at home. It is obvious that there are some programmes that they should not see alone. Even cartoons. Perhaps, someone has to help them to understand what is going on. Honestly, I think that, in Portugal and in general, that does not happen very often. Nowadays, parents have less time for the kids and leave them in front of the television because the television replaces the traditional nanny”

(José Eduardo Moniz, TVI)

When TVI is programming for children, special attention is given to the age group that is the target. The director of programmes explained:

“It is natural that for children between four and eight years old we look for a product that is clearly childish, because kids at this age have their ability to learn in a very initial stage. This is why, for these children, the mechanism of repetition works very well. If you broadcast the same product more than once, they will still make the same share. By eight, nine years old the degree of demand is higher. At this age children are more selective. So, we try to introduce more liveliness in the cartoons than what we do for the younger kids. Perhaps the big difference is this one”.

(José Eduardo Moniz, TVI)

And the head of TVI adds that there is a rule that is almost sacred: this station “never” broadcasts “hard stuff before 10 pm”.

During the last years, the public station tried to give the children programming that are less violent and more educational than the products shown on the private channels, namely on SIC. This was the result of a department for children that had these specific concerns. But the reformulation of the channel left this department without a director, and the criticisms started
to appear, mainly because of the shares. Although he is not an expert in the matters of programming for children, the news presenter of the public channel that I interviewed argues that “it is a fact that the programming for children of RTP is less violent that the programming for children from the private channels”, even if he has doubts that this is the role of the public service. He added, “We can also say that RTP is probably more interested in a female audience as its favourite target”.

In the interview to *Diário de Notícias* (20 January 2000), the general director of RTP explained that, in what concerns programming for children, the public channel does not go over certain limits. Nevertheless, he recognises that this channel also have “little sins” in this matter. But there is also another opinion from the inside. The psychologist who works in the children’s department of the public channel, explained to me, in an informal talk, the strategy of the department: “We have heroines for girls and heroes for boys. We respect the quotas of international programmes. Among the documentaries, we diversify in the areas of the knowledge: arts, cinema and history. Among quiz shows, we also diversify: languages, arts, and mathematics. We follow an educational line with entertainment.”

5 – The quality and the audiences

“To tell the things with simplicity, it is hard to find people able to produce everyday, during twenty pursuing hours, emissions with quality. It is much easier, on the other hand, to find people able to produce, per day, twenty hours of mediocre and bad emissions, with, perhaps, one or two hours of good quality. We are facing a problem extremely difficult: the more channels there are, the more difficult it is to find professionals truly capable of producing programmes simultaneously attractive and of good quality” (Popper and Condry, 1995, pp.16-7). The question of quality, could be, in fact, resumed like this. But there are other factors.

In the Portuguese case, Traquina argues that the question of language is crucial. This author specifies the phenomenon:

“It is the programming in the Portuguese language that mobilises the viewers, the consumers. In the new era of the Portuguese television, an era in which the activity is economically dependent of the advertisement, one of the basic rules is to conquer the audiences. The Portuguese case also illustrates another basic rule of the broadcasting activity, particularly important in this era: the importance of the linguistic affinities in the international circulation of the television products”

(Traquina, 1997, p.89)

The popularity that the Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ have in Portugal is a clear example of this
preference (Cádima, 1995, p.33). But some other programmes, produced in Portugal, can also be very popular. In the yearly publication of SIC related to 1999, it is said, “following its line of orientation, SIC tried to speak more and more Portuguese”. The result is clear: “SIC shows the Portuguese people that it is possible to produce more and better television in Portuguese”. The examples are given. ‘Ponto de Encontro’, a programme that finds people that are missing, had a share of 51.4 per cent. ‘Chuva de Estrelas’, the national version of ‘Stars in their Eyes’, had a share of 54.4 per cent. ‘Roda dos Milhões’ – ‘Wheel of Fortune’ –, an entertainment show with the exhibition of the lottery, had a share of 56.1 per cent. ‘Médico de Família’, a Spanish format of a sitcom but produced in Portugal with Portuguese actors, had a share of 62.1 per cent.

Supporting her analysis in the conclusions of the (British) Broadcasting Research Unit, Lopes (1999, p.47) presents two ideas connected with the quality of the programming. First, there should be a search for the innovation, even if it implies risks. Second, one way of knowing if a programme has quality is to check if it is able to keep the attention of the public. But the problem of “measuring” quality can be complicated; mainly if we agree that some of the most popular programmes only have the aim of entertaining in the cheapest possible way. Even if the channels do not always have a concern for quality – understood as something that gives an additional knowledge to the viewer – the truth is that they always have the shares in mind. This is the clear result of the competition.

A multi-channel environment implies a different reality from the one that is typical in a scenario of broadcasting. Biltereyst (1997, p.91) presents one case of commercial success in Belgium. He explains what was the result of the appearance of VTM, “one of the major success stories in European commercial television”. What happened was that “VTM started in February 1989 and quickly became the market leader with more than 36 per cent in 1990. The public broadcaster’s market share (both channels combined) fell from 57 per cent in 1988 to 29 per cent in 1990”.

A similar phenomenon could be seen in Portugal. Since the date of the inception of the private channels, the shares have suffered a substantial change (source: AGB-Marktest October 1999). The first public channel, RTP1, has been losing shares every year, and SIC is being winning at the same rhythm. The other private channel, TVI, started only in 1993 and is making slow progress, and not always in a crescent tendency. Although RTP1 seems to be the big loser, RTP2 – the public channel more associated with culture, sports and programmes for minorities – is also decreasing in terms of shares. All of these conclusions can be seen in the table above, in percentages (see also table Ap.2.8 p: 246 and table Ap.2.9 p: 246).
3.2 EVOLUTION OF THE SHARES SINCE THE PRIVATISATION

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(Source: AGB/Marktest)

In the interview published in Diário de Notícias (20 January 2000), João Grego Esteves, general director of RTP, gave his view about this kind of analysis, done by private companies. “It is clear that the instrument to measure is not adjusted and does not reflect our reality. It exists to measure the interests of the advertisers and it concentrates itself where there is a market”. He presented one example to support the lack of credibility in the system: “There was a case when the emission failed and the following day there was an audience for it”.

Even if there are doubts about the degree of reliance in these kinds of studies about shares, they still are important to measure the success of the television channels. If in the case of the public station that is not presented as that important, in the case of the private channels, they are essential. The director of programmes of TVI, said, in the interview he gave me, that the choices recently made in terms of programming are having results, and the results are measured by a growth in the shares: “We can see that. We still have some ups and downs, but there are days that we are very well. Really well”. While TVI was still fighting for better positions, SIC already had a comfortable one and this station was using, with frequency, the results to improve its status. The sentence used by this channel, with proud, used to be frequent: “We are the leader of the audiences”. As we shall see, the scenario changed considerably.

Brandão de Brito, the administrator of RTP, interviewed by TV Guia (13 to 19 February 1999), said that the public channel is also “ambitious in what concerns shares”. But there is a difference between this station and the others: “This does not mean that the public service has to run after the shares”. Even though, the channel financed by the State cannot deny that a television is made to interest people, to give something to them, to make them become viewers. So, the administrator concludes, “Without audiences the public service would lose its aim”.

Traquina (1997, p.83) quotes one head from RTP, in a talk he had with a student of journalism, to explain what happened in Portugal in terms of quality, since the public station lost the monopoly. He says: “It is common sense that, with the privatisation, the quality of the
programmes did not increase. It is difficult to find who is responsible for this. It is the result of a group of factors that has to do with the commercial logic and with the resistance of the enterprises, since all of them, including RTP, depend on the same source: the incomes of the advertisement”.

6 - Financing of the stations and advertising

How PSB should be financed is a vitally important question. Analysing the British case, Maddox (1986, pp.77-8) concludes “to have produced two national channels of quality and interest, and to have kept them free of advertising, is a great cultural achievement”. The sub-director of programmes of SIC also finds positive aspects on the BBC system. In the interview he gave me, Borga used the British case as a good example: “With a public financing, BBC produces programmes good enough to be sold all over the world. And, doing this, complements the public financing”. The same does not happen in Portugal. “In the Portuguese case, what do we have?” he questioned. “First, the public television always had advertising, always went to the market to find money. Besides that, there was the television tax, getting money from the taxpayers. Thirdly, it never produced anything, it does not have programmes, never did in-house production”.

The sub-director of programmes of SIC did not say that the Portuguese State should stop financing RTP (see table Ap.2.4 p: 242). In his opinion, it “should be under the obligation with that sector, but not through an enterprise that is in competition with the other channels and that, at the end of the day, does the same, in a worse way, than the others, by other means”. The sub-director of programmes of SIC was obviously very critical of RTP and also about the policies of the State towards it: “With half of the millions that the State buries in RTP, the State could create incentives to the audio-visual industry, to the independent producers, to the cinema producers, to the television producers, to the multimedia producers, and so on, that would allow the development of an industry of the Portuguese audio-visual that could not only feed the Portuguese channels, but also export, get into the market of the world contents, which nowadays is a valuable and important market”.

As a representative of the public channels in the interviews that I conducted, the news presenter presented a different vision of this matter:

“RTP never was conceived as an enterprise to be profitable. All its structure reflects that reality. So, it has a heavier structure but it does things that the others do not do. We have a regional coverage that the other do not have and that it is very expensive, requires people and requires equipment. RTP International is also an expensive
product. We have 24 satellites working on a daily basis, broadcasting programmes for the exterior. It has an investment in Portuguese fiction that the private ones do not have, for instance, in what concerns the ‘telenovelas’, which is the most important product of fiction in the Portuguese television. RTP invests very much in soap operas and these are expensive products. Each episode of a ‘telenovela’ costs ten millions of escudos. Can a private do this? No, these are things that a private channel does not do. It is not worthy”

(José Rodrigues dos Santos, RTP1)

Comparing the different testimonies, there is a clear contradiction of opinions. RTP accused the private stations of not producing fiction in Portuguese language and SIC returns the accusation to the public station. What happens is that they were speaking of different things? RTP was saying that many of its ‘telenovelas’ are in house-productions while in the private stations they were basically from Brazil or from Argentina (dubbed in Brazil into Portuguese language with the Brazilian accent). This can be seen in the scheduling although TVI presented in 1999 a Portuguese ‘telenovela’ which was said to be very good by the director of programmes of the public television at the time, Maria Elisa (TV Guia, 13 to 19 February 1999). At the time, SIC was not producing ‘telenovelas’, preferring to buy the best ones from Brazil, thanks to an agreement that it has with the best producer of that country. SIC’s option was to invest in national films made specifically for television, supporting the national producers, actors and technicians. This station accused the public station of not doing the same. In January 2000 SIC presented the first of these films (“Amo-te Teresa”), having an audience of more than two million, in a country of less than ten million people. The question is that a programme spoken in the mother-language has, at the start, more possibilities of good shares, even if it is not that good. If it is reasonably good, it can easily be a success. The public television knows this and announced, soon after this, a production of a series about Portuguese life in the 1940s (Público, 2 February 2000).

With regard to the costs involved in the Portuguese public television, the director of the station admitted, in the interview he gave to Diário de Notícias (20 January 2000), that he is “the first one to say that there are high costs of inefficiency” in RTP, and he was sure that, in the future, the station could cost less. This can be seen as a change in the type of answer given to all the criticisms concerning the amount of money given by the State, through the taxpayers, to the public television. Instead of saying that such a structure needs such money.

The director of programmes of TVI was in a very special position, since he was one of the former heads of RTP. In the interview he gave, he had a discourse more moderate than the sub-director of programmes of SIC in what concerns the public television. He, the director of TVI, explained that in his point of view, in this matter of financing, “everything has to be
adjusted according to the service that is given”. This means that “if the money that the State
gives to RTP, or any other public channel in Portugal, corresponds to a product that fulfils the
missions of the public service that are stated in the law, I do not have any criticism to make. I
could only criticise if the investment does not correspond to those objectives and is being
used to finance other things”. Directly questioned how did he feel, as a tax payer, with the
service given by RTP, the director of programmes of TVI transformed the question to give a
sincere answer: “It is obvious that if you ask me: would you prefer to see your money
invested in a television channel or in an hospital, if we consider the supply... It is obvious that
I prefer that the money would be invested in an hospital or in public housing”.
The former director of programmes of RTP, Maria Elisa, explained, in one of her last
interviews in that position (published in TVGuia, 13 to 19 February 1999) that the criticisms
concerning the money given to the public station often forget three factors. “It would be good
that the people would realise that it were taken from RTP its three biggest incomes, what led
to the actual situation (of limited financing): first of all, the tax, that nowadays would be
15.000 millions of escudos (75 millions of euros) per year; then, the net of transmitting
equipment, that was ours and that now we to pay 6.000 millions of escudos (30 millions of
euros) per year; finally, the drastic cut in the advertising”. Although she was removed from
the direction, this respectable journalist and interviewer left her message in defence of the
public service: “we (the people responsible for RTP) have the biggest respect for the public
money; we negotiate we extreme rigidity”.
In the document about programmes and results that SIC presents every year, there is a space
to show the achievements of the different channels in terms of advertising. The document
from 1999 shows the values of the years between 1995 and 1998. Since 1996, SIC was having
more than half of the market of advertising. This also explains why this station, after that
year, had no more debts achieving, after three years of existence, a stable financial situation.
When questioned by me, if the private television only intends to be profitable, the sub-
director of programmes of SIC answered, “that is a generalisation as any other”. And he
added that he could also generalise in how different ways: “the only aim of the
commercial television is to achieve profits; the only aim of the public television is to
support the propaganda of the Government that is in the power”. Concluding that this type
of thinking ends nowhere, he decided to explain what is in the base of the SIC’s options.
“First of all, I can tell you that our scheduling for programming and for
information is made by programming-makers, it is not done by the commercial
direction, so, it is not dictated by the advertisers. It is the other way around: first
we programme and then, whoever wants, can associated himself to the programme
or not. Until today, we never created a programme because of the pressure of any
advertiser, just as we never finished a programme that did not have a sponsor. So, both the choice of the programmes and their duration has to do with programming options and never with commercial options. But we do not have any kind of complexes: a television channel, to be independent, has to be self-financed. It cannot be dependent on the subsidies of the State. So, the only source of financing is the advertisement”

(António Borga, SIC)

This is a clear way of thinking of all the people that are in charge of SIC. In an article that he wrote in TVGuia (13 to 19 February 1999), Francisco Pinto Balsemão, the boss of the station, clarified what he thinks about the way the channels are financed: “The Portuguese model of television is condemned, just like the European. The private channels are victims of a disloyal competition, mainly in the countries where advertisement goes together with other forms of financing”. This is what happens with the public television in Portugal, and it is also one of the main criticisms made towards it (see number 7).

The discussion about the morality of the public television showing advertisements is still present. Arons de Carvalho, the secretary of State who was responsible for the mass media in Portugal from 1996 to 2002, said, in public, that perhaps the limitations that the two public channels have towards advertisement could be unfair (Público, 28 November 1998). As a result of the contract of concession of the public service, RTP2 stopped having advertisements and the time of advertising in RTP1 was reduced from twelve to seven hours and thirty minutes per hour. The responsible said that the SIC were taking advantage of this situation and he admitted to going back to the old situation. Ironically, someone from the direction of SIC, contacted by the author of the article, mentioned that during the previous five months the public station had exceeded the limits by fourteen and a half hours.

The opinion of the sub-director of programmes of SIC is that the better the programming of a generalist channel is, the easier it is to have the interest of the market to invest on it. But he explained that there is a danger in this process: “If a television channel would not know how to programme and if it would not have a strategy adjusted to its target audiences, then, it becomes weak and at the reach of other interests, namely economic interests”. In the specific case of SIC, the sub-director of programmes was “completely” sure that this station is independent from any economic interests. And this “has to do with the fact that SIC is a project of mass media. It is not an appendix of any economic group that is dedicated to other activity or indistinct activities, as it happens with some television stations in other countries”.

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Television channels are in the public domain, which makes them easy to criticise, coming from different directions. It is the price of being popular in societies where people are expected to participate. The researchers give a special contribution in this arena.

“TV has stood accused of various ideological atrocities against cultural standards, sexual decency, respectable language, behavioural property; or from another perspective it is accused of abuses in the struggle for political freedom, social change, economic quality. It is investigated for promoting pathological conditions in individuals and societies, from stupidity to consumerism. It has been denounced for maltreatment of various vulnerable, victimised or innocent parties defined by an aspect of their identity, nationality, ethnicity or language-group. It’s bad for boys and girls, workers and elites, blacks and whites, gays and straights, radicals and conservatives” (Hartley, 1999, p.19).

Wolton (1994, p.58) notes that the important consequences of the criticisms towards the television became normal during the 1980s. The result of this situation was “the incapacity to separate the positive from the negative aspects of the public television, the globalisation of the critic and the caricatured denouncement of the private television”. For this researcher, it is understandable that the public, as viewers, will criticise television: “The daily discourse of the public is generally critical, because there is always a discrepancy between the expectations and what television really gives”. And the public criticises simply because watching television does not require a special knowledge, just as it happens with many other aspects of life in society.

The discourse of the politicians about television has, according to Wolton (1994, p.61), lost much of its legitimacy. First, because “for a long time, the politicians first used television to serve their own interest through the nomination of the directors, the control of the information and the various nets of professional friendships established in the channels”. The second reason that this research finds for the loss of the legitimacy of the politics to criticise is that, “during 40 years, they have said everything and the opposite about television”. The best example of this is that, both in the right and in the left wing, they were strong defenders of the television of the State and clearly against the private television, but then they allowed it.

Besides the public and the politicians, Wolton (1994, p.63) also analyses the criticisms of the intellectuals. This researcher argues that, in all the countries, politicians normally have reservations or even hostility against television. Not only in what concerns the culture that this media transmits but also in relation to its values and its stars. The critics of the intellectuals can be resumed in this sentence: “Television alienates”. How do the intellectuals
explain this? They say that “the viewer is passive towards the image; loses the critical sense and becomes influenced; the individual consumption makes the viewer anti-social and favours an irrational integration of the dominant social models”.

In what concerns the function of the organisations, the most common criticism to the public channels is the bureaucracy, the amount of money given and amount of people working there. All of these factors transform this type of station in heavy structures, difficult to manage and easy to criticise. Morgan (1986, p.23) exemplifies with the British case: “The BBC is a very good example of a bureaucratic organisation. Its affairs are run in carefully delegated ways, each level of the hierarchy, from the top of the pyramid to the wide layers at the bottom, having its own degree of discretion in decision-making”. This criticism can be transported to other realities. In fact, the Portuguese public station has been fighting against a heavy structure, but the results are not always clear. One of the reasons can be the easiness that the administrators are hired and fired: since 1974, the average lifetime of one administrator is one and a half years.

The sub-director of programmes of SIC, Borga, in the interview he gave me, reminded the scenario in which many of the European public television channels appeared, including the Portuguese one: “under dictatorships”. Naturally, they began to be used as “instruments” of that kind of regimes. For him, this is essential for the understanding of the internal structure of these stations. The problem, according to him, is that “25 years passed over the Portuguese revolution, but RTP still goes in the continuity of the same RTP that was created under the dictatorship”. He explained that RTP has “a culture of enterprise that goes until the end of the 1950s”: “in the transition for the democracy, there was not any internal revolution, any deep re-planning, that would take that culture away and replaced it by a new democratic culture under all the aspects, including in the way of facing the public”. The result of this is an attitude of “programming regardless of the tastes and the interests of the public”.

The administrator of RTP in the beginning of 2000 was well aware of these criticisms. In the interview published in Diário de Notícias (20 January 2000), he presented his point of view: “The campaign against RTP is made, first, and with legitimacy, by the competition. There are many interests settled down. Some of them want RTP to finish so the others can get more channels. Others want RTP to be weak but they argue that closing or privatising it would be a disaster”. But, once again, the administrator recognised that the problems do not all come from the outside: “We have our own mistakes, that are many”. Doing something like a self-evaluation, he found reasons for the internal problems of RTP. Probably, the most important is the result of “many years of arrogant monopoly”, which originated a problem of image. Besides all this, RTP had to fight against the mentality, that was typical in the last decade that “anything that is public is evil and anything that is private is good”.
Even if the public channel is always in the sight of the critics, the private stations are not free from them as well. In Portugal, around the year 2000, the preferred target of the opinion-makers was SIC, probably because of its increasing success in terms of shares. But TVI was also criticised, mainly because in the beginning it presented itself as a Christian channel and, pretty soon, started to broadcast violent movies and others with explicit sex. One opinion-maker that has openly criticised SIC is Alfredo Barroso. He has been promoting, through the newspapers, a strong fight against the station, defended by its director of programmes and information, Emídio Rangel. Barroso, like other critics, accused SIC of “creating a new species of living-dead”. The reaction of those responsible for SIC was that the “dictionary of the critics did not follow the new situation of the television in Portugal” (Traquina, 1997, p.13).

At that time, the people in charge of RTP also criticised SIC. In the interview published in *Diário de Notícias* (20 January 2000), the director of the public channel described, in his own way, that private station: “SIC is a sandwich with news bulletins that are good, a Spanish sitcom that is like all the others and enough soap-operas to smash the competition”. But much more than this, in the first years of its existence, SIC had to reply to the constant accusations of being too light in values and too violent in contents. Besides the provocative tone that most of these criticisms had, they do not seem to be a problem for the heads of that private channel. In the interview he gave me, the sub-director of programmes of SIC, Borga, explained that “in the beginning” the station had to face many hostile opinions, namely the ones that originated from the educational sector of the country. The sub-director told me that inside the station this was always understood as something ironic. Why?

> “Because these sectors frequently transfer to the television the responsibilities of the school, not to talk about the responsibilities of the family. While in other countries the school adapted it and understood that the audio-visual could be an extremely valuable assistant in the acquisition of knowledge, in the stimulus of the reflection and of the critic mind of the child, in our case, the school still is closed to the audio-visual, like it is closed to reality and to life”

(Prof. António Borga, SIC)

Hartley (1999, p.63) explains the pressures and accusations addressed to the broadcasting companies as being “external forces”. Besides the “formal educational institutions” (which include “researcher, conferences and publication and, of courses, lecturers, textbooks and exam questions) and the “critical institutions” (within “intellectual culture, including political organisations, unattached intellectuals, journalists and media commentators”), he explains the way of functioning of the “governmental institutions, with their apparatus of policy-formation, democratic will-formation (lobbying) and regulation/policing”.

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One example of the pressure exercised by the politicians is the case of Italy. Gundle (1997, p.65) reminds us that the television in that country “has always been politically dominated”. This happened a long time ago: “The ruling Christian Democrats (DC) ousted left-wingers from RAI (the public channel) in the late 1940’s and did their best to stamp early television with their imprint”. Once again, the experience of other European countries was repeated in Portugal. The public television, in this country, appeared in 1957, in the shade of the political power. At that time, Portugal was under the dictatorship of Salazar, and RTP was increasingly used as an instrument of the propagandistic structure of the regime (Cádima, 1996b). With a democratic system for more than 25 years, the politic power still has its control in the broadcasting system. Traquina (1997, p.50) gives the example of the constitution of the High Authority for Broadcasting. For example, five of its members are representatives, proportionally, of the forces of the Parliament and the Government designates three others. This means that it is an organisation “very politicised and permeable to eventual influences of the Government”.

Apart from the indirect control over the institutions, the different Governments (regardless of which political party holds office) are frequently accused of manipulating RTP through the news bulletins. Obviously, these accusations come, above all, from the private sector. The general director of SIC, in an article published in TVGuia (13 to 19 February 1999), showed no fears: “I would say that this generation of politics does not know how to govern without having RTP completely controlled”.

In the interview published in Diário de Noticias (20 January 2000), the director of RTP assured that he did not face pressures. “If they existed, they would have get another director to the information”. Even if he denies the interference of the politicians in power, he admits, “The Government allows itself to be involved in the shares”. But the journalist who presents the main news of the public channel, Rodrigues dos Santos, explained to me that “when RTP was in a monopoly situation it exercised permanent political pressure: from the party in the power, from the parties in the opposition, from the trade unions. Everybody wanted to be on television and felt they had that right. Since the appearance of the private channels, that kind of absurd responsibility that was required from RTP was over because people started to look at what the others were doing”.

Recognising that a public station is an easier target for pressures than an “independent” station, the sub-director of programmes of SIC, Borga, also admitted that this channel has been a target of a different kind of pressure, from the “moralistic lobby”. In the beginning, the pressures were stronger and more frequent than nowadays. Even though, this reveals that in Portugal there also exist some “Mary Whitehouses”, “well connected at the level of some institutions” and close to “one or another member of the Government”. He added, “There
have been some threats of campaigns against the television, in particularly against SIC, because of the question of the violence”. But these accusations were rejected by SIC. The best example is the programme ‘Casos de Polícia’ (a programme reporting crimes) that was considered by the lobby as extremely violent. The sub-director replied: “It is a programme that already won various awards of reportage and that is on the air for several years. It reports cases of social problems that lead to crimes and it has a panel of a sociologist, a priest and a lawyer discussing and analysing the reasons of those acts of violence”. To banish this programme “would be completely absurd”, he said. Doing that, “the television would be closing its eyes to some of the most serious problems of our societies, which is a problem of unbalances, asymmetries and social dysfunction that leads to violence”.

Moniz, director of programmes, stated that until the beginning of 2000, TVI had a relatively “quiet life” probably due to the fact that it is not a public station and not a leader in the shares.

“It is obvious that there are organisations that do some pressures. We take them and discuss them. Sometimes in a polite way, sometimes not. Sometimes in a formal way, sometimes not. Just as any mass media does. What is needed – here and in the public service – is to have the capacity to distinguish between what is information and what is pressure”.


Chapter 4: The Programming

Introduction

This chapter presents a quantitative study based on the programming of Portuguese television in one week in May 2000. It was the third week of May 2000 but it could have been any other week. My only concern was to avoid the weeks when something extraordinary happened, because this changes the normal schedule of the channels. If I was avoiding the extraordinary, it can be argued that I was looking for the normal. But I do not think that it is possible to find a “normal” week because the schedules vary according to the periods of the year, the ratings, and the advertisers. So, I was only looking for a week that would show the main trends in programming for Portuguese television.

After having presented the arguments of the policy-makers and those responsible for the channels, the following step consists of observing what these policy-makers do. The main idea is to understand what their priorities are in terms of genre, type and origin of programmes. As this is something that implies competition on a daily basis between channels, the perspective of this quantitative analysis is based on comparisons. First, I created 6 broad categories and then divided them into 37 types of programmes. Each programme would fit into one of the 6 broad categories and in one of the 37 types of programmes. As it is a quantitative analysis, I used the Statistic Programme Applied to Social Sciences (SPSS).

Having identified the output of the Portuguese television channels, I have decided to interview four of the main television critics in Portugal. The policy-makers are often angry with these people, but they do have a space in the newspapers where they can present their points of view. So, they influence people and this is the argument that I present to include their opinion about the phenomenon that is investigated in this work. Also, the knowledge and the information that these four critics have cannot be ignored. Finally, this chapter is completed with a revision about some of the policies and genres of programming in other countries in Europe, as a way of establishing possible links between these countries and Portugal.
1 – Television programming: policies and genres

“In Western Europe, broadcasting regulations have traditionally emphasized general values like universality, diversity of opinion and a wide range of offerings. These were the core values that were employed to legitimise the privileged status of national public service broadcasting institutions. Commercial television was based on different values, those of popularity, choice and economic calculation. However, the recent liberalization of the airwaves appears to have contributed to a convergence of programme policy discourses”

(Hellman, 1999, p.105)

The question that is the basis of this chapter; how are the schedules of the television stations composed. Analysing one week of transmissions, I found what type of output is privileged by the four Portuguese channels, and how is it received by the critics. But Portugal is not isolated. There is the phenomenon of transnationalization characterised by programmes and formats that travel from one country to another. So, besides cultural identities specific to each country, a broader context should be examined, namely through the presentation of other European examples.

Hellman (1999) identifies two different discourses concerning television programme policy-making: one associated with those in favour of public service-type television, and another one related to economic arguments. In short, those in favour of public service-type television argue that audience needs diversity, quality, information and education, and cultural integration. Those who are more concerned with the costs and the benefits of the programming argue that audience wants choice and popular programmes. As I presented before, this also happens in Portugal (see chapter 2).

This means that when the policy-makers are deciding what to broadcast they have in mind two different types of audiences: citizens and/or consumers (see chapter 1). But does this mean that public channels do not give entertainment in considerable amounts or that commercial channels are not interested in informing the viewers? This does not seem to be the case in Portugal, at least by what is seen through the data that results of the analysis I presented. And this goes in the same direction of what Hellman says: a convergence of programme policies.

In Finland, the Government understood that there was no point in defining “detailed standards concerning programmes” (Hellman 1999). Instead of asking for a compromise of a certain type of schedule, the Finish Government asked for a fee payable to public television, in order to make investments in the digital network. So, in 1997, when Finland launched its fourth
channel (the second commercial), it was clear that the reason was not to widen the cultural supply but there were other interests, connected with technology and competition.

The most obvious reason for the Finish Government’s attitude is that, the stricter the rules are, the more difficult they are to respect. And this can be seen through the French example, explained by Chaniac (1999, p.68): “A complex and voluminous body of rules and regulations has not succeeded in preventing the transformation of programme schedules”. In the UK case, “the whole of television programming is characterised by the obligation to abide by standards of taste and decency”. And “British programmes do not hesitate, when it is possible, to take their scissors to scenes of sex and violence” (ibid.).

Competition is always present in the policy-making of television channels, regardless of which European country we are talking about. But in some cases this phenomenon is more obvious than it is in others. “In general, the competition between the leading channels appears to be often more confrontational in France than in the UK” (Chaniac, 1999, p.63). For years, TF1 and France 2 had the news bulletins at the same time, preceded by a game show and followed by a drama. While the other channels were competing with the same type of programmes, France 3 was broadcasting regional news, a successful option, since it normally takes an audience share of over 40 per cent. In the UK, something different was happening: BBC and ITV scheduled their news with half an hour of difference and the real competition happened with the Australian soap operas.

The Portuguese case has been more similar to the French one: the news bulletins of the three main channels (RTP1, SIC and TVI) are normally at the same hour and they are normally followed by a ‘telenovela’. If there is a channel that finds a programme that increases the ratings, the others will try to find something similar to broadcast at the same time. SIC bought two programmes of the same type to fight ‘Big Brother’ on TVI.

Even if some specificities of each country create specific types of programmes or give more importance to one genre than to another, there are general tendencies in the 1990s, regarding television programming. Mullan (1997, p.42) reminds us that in this decade some established genres continued to be explored and developed, “some less successfully than others: note, for example, the paucity of current sit-coms, compared to the continuation of both new and well-established soaps”. He explains that, at the same time, this decade introduced into the lexicon a number of hybrid formats: “The conventional chat show has now been all but replaced by the so-called ‘nuts and sluts’ show, in which both guests and audience indulge in self-humiliation as they divulge personal fantasies and secrets”. These formats had not been explored in Portugal until the end of 2001. Following the trends of the programming of other countries, the private channels had already explored this format.
According to Mullan (1997, p.43), “factual entertainment continues to be broadcast either on daytime television, with cyclical themes, guests and even audiences”. In his analysis of British television, the options the broadcasters do to fill the daytime go to programmes that “use presenter-celebrity-couples to present a mishmash of cookery, fitness, astrology, “welfare”, makeovers, celebrity interviews and phone-ins, all carried out crisply and cheerily”. As my analysis of the Portuguese schedules showed, this type of factual entertainment also exists in Portugal, but it is mainly broadcast before lunch and only by two of the four channels, one being public (RTP1) and the other being private (SIC).

As Tunstall (1993, pp.138-140) states, “producers of entertainment programmes are well aware that the system does not honour their efforts, although it does rely upon them to achieve strong ratings”. Facing the critics who say that these type of programmes invade the privacy of the people, that they are dependent on a repeated formula or that they are based on American formats, the truth is that they go on occupying significant percentage of the broadcasting schedules. And this is something that has been growing. Tunstall reveals that the early BBC provided “remarkably little entertainment”, apart from music.

The 1990s were characterised by new forms of ‘factual’ programming that went on to the following decade. Mullan (1997, p.49) gives an example: “Documentaries have to an extent been edged out, in general terms, by the current affairs programme: the ‘triumph’ of journalism over free-ranging mind”. Tunstall (1993, p.22) even says that “documentary, with its long gestation periods and emphasis on high quality, is found amongst the prestige output of all four conventional channels (in the United Kingdom), and on public-service grounds it has usually been scheduled in mid-evening”. As for news and current affairs, this author explains that, “with its very short gestation periods, (it) operates on a large scale in terms of hours per week and in the scale of editorial and technical back-up staff”. Even if it was not visible in the week of scheduling that I analysed, the three main Portuguese channels of television (RTP1, SIC and TVI) also normally have a weekly programme of interviews or current affairs. As far as the fourth channel, RTP2, it dedicates a considerable amount of time to documentaries and programmes of debates.

Even if it happened previously in other countries, in Portugal we had to wait until the end of the 1990s to see films produced for television as one of the most important genres in television programming. Mullan (1997, p.59) has no doubt when he says that “it is drama, be it in the shape of soaps, movies or in any number of series of varying lengths, that has continued to capture the attention of audiences, regularly attracting substantial audiences”. Bearing this in mind and also data from Pragnell (1985) which shows the weight of the American drama in the programming of Western European countries, Sepstrup (1990, p.40) suggests that it is more appropriate “to discuss media policy measures related to drama
programmes than to other programme categories”. In fact, this had been done. For instance, the European Television Task Force (1988, p.80) analysed the problem in the 1980s. To conclude, once again, that “drama occupies a dominant place” in television programming, “both in the amount of air-time reserved for it and in its popularity”.

Soap operas are popular in the United Kingdom as they are in Portugal, although in the latter they assume a specific format originated in Brazil: the ‘telenovelas’. Mullan (1997, p.56-7) explains that, traditionally, the genre of soap operas “commands strong audience loyalty”. The broadcasters know that both in the United Kingdom and in Portugal, in what concerns Brazilian and Portuguese ‘telenovelas’. Since the formula of the soap operas and the ‘telenovelas’ has been successful, they will most probably stay in the schedules as they are. However, sports programmes are changing and are expected to “continue to change over the coming decades and in so doing will change sport as it does so” (Mullan, 1997, p. 57).

A type of programme that, during the last decades, has had a different presence in schedules is the programming for children. A study made by Buckingham et al (1999, p.92). show that “the most noticeable trend is that the amount of children’s television on terrestrial channels (in Britain) steadily increases with each decade until the huge leap between 1986 and 1996”. A table shows that in 1956 there were more than 100 programmes for children. In 1966 they were around 150. In 1976 they were around 250. In 1986 they were almost 300. And in 1996 they were almost 500. But, this data has to be analysed in association with another phenomenon, which is the move towards 24-hours scheduling. As the authors remind us, we also need to bear in mind the amount of repeated programmes. One concerning possible consequence is that “the economic logic would seem to dictate that this increase in programming for children would lead to a decline in its diversity and quality” (ibid., p.112).

In the Portuguese case, the amount of programming for children has to be considered with the appearance of the private channels, in the beginning of the 1990s. In any case, and as a result of the analysis of the Portuguese schedules that I presented, it is possible to say that each of the four channels broadcast a considerable amount of programmes for children. For example, TVI, a commercial channel, dedicates more time of its output to children’s programmes than it does to factual entertainment or to all the informative programmes.

Mullan (1997) also considers that this decade was characterised by a considerable amount of quiz shows that, in the majority of the cases, had a “low cultural status” that no other television genre has. In the United Kingdom, ITV won popularity with the American formats of game and quiz shows. Tunstall (1993, p.141) explains that the initial attraction of game shows to ITV “was the combination of popularity with low production cost”. In Portugal, policy-makers also broadcast frequently this type of programmes. As the schedules vary according to the period of the year, what happened in the week that I analysed was that it was
not a week rich in quiz shows. But this does not mean that they are not common in other periods of the year.

Probably because it is one of the most broadcast types of programmes, according to Sepstrup (1990, p.41), entertainment programmes are also the ones that dominate international television flows. The same author, analysing the origin of the television through the data of *Television Programming in Europe* (1988)- in what respects 15 countries or 30 public channels - concludes that they had “a 68 per cent degree of self-sufficiency” (ibid., p.36). On average, they had 15 per cent of programmes originated from the USA, 14 per cent originated from other Western European countries, and only 3 per cent from other origin.

According to that study, Portugal had 57 per cent of domestic share of supply, 16 per cent of programmes from the USA, 17 per cent of programmes from other Western European countries and 10 per cent from the rest of the World. At this time, Portugal only had two television channels and both were public. In the analysis that I conducted, these tendencies are still evident. More than giving special attention to national programmes, the Portuguese policy-makers are giving priority to In-house production and are looking with a growing interest towards the National Independent Market. This is something significant, if the option is to avoid American programmes. In this matter, Chaniac (1999, pp.68-9) gives two different examples. On one side, “the resourcefulness of the British television system has led to the rapid development of a fairly abundant programme production base which practically ensures the self-sufficiency of the public and commercial channels”; on the other side, “France’s traditional weakness in producing dramas such as soaps and sitcoms has resulted in an overwhelming presence of American drama in horizontal programming slots both in daytime and in prime-time access”.

In January 1995, Sousa (1996, PhD Thesis) analysed Portuguese programming during one week. She based her analysis in the TV Guide, looking for the major trends and what seemed to her to be the most significant aspects of the schedules. Even if she did not elaborate a quantitative comparison of all the programmes, she constructed a description of what each channel was at that time. What follows proves that there have been some changes in Portuguese television. For instance, nowadays RTP2 does not broadcast as many operas and theatres as it used to. Another difference can be noticed in SIC: nowadays it has more fiction spoken in Portuguese and not so many Brazilian ‘telenovelas’. TVI still does not have many documentaries or debates, but nowadays it has much more fiction in Portuguese than it used to have in 1995.

Sousa, in her PhD thesis, presents an analysis of Portuguese programming during a week in January 1995. Regarding RTP1, she notes the absence of factual programmes.
Sousa identifies a normal prime time schedule in the main channel of the public station.

“Nor even one documentary or investigative journalism programme was scheduled. The only programme in which there is public discussion is Prova Oral, a live programme in which public figures (not necessarily politicians or political analysts) are interviewed by José Eduardo Moniz, the RTP’s director of Information. Yet, this programme was scheduled at 10.50 pm of a weekday. In general, after the main news bulletins, peak time programmes are telenovelas, variety shows, talk shows, quiz games and sports”.

(Sousa, 1996, PhD Thesis)

Regarding RTP2, the second channel of the public television, Sousa observes a real tendency to serve minorities.

“TV2 has a clearly wider variety of television genres and appeals to minority groups. In the programming schedule from the 14th to 20th of January 1995, one can notice the existence of documentaries like Gente Reomta (Remote People) and Homem e a Cidade (Man and City), programmes geared to financial consumers (e.g. Dinheiro em Caixa), religious programmes such as the Sunday Mass and 70x7, movies and series. Broadly speaking, in this week TV2 gave considerable space in peak time to high culture programmes such as opera, theatre, music and other forms of art. Given that other national channels show at least four telenovelas per day, its absence in TV2 must be recognised”.

(Sousa, 1996, PhD Thesis)

Analysing SIC, a private station, Sousa finds a special predominance of Brazilian ‘telenovelas’. This can be explained by the agreement that SIC had with Globo, the Brazilian big producers of ‘telenovelas’.

“Taking the week of the 14th of January to the 20th of January 1995, SIC put on air five different Brazilian telenovelas daily from Monday to Friday, two on Saturday and on Sunday. The four news bulletins are also maintained throughout the week. Considerable differences occurred only in the evening schedule, after the fifth telenovela. Quizzes and variety shows in Portuguese language, mostly imported formats, are clearly dominant”.

(Sousa, 1996, PhD Thesis)

In what matters TVI, other private channel, Sousa explains that there also was an option to broadcast ‘telenovelas’ and that national drama was not scheduled.

“Taking the week of 14th January to the 20th of January 1995, TVI scheduled five different Latin American telenovelas, four daily and one at the weekend. During the week, at peak-time, the news bulletin was formally followed by a Brazilian
telenovela and by a US series. Later in the evening, the programming varied from movies (generally American) to quizzes and reality shows such as Amigos para Sempre (Friends for Ever). During this week, one could not find television genres like documentaries, political debates, investigative journalism programmes, or indeed national series or drama”.
(Sousa, 1996, PhD Thesis)

As we shall see, five years later the situation was different. Nor only because the formats of the reality shows scheduled in 2000 were much more polemical than in 1995. ‘Amigos para Sempre’ can be considered a “naïv” programme when compared to ‘Big Brother’. The aim of the first one was simply to show normal people, talking about their normal lives, in a tender way.

2 – Comparison of the schedules of Portuguese channels

I chose the third week of May 2000 as the one to be analysed in terms of programming of Portuguese television. Although I tried to pick one week by random, I had to avoid weeks that would obviously be different from the rule. Just to exemplify, I rejected the previous week because the Pope was in Portugal and all the channels dedicated many hours of their broadcasting time to special emissions concerning the visit. The same happened the weeks after that, because of the realisation of the European Championship of Football (Euro 2000).

After a first look to TV Guia (equivalent to the British TV Guide), I found out that the first channel of the public station – RTP1 – had just finished the first session of the quiz show ‘Who wants to be a millionaire?’ daily, in prime time. It had been a big success in terms of audiences and the week I chose was the one in which that programme had finished its first run. For this reason, RTP1 almost does not have quiz shows in the analysis that will present, but this is not the normal policy of programming. So, this is a factor that has to be taken into consideration, although I think that it is almost impossible to find the most “normal” week.

In terms of administration and policies of programming, my chosen period of Spring 2000 was associated with new directors in the public channel (RTP) and new strategies in the of the private channels (TVI). Each of these channels was trying to find a way of fighting the other private channel (SIC), since this was the one with clear advantage in terms of audiences. While RTP nominated new directors, TVI decided to buy formats of polemic programmes, namely the ‘Big Brother’. It was a period of change, as the future showed. The audience studies made by the Portuguese company Marktest Audimetria show that this change of strategy made by TVI had a clear effect on the viewing shares.
Marktest is the company that gave me all the data I used as the raw material for this analysis. They provided me with the general ratings of the weeks I was interested in, as well as the detailed data about the third week of May 2000. Without this data, I would never be able to compare the duration of all the programmes of the four channels during the full transmission of one week. For the simple reason that videotaping the four channels non-stop and measuring all the programmes would be something almost impossible for me to do. It was only possible with their cooperation.

At this point, I have to clarify that I am using the concept of ratings as it is understood in England: the distribution of the viewers, at a certain moment, by the existing channels. In Portugal, this is called “shares”. On the other side, in Portugal the concept of “ratings” is applied to the percentage of the general population that is watching one channel at a specific moment.

At the period of the programme analysis that I made, these were the ratings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1 Ratings of April/May 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>27/02</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>03/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10/16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17/23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24/30</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>01/07</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>08/14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15/21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marktest Audimetria

At the period of the change in the policy-making of TVI, these were the ratings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.2 Ratings of September/October 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>28/03</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>04/10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11/17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18/24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25/01</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>02/08</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>09/15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16/22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marktest Audimetria
While both the public channels kept more or less the same ratings, in the private channels there was a phenomenon of transference: in April and May 1999, SIC was clearly the leader of audiences but in September and October 2000 TVI started to win viewers week after week, mainly because of ‘Big Brother’.

**Objectives and methodology**

The objective of the analysis that I did and that I am presenting now was to identify the percentages of programmes broadcast by the four Portuguese terrestrial channels. The questions I wanted to answer were:

- What type of programmes are broadcast most by each channel;
- What type of programmes are broadcast most on weekdays and on the weekends;
- What type of programmes are broadcast most in the different periods of the day;
- What is the origin of the programmes broadcast most.

This means that this is a quantitative analysis, and that it does not have the intention of determining the quality of the programming. On the other hand, I do not intend to observe the popularity of programmes, even if I will make references to the ratings that the programmes of that week had. What matters in this analysis are the options the policy-makers choose, and the type of schedules they construct.

My starting point was the data that Marktest provided. Their analysis of programmes includes the date, the starting hour, the duration, the channel, the name of the programme, its rate (the percentage of the population that saw it) and its share (percentage of viewers that saw it). Once again, we have to bear in mind that the concepts of “rates” and “shares” used by Marktest are the Portuguese ones. Which means that I will not use their information about the total of the Portuguese population and that I will call “ratings” to what they call “shares”.

Through this information, I identified and coded, among the four channels, 232 different programmes. Based on this list, I created and coded broad and detailed categories: 6 genres of programmes and 37 types of programmes. The objective is to distinguish the options of the policy-makers in general and in particular.

To find the answers to my questions, I used SPSS (Statistic Programme for Social Sciences). One of the first steps was to define eight variables: channel; day of the week; programme; genre; type; duration; origin; rating.

**Channel** is one of the four: RTP1; RTP2; SIC and TVI.
Day is each day of the week: Monday; Tuesday; Wednesday; Thursday; Friday; Saturday and Sunday.

Programme is the name of each of the 232 programmes, a list made by me through the information collected by Marktest.

Genre is one of 6 broad categories. The method I used to create these genres of programmes was the result of an analysis of the programmes. The first perception I got was that there is a clear division among the programmes: they are either entertainment or information. Then, the table showed a considerable amount of children’s programmes. Even if they have both entertainment and information, I decided to keep them as a separate genre. Not only because of the specific public they are addressed to, but also because the policy-makers themselves consider children’s programmes as a specific genre. Then, I found some programmes that did not fit perfectly in the genres I had identified and I created the genre miscellaneous for them. As I was looking for the programmes, I understood that I would have to divide both entertainment and information. This was the result of simple observations: sometimes the entertainment was with real people, sometimes it was fictional; sometimes the information was news bulletins; sometimes it had other diverse formats. Finally, I achieved the following table.

### 4.3 GENRE OF PROGRAMMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factual Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fictional Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/Diverse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information/News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type is one of the sub-divisions of the categories. The reason why there is not a division in children’s programming is because the channels have blocks of programmes under the same name. For instance, “Buerere” on SIC and “Mix e Max” on TVI are agglomerates of live-entertainment, cartoons, and quiz shows. In Marktest’s tables, they only come with the name of the agglomerate, which does not allow separating. Because of this reason, I could not identify the amount of time that is dedicated to cartoons, in opposition to other types of programmes for children, although I know this would be an interesting analysis.
### 4.4 TYPE OF PROGRAMMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factual Entertainment</th>
<th>Fictional Entertainment</th>
<th>Information / diverse</th>
<th>Information / news</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live-entertain</td>
<td>‘Telenovela’</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Open Univers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz-shows</td>
<td>Sit-com</td>
<td>Gen. Debate</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
<td>Teleshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk-shows</td>
<td>Serie</td>
<td>Sport Debate</td>
<td>African</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eucaristhy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>Movie</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>European</td>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Tele-movie</td>
<td>Documentary</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Porno-movie</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Satirical</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Duration** is the counting in minutes that each programme is on air.

**Origin** is one of seven possible places of production: Portuguese In-house Production; Portuguese Independent Production Market; Rest of Europe; Brazil; USA; Rest of the World; Mix.

Once again, I created these categories based on the programmes broadcast in that week. The distinction between two Portuguese origins appears because the policy-makers separate their own production (in-house) from the production of the independent market. This market consists of private companies selling their productions to any channel, which is an activity that is starting in Portugal.

**Time** is one of the periods of the day: Morning (06:00-13:00); Lunchtime (13:00-15:00); Afternoon (15:00-19:00); Primetime (19:00-22:00); Night (22:00-01:00); Late night (01:00-06:00).

This labelling of periods was made by me, based on the definitions of the policy-makers, which are in agreement with the Portuguese way of life. For instance, shops close to lunch between 13:00 and 15:00 and they close again at 19:00.

**Rating** is the percentage of viewers at a specific moment who are watching that programme.
2.1 – Analysis of the schedules and comparison of the discourse of the policy-makers with the practice

After coding the data into the SPSS, I was able to observe the general panorama of programming of the four terrestrial Portuguese television channels at the time of the analysis, which was May 2000. The three main findings of my analysis are: the importance that Portuguese policy-makers give to entertainment, to programmes for children and to programmes spoken in the native language.

Dominant genre of programmes on the Portuguese schedules

Using SPSS I found that, at the time of the analysis, there was a predominance of entertainment. This is a conclusion based on the broad classification of four categories: entertainment, information, children, and miscellaneous. Later I will present the conclusions in detail, meaning that 37 types of programmes were identified and analysed.

Although the public service is associated with information, education and entertainment, this last bit is shown to be the most important, if we consider the phenomenon on a quantitative basis. And even if the people in charge of the private channels argue that they also do public service – understood as giving quality programmes about education and information –, the truth is that the major part of their time of broadcasting is occupied with entertainment (see table Ap.3.1 p: 249).

The large use of entertainment by Portuguese television is something that is clearly assumed by the policy-makers. In this respect, what they do is exactly what they say. As I have stated before, in the analysis of their opinion, in one article published on the press, the president of SIC, Francisco Pinto Balsemão asks: “What is the problem of producing entertainment only to entertain?” In fact, the schedules of this channel also are in agreement with what the sub-director of programmes, António Borga, told me: “The strategy is to be accessible to everybody”. Entertainment is obviously easier to watch.

If these programmes have quality, that is something else, difficult to prove. We cannot measure its level of quality by the amount of viewers they get. Ratings do not reveal the quality of the programme; they determine the level of interest of the advertisers.

As we can see through Graphics 4.1 and 4.2, in the week analysed, in both private channels entertainment takes more than half of the schedules. On SIC, 59.2 per cent of the programming is entertainment. On TVI, 57.6 per cent of the programming is entertainment. But there is a significant difference: while on SIC the amount of entertainment is almost equally divided between factual and fictional entertainment, on TVI most of it is fictional...
entertainment. This may be explained by the difference of budgets between the stations. As the director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz, said, its budget for that year was considerably inferior to the other channels. The result was that, instead of producing factual entertainment (like talk-shows), TVI had the strategy of buying series. But, once again, this coincides with what the director told me: “The strategy is to have series and films of good quality”. At least, this was the strategy at that time. As time showed, later the strategy was centred in ‘Big Brother’.

![Graphic 4.1: Genre of programmes on SIC divided by duration](image)

![Graphic 4.2: Genre of Programmes on TVI divided by duration](image)

On RTP1 (see Graphic 4.3) entertainment also has its importance: it takes almost half of the time of broadcasting. Just like SIC, but this time broadcasting time is closely divided between factual and fictional entertainment. The exception to this scenario is RTP2 (see Graphic 4.4): half of the time of the broadcasting is taken by information/news. And this has an explanation: that time is occupied by the non-stop transmission of Euronews. This is a programme produced in France, with teams of journalists from different European countries. It consists of showing blocks of images about what is happening in the world in general, and in Europe, in particular. This programme does not have presenters. The reports come one after the other and they are repeated after a while.
By broadcasting Euronews, this channel owned by the State, is providing one of its missions: information. The problem is that although it is provided in Portuguese, the information does not originate in Portugal. It is translated. This means that the perspective is not Portuguese. But, in the other hand, it is a European production and, so, it responds to the national interest of having the country integrated in the spirit of the European Union.

![Graphic 4.3: Genre of programmes on RTP1 divided by duration](image)

**Graphic 4.3: Genre of programmes on RTP1 divided by duration**

With regard to children’s programming, TVI is the station that dedicates more of its time to this age group. This is the result of a strategy that the director, José Eduardo Moniz, explained to me: TVI wants to win the fidelity of the young generations and it is giving an important part of its time of broadcasting to them, in order to get them used to watching this channel. At the period of the analysis, 20.7 per cent of the programmes broadcast by TVI were for children and youngsters, whilst SIC had 13.9 per cent, RTP1 had 11.4 per cent and RTP2 had 3.0 per cent. These might seem surprising figures, but, once again, it is not possible to identify how much of this time is dedicated to cartoons.

As we can see through the testimonies of people who work on RTP, regarding the public service, the concern of the station is much more about quality than quantity. So, it is not surprising to see that RTP is not on the lead in terms of amount of programmes for children.
On the other side, just like the other private channel, SIC is investing on a significant quantity of programmes for children. The reason of this option, that is said in the discourse of the policy-makers and visible in the schedules, is because 70 per cent of the children who, at that time, watched television were watching SIC.

As far as information – and excluding the specific case of RTP2 – RTP1 dedicates almost twice of the time that SIC dedicates to this type of programme and triple the time that TVI dedicates. Although the sub-director of programmes of SIC, António Borga, emphasised the strong informative sector of the channel and although the director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz, announced the improvement of the news bulletin, in the quantitative analysis that results from the application of SPSS these options are not still visible. RTP1, probably assuming its obligations to fulfil the public service, is the channel that gives more information.

In the analysis of the schedules, relating to May 2000, 33.3 per cent of the time of RTP1’s transmissions is given to information (16.9 per cent of news and 16.4 per cent of diverse), while SIC has 17.7 per cent (10.7 per cent of news and 7.0 per cent of diverse) and TVI has 11.8 per cent (7.8 per cent of news and 4.0 per cent of diverse). At this point, it is important to recall that in that period TVI was preparing a big change in its strategy and schedules, which had direct effects on the programming of both SIC and, later, RTP.

**Types of programmes most scheduled by each channel**

After analysing the schedules in broad categories, the second analysis has to do with 37 types of programmes. This can create confusion, because programmes for children constitute both a broad category and one type of programme. But, if in the general analysis they are not the most significant in terms of duration in the schedules, in the detailed analysis by types of programmes they are. Because now the different programmes of entertainment are separated and there is not one of them that, isolated, occupies more time of broadcasting than programmes for children.

During the whole week, among the 37 types of programmes that constitute the schedules, the children’s programmes are the ones that take more time. They are the leaders on RTP1 and TVI and they are in second place in SIC. Movies also have an important position among the channels: they come in second place on TVI, in third on RTP2 and SIC and in fourth place on RTP1. Other type of fiction (like ‘telenovela’, and series) is also frequently broadcast. The other frequent programmes are the news (specially Euronews on RTP2), live entertainment, magazine, and sports (see also table Ap.3.2 p: 250).
4.5 Ranking of types of programmes with more weight during the whole week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>RTP1 (%)</th>
<th>RTP2 (%)</th>
<th>SIC (%)</th>
<th>TVI (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>Euronews</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. News</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Documentaries</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>‘Telenovela’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table confirms the general interest of the policy-makers of the channels for different types of entertainment and also shows the concern that people in charge of RTP have in using the second channel – RTP2 – in a special way. This is why we find three types of programmes in the leadership of this channel that we do not see having the equivalent weight in the other stations: European news, sports and documentaries.

During the weekdays, there is not a common pattern between the channels. RTP1 mainly concentrates on magazines and live-entertainment. RTP2 has a tendency to broadcast European news and movies. SIC gives preference to live-entertainment and talk shows. TVI has a special interest in children’s programmes and movies. Even though, there is a coincidence between RTP1 and SIC in what concerns the preference for live-entertainment. Because the weekdays are the majority of the days of the whole week, it is understandable that some results are similar to the last table. This happens namely with RTP2 having the European news in first place, with SIC having live-entertainment in first place, and with TVI having children’s programming in first place.

4.6 Ranking of types of programmes with more weight during the weekdays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Type</th>
<th>RTP1 (%)</th>
<th>RTP2 (%)</th>
<th>SIC (%)</th>
<th>TVI (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Euronews</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>Live-entert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-entert.</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Talk-shows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General news</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>‘Telenovela’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Documentaries</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the weekend, the programmes for children and the movies are the ones that occupy most of the time of broadcasting in the majority of schedules. But the general news and the tele-shop also appear in the table of the most scheduled types of programmes. A significant difference when one compares this table with the last one is that live-entertainment, during the weekends, does not have so much weight as it has during the weekdays.

Once again, the exception to the rule happens in RTP2, where the sports have the leadership and where new types of programmes win importance in the schedules: Open University and
culture. There is, again, a clear option of the policy-makers to give an alternative programming through this public channel.

### 4.7 Ranking of types of programmes with more weight during the weekend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>RTP2</th>
<th>SIC</th>
<th>TVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>Euronews</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tele-shop</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>Open Univ.</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>Live-entert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General news</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>General news</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Types of programmes, by period of the day, most broadcast by each channel

Although there is a significant weight of programmes for children in the morning, general news at lunchtime, and movies at night and late night, the channels have considerably different policy options, as it can be seen in the table (see also table Ap. 3.3 p: 254):

#### 4.8 Types of programmes, by period of the day, most broadcast by each channel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Lunchtime</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Prime-time</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Late-night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>‘Telenovela’</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Tele-shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
<td>European news</td>
<td>Sports debate</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>European news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Talk-shows</td>
<td>‘Tele-novela’</td>
<td>Live-entertainment</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two private channels have some things in common. For instance, they have the same preferences at three different periods of the day: programmes for children in the morning; general news during lunchtime; and movies at late night. In the primetime and at night, there is no coincidence of types of programmes but they are all included in the broad category of entertainment. The major difference between the private channels happens in the afternoon: SIC prefers to spend most of its time giving talk shows to adults and TVI prefers to broadcast to children.
RTP1 occupies most of the morning with magazines and most of its primetime with general news. RTP2 gives preference to sports debate on lunchtime and to sports during the afternoon. When the news presenter of RTP, José Rodrigues dos Santos, said that the public service should correspond to the interests of everybody at least once, he was probably talking about the alternative that this station was trying to be at this stage, although the ratings did not show the preferences of the majority of the viewers.

Types of programmes, by origin, most broadcast by each channel

Both RTP1 and SIC made a clear choice to broadcast In-house programmes in the majority of the time of transmission (see table Ap. 3.4 p: 257). Each station accuses the other of not creating incentives to the production in Portuguese language (see chapter 3), but they were talking about different things. SIC started a mega production of one film per month specially made for television, while both RTP and TVI have a significant quantity of national ‘telenovelas’.

4.9 Types of programmes, by origin, most broadcast by each channel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>RTP2</th>
<th>SIC</th>
<th>TVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind. Market</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Europe</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest World</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if, at the time of the interview, TVI was preparing a significant change in its policies and schedules, the analysis of the programmes broadcast by this channel do not coincide with what the director told me. As all the other people in charge for the other stations, he said that TVI defends the idea of buying programmes from the National Independent Market of production. But the analysis of the schedules shows that the majority of the programmes were still from the United States of America. At that time, TVI only had 3.5 per cent of programmes bought from the National Independent Market.
According to the analysis I have done through SPSS, on TVI more than 30 per cent of programmes originated in the USA and all the other channels have more than 10 per cent. The National Independent Market and the Rest of Europe still have a small share of time in all the channels, but RTP1 leads in both these situations. RTP1 is also the only channel that has products from the Rest of the World. All channels have a considerable amount of Mixed programmes in origin. The most obvious case is RTP2, because of the Euronews. The second case is TVI, because of the ‘telenovelas’ from Venezuela dubbed in Brazilian.

Both RTP1 (50 per cent) and SIC (42.1 per cent) made a clear decision to broadcast In-house programmes in the majority of their time of transmission. The time given to information and to magazines explains this, but also the need of to have formats spoken in Portuguese. In this topic, we also have to consider all the ‘telenovelas’ produced in Brazil and scheduled in Portugal. Although this was a fallow period for Brazilian ‘telenovelas’, months later, the results would have been different, meaning that the Brazilian production would have been stronger.

Cross-tabulation between origin of the programmes and day of broadcasting

Through my analysis, it is possible to conclude that RTP1 broadcasts more In-house programmes on weekdays (58.2 per cent of total) than it does on weekends (32.8 per cent). This can be explained by the preference for the exhibition on foreign series on Saturdays and Sundays. In fact, this channel broadcasts more products from the USA on weekends (24.1 per cent of the total) than it does on weekdays (7.9 per cent). Another interesting conclusion is that RTP1 does not have programmes from the Rest of the World on the weekends.

RTP2 is strongly marked by the presence of Euronews, which increases the broadcasting of programmes with mixed origin. This happens mainly on weekdays (55.3 per cent of the total) but it is also strong on weekends (38.2 per cent). The other strong presence is the In-house programming, which is more visible on the weekends (39.2 per cent of the total) but also important during the weekdays (22.6 per cent). This can be seen as an effort to fulfil the public service obligations.

My analysis shows that the private channel SIC also has concerns with the national products. The most important to note is the predominance of In-house programmes, especially on weekdays (47.3 per cent of the total) but also on weekends (29.2 per cent). Another important thing to register is that there is a considerable presence of programmes of mixed origin in both during the weekdays (22.4 per cent of the total) and the weekend (27.7 per cent). Finally, it has to be underlined that, on this channel, the programmes from the USA are more frequent on weekends (28.1 per cent of the total) than on the weekdays (8.6 per cent) and the Brazilian
programmes are more frequent on weekdays (15.9 per cent of the total) than they are on weekends (3.5 per cent).
On TVI, the programmes from the USA have an important weight both during the weekdays (29.2 per cent of the total) and the weekends (34.9 per cent). Besides that, during the weekdays the most frequent programmes are of mixed origin (37.8 per cent of the total) because of the ‘telenovelas’ from Venezuela dubbed in Brazilian. During the weekends, the In-house production is more visible (35.8 per cent) (see table Ap.3.5 p: 258).

**Cross-tabulation between origin of the programmes and period of the day of broadcasting**

On RTP1, the Morning period is filled with In-house production in almost 3/4 of the time (73.5 per cent of the total). The majority of the Lunchtime is divided between In-house (44.2 per cent) and Rest of the World production (44.7 per cent). In the Afternoon, the In-house production is still very important (52.5 per cent) but the programmes originated in the USA start to have an important share of time (24.9 per cent). The national production is the most important programming during Primetime (In-house production has 52.0 per cent of the time and National Independent Market has 23.0 per cent). At Night, the programmes from the Rest of Europe become more visible (25.8 per cent) that at any other period of the day. The Late Night period does not have a special predominance of origin (In-house production has 31.2 per cent; USA has 26.6 per cent; Mixed production has 34.0 per cent).

On RTP2, there are three periods that are dominated by the mixed programmes: Morning (68.0 per cent); Afternoon (63.9 per cent); Late Night (83.7 per cent). All the periods (specially Lunchtime with 70.2 per cent and Primetime with 61.3 per cent) have a significant presence of In-house production, except the Late Night period, which has only 6.4 per cent. Programmes from the USA are mainly visible at the Night period (42.0 per cent).

On SIC, the Morning period is dominated by the mixed production (57.2 per cent of the total), because of the children’s programmes. The In-house made programmes are also important (37.8 per cent), because of the magazines. During Lunchtime, all the programmes scheduled are made in Portugal: In-house production has 58.2 per cent of the time and the production made by the National Independent Market has 41.8 per cent. Brazilian programmes (‘telenovelas’) have an important weight (41.2 per cent) on Primetime period, followed by In-house production (news) (38.7 per cent). At Night, In-house programmes are in the lead (55.0
per cent) but there is still an important presence of Brazilian programmes (32.1 per cent). At Late Night, American programmes (movies) occupy the majority of the time (45.9 per cent). On TVI, the Morning is dominated by the mixed production (62.5 per cent of the total) because of the children’s programmes. During the Lunchtime, the programmes are almost all made In-house (95.9 per cent). In the Afternoon, the types of programmes that are more predominant are the ones with mixed origin (46.5 per cent), again because of the children’s programmes. The majority of programmes broadcasted during Primetime (42.0 per cent) and Night (47.6 per cent) are made In-house. The Late Night period is clearly dominated by the programmes originated in USA (85.0 per cent) (see Ap. 3.6 p: 260).

**Sharings**

As we have seen before, during the week of the analysis, 15 to 21 of May 2000, SIC was clearly the leader of audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.10 Global share of the Week 20 of 2000 – 15/21 May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video/other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total TV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Marktest Audimetria
2.2 – Summing up

PANORAMA OF THE PORTUGUESE PROGRAMMING

- **Dominant genre of programmes scheduled by each channel**

There is a predominance of entertainment among the Portuguese television. In both private channels (SIC and TVI), entertainment takes more than half of the schedules. In RTP1 it takes almost half. The exception is RTP2: half of the time of the broadcasting is taken by information/news.

- **Types of programmes most scheduled by each channel by day**

During the whole week, the types of programmes that take more space in the schedules are the programmes for children. They are the leaders on RTP1 and TVI and they are in second place in TVI. Movies also have an important position among the channels: they come in second place on TVI, in third on RTP2 and SIC and in fourth place on RTP1.

During the weekdays, there is not a common pattern between the channels. What RTP1 broadcasts more is magazines and live-entertainment. What RTP2 gives more is European news and movies. What SIC gives more is live entertainment and talk shows. What TVI gives more is programmes for children and movies.

During the weekend, the programmes for children and the movies are the ones that occupy most of the time of the broadcasting in the majority of the schedules. The exception is with RTP2, where the sports have the leadership.

**Types of programmes most scheduled by each channel by time**

Although there is a significant weight of programmes for children in the Morning, general news at Lunchtime, and movies at Night and Late Night, the channels have considerable different policy options:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Lunchtime</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Prime-time</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Late-night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RTP1</strong></td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>Telenovelas</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Tele-shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RTP2</strong></td>
<td>European News</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>European News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIC</strong></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General News</td>
<td>Talk-shows</td>
<td>Telenovelas</td>
<td>Live</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Entert.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TVI</strong></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General News</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Comparison of types of programmes scheduled by origin**

Both RTP1 and SIC made a clear option to broadcast In-house programmes in the majority of the time of transmission. All the channels have more than 10 per cent of American programmes and TVI has more than 30 per cent. The National Independent Market and the Rest of Europe still have a small share of time in all the channels, but RTP1 leads in both these situations. RTP1 is also the only channel that has products from the Rest of the World. All channels have a considerable amount of Mixed programmes in origin.

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3 – Critics/policy-makers: contradictory claims about Portuguese television

During the Summer 2000 I interviewed four people who are known for the articles they write in the press about television. Three of them – Mário Castrim, Eduardo Cintra Torres and Miguel Gaspar – do it as their main activity. Mário Castrim is the oldest television critic in activity: he has been writing for decades, almost since the beginning of the television in Portugal, and nowadays he does it for a tabloid newspaper, *Tal & Qual*. Eduardo Cintra Torres and Miguel Gaspar have been doing television criticism for a couple of years in the two major quality daily newspapers. Cintra Torres writes in *Público*. At the time of the
interview, Miguel Gaspar was writing in *Diário de Notícias*. The other one, Alfredo Barroso, used to do it very often when the privatisation started and also participated in programmes of television. Now he is not writing regularly about television but he still follows the phenomenon and, occasionally, uses his opinion article in the weekly quality newspaper *Expresso* to voice his opinion about television.

The interviews were conducted with the same orientation, asking the same questions (see Appendix 4 p: 263). The idea was to have their opinion about certain aspects to do with Portuguese television. Namely: the actual programming of the four terrestrial channels; privatisation; public/private services; their opinion about each channel; policies of programming; counter-programming; criticisms to violence and concerns with children; minorities; the best and the worst on Portuguese television. Eduardo Cintra Torres, Miguel Gaspar and Alfredo Barroso accepted to be interviewed directly, while Mário Castrim preferred to write and fax the answers to my questions.

The actual programming of Portuguese television

To understand how the different critics see the phenomenon of television, the first thing I asked was how they saw the actual programming of the Portuguese television. Mário Castrim, in his characteristic negative tone, answered that he sees it as “a television based on a strong foreign production with a tiny national production, that in general is of bad quality. It is essentially orientated towards the entertainment”. All these aspects are confirmed by the analysis of the schedules that were presented before and the aspect of the “bad quality” is, obviously, his own opinion but can be seen as the reflex of the opinion of many people, as I will try to show through the information I acquired during the discussions with the focus groups with different types of people.

Alfredo Barroso, who says that the programming is “a mix of tele-rubbish with tele-show”, shares the negative image of Portuguese television. These two ideas clearly indicate that he thinks that, with small exceptions, what Portuguese viewers can find on their television is bad quality and almost limited to the genre of entertainment. And he adds that “the schedules of the different channels are similar”, which does not allow to establish specific characteristics of each station, even if there are substantial differences in their genesis and types of funding.

Naturally, the policy-makers do not have the same opinion about the lack of quality in their own channels, but they openly criticise the other channels, as we have seen before. For instance, the sub-director of programmes of SIC accuses RTP1 of “ignoring the tastes and interests of the public” and diminishes TVI by saying that it was “born in the wrong way, with many problems and mistakes”.

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Answering the same question about programming, Cintra Torres prefers to give a description of how he sees Portuguese television. He explains that now it has “more hours of emission in the four channels” and he notices the “reinforcement of the quiz-shows, as well as in the in-house production of fiction”. In practice, this reflects one type of programming that goes for the easiest: light-entertainment and programmes in the native language. Cintra Torres resumes the options of the policy-makers of television by saying that “they give what they think the public wants”, and, of course, all this logic is based on the shares.

The way Miguel Gaspar sees the problem is at a European level. From this perspective, there are not many differences, he argues: “The Portuguese programming is very similar to the programming of other countries. On prime-time, what distinguishes it from the other European televisions is the weight of the soap-opera”. Most of these soap operas are ‘telenovelas’, from Brazil, a type of programme that is very popular in Portugal for the last 20 years. RTP started to broadcast them and SIC, understanding the potentials of the ‘telenovelas’, made an agreement of exclusivity with Globo, the great Brazilian producer. As a result, RTP started to invest much more in their production of ‘telenovelas’ and TVI decided to produce their own as well.

**Public service versus private channels**

When I asked the critics what do they think about the appearance of two private/commercial channels of television in 1992/3, I noticed different views. Mário Castrim has a negative opinion about this. He says that privatisation “was not good”. The most important explanation is that the “offer assumed degrading aspects”. The reality is that the private channels began to show more violent movies and scenes with explicit sex that it happened when RTP had the monopoly. But this critic agrees that the private channels brought something good: “Only in the Information sector there was a certain improvement. Regarding the rest, all the prejudices were kept and some of them got worse”.

It is precisely the overture in the information and the news that the other three critics congratulate on the appearance of the private channels of television in Portugal. Alfredo Barroso says that the news channels were “responsible for the respect for the political pluralism” and they also “created a new dynamism”, which he considers fundamental in a democratic society. But this critic verifies, “We rapidly saw that that dynamism resulted in having a low level of taste. As a consequence, RTP lowered its cultural level”.

Miguel Gaspar agrees that “more television channels brought that levelling by the lower of the programming” but he also underlines that it is “very important” that the news started to be given by three different channels, which, at least in theory, assures diversity and more access
to different perspectives. In practice, the variety of channels allows, “Today the viewers have the option to choose according to their interests”.

Eduardo Cintra Torres also believes that the privatisation was good for the Portuguese scenario of television. He is very certain of this: “It was good, for sure. The State does not have to do everything a society needs. The overture to the private initiative came late at least ten years; it should have been in the beginning of the 1980s”.

But the privatisation only happened in the beginning of the 1990s. Although people on RTP knew that new channels would be created, Miguel Gaspar explains that the public station “did not find the way of resisting the shock of the private channels and became a copy of them”. Policy-makers do not deny these similarities between the three channels (RTP1 and the private ones, SIC and TVI). The general director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz, admitted that, with the exception of RTP2, a foreigner that would arrive in Portugal would hardly find out which one of the other three channels is public or private. Eduardo Cintra Torres does not seem to be very worried with these confusions. He sustains his idea by saying that “there are agreements of concessions”. So, “if the private stations are fulfilling the agreements, everything is fine”, he argues.

Miguel Gaspar resumes what the majority of the people in Portugal seem to think: “All of the channels behave in order to get the best of the audiences”. Obviously against this reality, Mário Castrim argues, “a public station is not supposed to fight for competition. Instead, it should only be interested in art, culture, political pluralism, with total abnegation of the advertisement”. Although the people in charge in the private channel say they also fulfil missions of the public service, Mário Castrim does not agree and says “the ‘private service’ considers itself apart from these obligations”.

Alfredo Barroso comments what the policy-makers of SIC use to say about those obligations: “SIC says that it also does public service but it is at 2 or 3 in the morning. It is not possible to understand what kind of public service is this”. And, as far as RTP, this critic argues that it “should be concerned with the general knowledge of the people. It cannot have the immediate logic of earning money every day. It should not lose interest about the concept of the generalist television”. But all the critics seem to agree that the Portuguese public service is not doing this, with rare exceptions.

**Policies of programming**

About the policies of programming, Mário Castrim argues, “to give what the people want is the alibi of the drug dealers”. This is a serious criticism of the way the different channels have been fighting for audiences in Portugal. There is a generalised idea that the thing that moves
the policy-makers is the ratings and, subsequently, the money they get from the advertisers. The only channel that seems to be less worried with this is RTP, the public station. This is probably why Mário Castrim says that he sees “stagnation in RTP”. In the other channels, he sees “dynamism in SIC” and “false Christianity, fall and satanic recovery in TVI”. Analysing the actual phenomenon of the Portuguese television, this critic says “everything is legitimate since it gives profits”. In his opinion, television channels look for people to sell to the advertisers instead of looking for advertisers that would financially support the programmes for people. For Castrim, this is “a new way of selling slaves”.

One of the ways that the Portuguese policy-makers are finding to get more and more people to watch their programmes is “to look fast for the formats that were smashing in the other countries”, as Miguel Gaspar notes. Again, the idea is to attract the advertisers. This happens because “not even one media is immune to the commercial logic”. But what shocks this critic is “the perception that exists in Portugal that the commercial logic justifies everything, including the absence of rules”. One of the consequences of this is, as we shall see next, the counter-programming.

Eduardo Cintra Torres thinks, “The commercial logic has overlapped the other possible logic of programming”. But he underlines that this commercial logic “has to have in mind the needs of the viewers and the concession agreements”. And, in the beginning of the privatisation, things were different. Alfredo Barroso reminds that “both SIC and TVI started with worries about quality. But soon SIC understood that quality costs more money”. Subsequently, this station opted to have programmes that without being very expensive would give big shares of audiences.

In Miguel Gaspar’s perspective, another characteristic of the actual policies of programming of the Portuguese channels is that they are making “a very strong investment in the fiction spoken in Portuguese”. And, for him, “this is the best aspect of the Portuguese television nowadays”. All the critics agree that there is a positive aspect in this investment. Eduardo Cintra Torres explains that the Portuguese fiction that the private stations are producing “is not brilliant, but it is a beginning”.

About the recent effort of TVI to gain audiences using formats like ‘Big Brother’ and having a more aggressive information sector, Eduardo Cintra Torres says, “the competition is always good for the public. If TVI improves, it will be very positive for the television in Portugal”.

**Counter-scheduling**

What all the four critics condemn very hardly is the counter-scheduling. Alfredo Barroso explains the practice: the channels “not only do not follow their own timetables, but they also
modify the schedules, moving and even eliminating programmes”, according to what the other channels are broadcasting. For him, this “reveals the total disrespect for the viewers”. This critic has no doubts about this practice and about what should be done to fight it: “The counter-scheduling should be considered a disloyal competition. There should be a serious intervention”.

Miguel Gaspar also thinks that this practice implies “disrespect for the viewers”. What particularly shocks him is that “they constantly change the timetables of the programmes, looking for the time where it will find the right audience. This shows lack of maturity”. For Mário Castrim, the viewers have nothing to win and everything to loose with this practice. He sees the counter-scheduling as a result “of the subordination of the television to the big economic groups”.

Among the four critics, the one that is not so hard on the counter-scheduling is Eduardo Cintra Torres. He explains himself: “I think that the counter-scheduling is negative, but I do not know how much it is negative. I do not think that it is very healthy. I think that there should be a certain constraint of the programmers, that do that a lot, mainly the ones from SIC”.

**Criticisms to violence and concerns with children**

Mário Castrim has no mercy with the Portuguese channels in what concerns violence and children: “There is no special concern with children at all. Children are given low taste, grossness, violence”. For him, “specially disgusting are the Japanese animated films”. For this critic, “a private television, or one that behaves in the same way, has a logic that has nothing to do with intellectual or cultural enlightenment of the audiences, not even by the protection of the children’s souls”.

Although he admits that in this field he has “difficulties in making criticisms”, Alfredo Barroso agrees with Castrim, in a certain way. In Barroso’s opinion “there are cartoons that are very brutal”. So, he concludes, “there is no concern at all with the children”. And Barroso gives one example that illustrates what he says: “RTP broadcasts unbelievable things: sex without an erotic sense, violence without a context”. And it is important to have in mind that RTP is the public channel.

Eduardo Cintra Torres reminds “it happened already that they broadcast a movie not advised for young and sensible people in the afternoon”. In Portugal, this is clearly indicated by the presence of a red circle in the upper right corner of the screen. Although he understands that this is the result of the policy-making strategy of looking for the best period of the day to broadcast certain types of programmes, he finds this bad. But, in general, Cintra Torres
defends that it is important to distinguish between good and bad violence. And he gives the example of his own children, who watch violent movies that are considered good and they do not seem to be affected by that.

Following the same logic of the other critics, Miguel Gaspar does not see a big concern by the policy-makers in what matters the kids, but, in the same way, he does not see them transforming the little children in gangsters.

**Minorities**

In Alfredo Barroso’s opinion, “the minorities are served at a minimum level”. He refers to the cultural minorities. Now a days, they “have a wider choice given by the cable and certain foreign channels”. So, it is not reasonable to expect the generalist channels to fulfil the needs of these minorities. This opinion is shared by Mário Castrim, when he says that “the television purpose is not to serve the minorities” because they “already have other sources”. Even if they are auto-sufficient, Castrim has no doubt to state, “They have the right to access television”. But he concludes that, “simply, for them (in the generalist television) there is no place”.

Eduardo Cintra Torres also thinks that the elites are badly represented in the Portuguese generalist television and that the only exception – RTP2 – is not good enough. But this does not seem to be a problem, because “they have a wide programming” in cable and satellite channels, like “History, Arté, in the movies’ channel, in CNN, BBC”. About other minorities, Cintra Torres reminds, for instance, that different religions have, by law, “the right of having time in the public television”. The question of the practical results of this law have to do with representation: “If there was two millions of Muslims in Portugal, the private stations would feel the need, in their fiction series, of having that element and of showing their ceremonies, even if it was for seconds, in their news bulletins”. But this is not the case, since Portugal is still a predominantly Catholic country.

About this topic, Miguel Gaspar underlines the idea that “technology made possible so many sources that people do not know what to put in all of them”. Which means that everybody can find something that will please him/her.
**Chapter 5: The Audiences**

**Introduction**

After having analysed what television channels offer their viewers, it is important to understand how do people receive that output. This is what this chapter is about. First, I will present a review of the literature about the concepts of audience. Then, I will explain the four focus group discussions that I conducted with different types of Portuguese viewers. All the procedures, since the decision about how many groups I should have, until the way I organised them, will be explained. The opinions of the participants, interpreted according to their social and working contexts, will be presented and analysed.

1 – **Audience(s): preferences, profits and other aspects**

The concept of audience varies accordingly to the stage of development of a given society. The one that has been used more recently is, not surprisingly, a concept that results from the conditions of the new societies, with all the new means that are available to people, including the new technologies, which constitute a phenomenon of quick change. So, the concept of audience once applied to a certain kind of artistic performances or even to other forms of media – for instance, the books – do not apply to television. The main difference is in the number of people who receive television, which implies a large variety of interests.

About this matter, McQuail quotes the sociologist Herbert Blumer (1997, p.6): “He called the phenomenon a ‘mass’ and differentiated it from older social forms – especially the group, the crowd, and the public”. And each one of these three ways of people being organised has an explanation. In a group, “all of its members know and interact with each other within certain social and physical boundaries”. The crowd is “a larger unit, although spatially restricted”. The public is “a product of modern conditions, especially when seen as an element in the institution of democratic politics”. In this context, “the mass was seen as a product of the new conditions of modern industrial urban society, especially its largeness of scale, anonymity, and rootlessness”.

Barwise and Ehrenber (1988, p.25) also argue that an audience is not a crowd. Even if they agree that television is part of the mass media, they do not see the audience as an “undiscriminating crowd all watching the most popular fare”. According to these authors, “the average viewer watches only two or three of the top ten rating programs in the week”.

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The concept of ‘audience’ can be defined and understood in a number of different ways. For instance, Moores (1993, p.2) prefers to talk about audiences, in the plural, even if he recognises that “the term presents conceptual difficulties”. Even though, this author explains that the plural denotes “several groups divided by their reception of different media and genres, or by social and cultural positioning”. For Fiske (1989, p.56), the question is almost a non-question. “What on earth is not the television audience?” He explains: “The ‘television audience’ is not a social category like class, or race, or gender – everyone slips in or out of it in a way that makes nonsense of any categorical boundaries: similarly when ‘it’ people constitute themselves quite differently as audience members at different times.”

Following Fiske’s statement, it is easy to accept the idea presented earlier that there is not a characteristic common to the people who watch television. And Ang (1991, pp.17-8) gives a clear example to support this same thesis: “Contrary to other social institutions such as the school or the family, television (as well as all the other mass media) does not have the means to coerce people into becoming members of its audience. Television membership is not a matter of compulsion or necessity, but is principally voluntary and optional”.

If there is not a common interest shared by the television audience, there must be a way of producing and broadcasting to everybody. Said like this, this appears to be an enormous task. Shanaham and Morgan (1999, p.21) remind us: “Gerbner and Gross argued that television is different from other media in its centralized mass-production and ritualistic use of a coherent set of images and messages produced to appeal to virtually the entire population”. And another idea that is being accepted is that the messages given by television reach every type of person, no matters what specific race, age, professional status or social class they belong to. This is why the television audience is so desired by the advertisers. Reaching everybody, they reach their ‘targets’: people with more disposable income and young people.

But not everything is a matter of quantity, a matter of how many people watch. There is also the question of the quality or, in other words, the question of how the audience watch. It is also possible to talk about how viewers receive those messages and, going back in time, what gratifications they get from that activity.

Morley is the researcher responsible for one of the most known studies about the way the audience produce meaning through television: the analysis of the reception of a British programme, ‘Nationwide’. He started his research with a clear idea of what had been done until then, beginning with the ‘hypodermic model’. Morley (1992, p.45) quotes Katz and Lazarsfeld to explain this model: “Every Message (was conceived) as a direct and powerful stimulus to action which would elicit immediate response”. While this ‘pessimistic’ approach was being developed by the German researchers, known as Frankfurt School, in America this idea was not very well accepted. While German researchers were concerned with “the role of
the media in the reproduction of ideology and with detailed analyses of the ‘true’, hidden media of media texts”, “traditional mass communications theory, practised largely by American sociologists, was oscillating between powerful media and powerful viewers” (Livingstone, 1990, p.9). So, the researchers of the United States adopted an ‘optimistic’ paradigm. It was also an American quantitative response (audience-based) opposed to a German qualitative proposal (message-based). Soon the audience-based model started to focus “on the social characteristics of different audiences, reflecting their different degrees of ‘openness’ to the messages received” (ibid., p.47).

Merton was the researcher who integrated, in a certain way, both theories. Simply by saying that both the analysis of the content and the analysis of the audience reception are important. From here to the rejection of the idea that the influence would flow directly from the media to the people was only a short step. Researchers like Merton, Katz and Lazarsfeld worked this idea. And this led to the creation of the ‘two-step flow of communication’, meaning that between the media and the audience there is something else: the opinion leaders. Then, in the late fifties, various functionalist approaches presented themselves as an alternative to the ‘effects’ theory. The idea was that a mass media could not influence one individual if he did not have a ‘use’ for that. And this theory was followed by the British research ‘uses and gratifications’, explained, in the beginning of the seventies, by Halloran (1970). He argued that we must get away from the habit of thinking in terms of what the media do to people and substitute for it the idea of what people do with the media. Hall was also responsible for the changes in the approaches of the seventies, introducing his reception theory. Alasuutari (1999, p.3) shows what Hall meant: “A message was no longer understood as some kind of a package or a ball that the sender throws to the receiver. Instead, the idea that a message is encoded by a programme producer and then decoded (and made sense of) by the receiver means that the sent and received messages are not necessarily identical, and different audiences may also decode a programme differently.”

In the early 1970s, Hall’s approach had its focus on the analysis of the ideological structure of news and current affairs. As Morley (1992, p.8) explains, “from the late 1970s onwards, researchers within the media/cultural studies traditions in Britain began to explore political and ideological significance of the structure of media products outside the ‘news’ category”. For the first time, researchers seemed to be interested on what started to be known as “popular culture”. For instance, Hobson (1982) and Ang (1985) observed the construction of gender identities in soap opera and Cohen and Gardner (1984) analysed the presentation of racial stereotypes in drama and light entertainment.

Morley was one of the researchers who conducted of the most known studies – the analysis of the British programme ‘Nationwide’ – about the way audiences decode the messages and
construct meanings through it. He was situated in the ‘cultural studies’. So, he believed that
the consumption of television leads to a certain production of meanings that contribute to the
construction of cultural identities. As Morley (1992, p.3) points, is that “in different places
and at different times the same things not always have the same significance”.

The analysis of the reception of ‘Nationwide’ – a BBC’s early evening magazine programme
– was designed to explore “the extent to which decoding takes place within the limits of the
preferred (or dominant) manner in which the message was initially encoded” (Morley, 1992,
p.57). Between 1975 and 1979, Morley, with the Media Studies Group at the Centre for
Contemporary Cultural Studies of University of Birmingham, analysed the programme in two
different ways. The project began by analysing the way in which the programme “was
characterized by particular formal devices, particular modes of address to its audience,
particular forms of textual organization” and went on to explore “how that programme
material was interpreted by individuals from different social backgrounds, with a view to
establishing the role of cultural frameworks in determining individual interpretations of the
programmes in question”. According to Morley (1992, p.75), the results of this second stage
of the project demonstrate “some of the relations between social-demographic factors (such as
age, sex, race, class) and differential interpretations of the same programme material”. This
study led to many others (see, for instance, Ang, Hobson, Katz and Liebes), in the new
context of the qualitative and ethnographic audience studies, which meant conducting in-
depth interviews with the viewers to analyse a programme and its reception.

In the 1980s, the approach was more a constructionist view, concentrated on the ‘what’ and
‘how’. Since virtually all of us watch television the question becomes how do we watch
television and how much attention do we pay (what programmes do we watch, why, what
expectations do we have, with whom do we watch, when and where). While researchers like
Lindolf and Traudt (1983) were dealing with the idea that the act of watching television
implied some prerequisites (namely, the relations of power in a family house), Barwise and
Ehrenberg (1988, p.4) were relating to the questions of the quantity and the questions of the
quality: “We watch a lot but it is mostly at a fairly low level of involvement, often at a lower
level of attention than in a cinema or theatre, at a live concert or sporting contest, or for most
books or magazines. We are not even always watching the screen when the set is on”. This is
the well-known facet of the television as a companion. Another conclusion that these authors
reach is that “we mainly watch when we are free to do so and when nothing more important
intervenes” (ibid., p19). The exception is when our favourite programme is on air.

Another important factor that should be taken in consideration is the context of viewing. This
implies two different things: the physical space, which means the domestic scenario in what
the viewing is processed; and the individual interpretation, which means the making sense and
the pleasure got from the programme. The problem that Morley (1989, pp.36-7) sees in the
analysis done in the domestic scenario is that it can be complicated to observe individuals.
“First of all one is not able to treat the individual viewer as if he or she were a free or rational
consumer in a cultural supermarket. For many people (and especially for the less powerful
members of any household) the programs they watch are not necessarily programs which they
will have chosen to watch”. Now a days this reality is a little bit different, since many houses
have more than one television set, which allows different options. About the second aspect of
the context of viewing, Fiske (1989, p.57) says: “The textuality of television, the
intertextuality of the process of making sense and pleasure from it, can only occur when
people bring their different histories and subjectivities to the viewing process”.

What people watch and what people want to watch are two basic questions that need to be
addressed when the subject is audience. Barwise and Ehrenberg (1988, p.27) found, not
surprisingly, that “children and teenagers tend to watch fewer demanding programs and, of
course, more children’s programs”. As for adults, “the main systematic differences are that
sports programs tend to be somewhat less popular among women and that most soap operas
are less popular among men”. The authors reached these conclusions in a study done in
Britain. Another finding is that “while British adults on average spend about 30 percent of
their viewing time on the more demanding programs, only one in ten spends less than 20
percent”. So, normally demanding programmes do not get high scores. Concluding, “viewers
mostly say that they quite like what they watch and watch what they say they quite like”
(ibid., p.57).

When it comes to examining the preferences of the viewers, the audience is considered as a
public. And this is mainly valid when the context is the public television. In this case, Ang
(1991, pp.28-9) argues that “the relationship of public service institution to its audience
remains essentially characterized, not by economic profit seeking, but by a pervasive sense of
cultural responsibility and social accountability, which is emphatically opposed to the easy-
going commercial dictum of ’giving the audience what it wants’”. So, there is a clear division
between audience as a public and audience as something profitable. The same author explains
that “the audience-as-public consists not of consumers, but of citizens who must be reformed,
educated, informed as well as entertained – in short, ‘served’ – presumably to enable them to
better perform their democratic rights and duties”.

When the subject is the taste of the audience, the commercial channels seem to win. Morley
(1989, p.30) explains: “The functioning of taste, and indeed ideology, has to be understood as
a process in which the commercial world succeeds in producing objects, programs (and
consumer goods), which do no connect with the lives desires of popular audiences. To fail to
understand exactly how this works is, in my own view, not only academically retrograde but
also politically suicidal”.

Profit is what motivates the commercial channels. So, the relationship that commercial televisions establish with their viewers is clear: the viewers themselves are being ‘sold’ to the advertisers. McQuail (1997, p.9) explains that this type or relationship “links sender and receiver in a ‘calculative’ rather than a normative or social relationship, as a cash transaction between producer and consumer rather than a communication relationship”. But this is not a direct transaction. The payment that is made is not direct and this is why commercial television seems to be free of charge. People pay when they consume and not when they watch television. Fiske (1989, p.59) argues, “Watching an opera or a concert by Dire Straits costs no more than a quiz show or a rerun sitcom”.

Commercial television is paid for the advertisers, and as such its primary aim is arguably to ‘sell’ viewers into them. Both them and the broadcasters have one concern in mind: to make money. Since this activity is not direct, it depends of an indirect source of information, the ratings. Even if the discourse of the ratings is “dry and technical”, it “provides knowledge about the television audience that is indispensable for the economic functioning of the system” (Ang, 1991, p.27). So, the most seen programmes (according to the ratings) are the ones the advertisers want to buy. Following the statistically logic, a bigger audience will provide more consumers for the products advertised in their breaks. And there are certain types of messages that programmes can have that attract a wider range of viewers than others. Violence is one of those messages. Shanaham and Morgan (1999, p.4) argue that most fundamentally “violence exists on television for its assumed ability to draw sufficiently large (and demographically attractive) audiences that may be sold at the profit to advertisers. Violence also sells well on the international market”. The reason is because the ‘language’ of violence is universal while, for instance, humour “does not always cross cultural borders successfully”.

The audience measurement is made through ratings (percentage of viewers). The ratings reached by each programme produce the standards of the advertising rates. “That standard is fixed according to the number of people who watch the programmes in which the commercials appear, resulting in the so called ‘cost-per-thousand’ that the networks could demand and advertisers would pay” (Ang, 1991, pp.53–4).

Although this measuring has been used for years, nowadays it starts to be seen as a crude process. Kolbolt, Hogg and Robinson (1999, pp.60-1) argue that this measure “is clearly imperfect because it fails to capture the intensity of enjoyment of each viewer”. These authors argue that one way of determining the pleasure got from the programmes could be measured by the interest in paying directly for that programme. But even this suggestion has its own problems. First of all, it would exclude the people who cannot or do not want to pay. And this
does not mean that they would not appreciate the programme if they had access to it. Then, “there are two further problems with using pay-per-view revenue as a measure of value: there is a difference, potentially important for some kinds of programmes, between *ex ante* and *ex post* valuation; and there is the problem that each of us may value the existence of programmes even if we do not watch them”.

Another problem identified by McQuail (1997, p.35) in what concerns measuring the receivers is that “the complete audience can never be measured in practice, only reconstructed or estimated after the event”. This author explains the pros and cons of the measurement. He says that the great advantage is “the fact that it can be quantified and once this has been done, the rules of mathematics are ultimately unassailable”. The problem seen by this researcher is that “there is no certain way of deciding on the relative value of the extent or the depth of media usage or how to draw the line between devoted and casual spectators”. This implies a difficulty in determining the degree of attention and attachment given to the programme.

The reality is that, as McQuail (1997, pp.43-4) says, “media providers need to know a great deal about the extent of media reach (which is at the same time a measure of audience attention) for reasons of finance or policy or for organization and planning”. And this is a problem that is growing. “The increase in the number of channels as a result of new technology and international transmission has exacerbated the situation, making the ‘audience’ even less predictable, stable, or knowable” (ibid., p.48).

Even if it seems difficult to know the audience, there is knowledge, formal and informal, as Ang argues:

“The production of this knowledge does not only take place in the specialized, knowledge-producing activity of ‘audience research’; it also emerges and comes into circulation more or less spontaneously through a whole range of concrete discursive practices – board meetings, informal conversation and interviews, discussion about programme ideas, scheduling principles, policy statements, research reports, and so on; practices that, in one way or another, ultimately revolve around one main objective: to come to terms with television’s invisible addressee”

(Ang, 1991, p.19)

The purpose of having this knowledge is to conquer the audiences. But it is not easy to achieve this purpose. Fiske (1989, p.61) explains that “the people choose to make some texts popular, and some not, and this process of choice is essentially a popular one: however hard the industry may try through market research, promotion, advertising, and scheduling to influence popular choice, its failure rate is enormous”.

Even though, the broadcasters in America recognise that their only interest is “whether people watch the programme” (Gitlin quoted by Ang, 1991, p.27). To achieve that, broadcasters have
strategies to make “audiences’ viewing practices more predictable”. For instance, presenting serial productions and fixed formats or genres. But “there are no guarantees that actual audiences will comply to the codes, routines and synchronities of viewing behaviour as designed by the institutions (ibid., p.19).

The policies adopted by the channels depend on different factors and change according to the stage of development of the system. Hellman (1999, p.105) presents the multi-channel scenario as one of the phenomena that changed the policies.

“In Western Europe, broadcasting regulations have traditionally emphasized general values like universality, diversity of opinion and a wide range of offerings. These were the core values that were employed to legitimise the privileged status of national public service broadcasting institutions. Commercial television was based on different values, those of popularity, choice and economic calculation. However, the recent liberalization of the airwaves appears to have contributed to a convergence of programme policy discourses”.

Hellman (1999, p.105)

Hellman (1999, pp.113-24) presents an analysis of how broadcasters from both public and commercial channels articulate their policies. On one side, there is the legitimating by the audience-as-citizens – in the public service. On the other side, there is the legitimating by the audience-as-consumers – in the commercial channels. This author argues that in the first case the audience needs diversity, quality, information and education, and cultural integration. In the second case, the audience wants choice and popular programmes but the viability of programming counts.

Regarding ‘diversity’, the idea is to cover both the general audience and the minorities with special interests, so that everyone would have something to watch once in a while. Although “quality” might be difficult to define, Hellman (1999) says that in informative programmes it can be seen by “an analytical procedure, impartiality and responsibility of reporting, and so on”. In drama it refers to “an innovative and artistic approach” and in entertainment it implies having the best popular performances. The “information and education” aspect is related to the need of keeping the public informed in a way that it creates public discussion on public affairs. ‘Cultural integration’ is connected with the idea of having programmes that will create a feeling of togetherness and that contribute to social cohesion.

‘Choice’ is not only a matter of having a wide range of programmes, available to all, at appropriate times. About ‘popular programmes’, the strategy is to find the programmes that will have the highest ratings, because the ratings will seduce the advertisers. This option is connected to the one that says that viability of programming counts and which implies an explicitly economic argumentation.
But all these arguments are not an exclusive possession of either public or commercial channels. For instance, commercial channels can argue that they also want to give diversity of programmes. In the same way, public channels also have in mind an economic logic, since the public money is not infinite. They also fight for shares in order to be able to claim to be serving the public. And the convergence of politics can also be seen in many other aspects. Hellman (1999, pp.124-6) concludes: “popularity rules”, “money buys”, “variety is popular” and “duties are shared”.

As all the different channels want the same – the highest possible number of viewers – the obvious result of this interest is the competition. In this scenario what is more likely to happen in terms of scheduling is a ‘counter-programming’. Instead of giving the viewers ‘complementary programming’ (each channel broadcasting a different type of programme), the broadcasters give, for instance, “different kinds of popular entertainment programs against each other, such as a police series versus a soap opera” (Barwise and Ehrenberg, 1988, p.74). What happens very often in Portugal is to give exactly the same type of programmes: news against news, soap operas against soap operas.

Opposite to this commercial scenario regulated by ratings and profits, we find the public broadcasting systems (generally, in Europe, they do not depend on advertising, although the Portuguese case is one of the two exceptions). Graham (1999, p.36) believes that there is a connection between the best output and the public service: “The countries which have performed best at producing programmes the rest of the world wants to see and hear have not been those dominated either by commercial broadcasting or by state run broadcasting, but those in which there has been a powerful public service tradition”. The obvious example is BBC, in the United Kingdom. But then there is also the example of America, the biggest exporter of television products that has no tradition of public service.

According to Graham (1999, p.35), in a democratic society people must be able to receive and understand the information. And he argues that the media have two responsibilities: “First, programmes need to handle information in such a way that it increases understanding and creates knowledge. Second, programmes need to ensure, as far as possible, that such knowledge correctly represents the world. This is not something restricted to the domain of news and documentaries”.

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2 – The opinion of the viewers: four focus group discussions

2.1 – Choosing to do focus groups

One important part of my work of analysing the programming of the Portuguese television was to find out the opinion of the viewers. Or more accurately, the opinion of some viewers. The objective was to find some of the trends that can be associated with some groups of the society. Just like Morley did in one of the major focus group discussions about television – ‘Nationwide’ –, I preferred to work with groups instead of one person at each time. As Morley and Brunsdon (1997, p.150) say, “the choice to work with groups rather than individuals (...) was made on the grounds that much individually based interview research is flawed by a focus on individuals as social atoms divorced from their social context”. Also, “it is the dynamic exchange between the individuals in the group that gives focus group their special characteristic and strength as a research method” (Morrison, 1998, p.168).

I knew that I wanted to do focus group discussions with people that have an opinion about television. I was not looking for heavy viewers but for people who, at least sometimes, watch television. And this could be any one, since “virtually everyone in every developed country watches it” (Barwise and Ehrenberg, 1988, p.20). This process of watching television involves the construction of a meaning and also talking about it.

“Watching television is a set of socially and culturally informed activities, a significant aspect of which is concerned with discursive meaning. Television audiences are active creators; they do not simply accept uncritically textual meanings but bring previously acquired cultural competencies to bear on them. Further, since texts do not embody one set of unambiguous meanings but are polysemic, that is, they are carriers of multiple meanings, differently constituted audiences will work with different textual meanings” (Barker, 1999, p.108).

Even if people watch television alone, later they will talk about it. They produce their own meaning of what they have seen and this is normally shared with other people. As Buckingham (1994, p.39) says: “It is inevitably a social process, which involves a variety of forms of dialogue, both spoken and unspoken. It is principally through talk that the meanings and pleasures of television are defined and circulated”. And, he concludes, to talk about television is “a vital element of our everyday social lives”. This is probably the reason why it is quite easy to organise focus groups discussions about television. Even people who do not watch a lot and those who criticise television very harshly can talk very easily about it.

At this point of my research, getting the opinion of the viewers was essential. I was interested in answer three questions:
• What do they prefer in the media in general and in television in particular?
• How and why do they watch television?
• What do they think about television programming?

For the first question – what – the answer could be achieved through a small questionnaire. For the other questions – how, why and opinion – I would have to use qualitative methods. As Hansen argues:

“For examining the dynamics of what experimental knowledge and frames of interpretation audiences bring to bear in their use of media content, what role media use has in the everyday life of audiences, or how audiences use the media as a resource in their everyday lives, it is necessary to turn to more qualitative methods, which allow us to observe in a more ‘natural’ setting than that of the survey or the laboratory experiment how audiences relate to media (both as technologies and as content)”

(Hansen, 1998, p.257)

Even if focus groups discussions seem to be a method that reproduces a ‘natural’ setting, there are researchers who have some doubts about this. Morrison (1998, p.154-5) is one of them: “Viewers do not in their everyday lives sit around and discuss programmes in the guided fashion of a focus group”. But, even though, this author recognises that all methodologies interfere with the ‘natural’ situations. And when this method is compared with other, it presents advantages. “Clearly focus group research with its insistence on the participants speaking for themselves in an open dialogue is closer to the emic side of the continuum than survey research, where the more closed dialogue and ‘forced’ responses place on the etic side of the continuum” (ibid.).

When I decided to use focus group research as a method to get qualitative answers, I never had the presumption of getting data that could be generalised to the Portuguese population. The objective was to identify opinions that exist in the Portuguese society. I could hardly even say that the results correspond to the thought of a certain percentage of the population. I can only find possible trends.

I also did not have intention of, through this method, finding the answer to the popularity of certain programmes. As Morrison (1998, p.149) says, “such understanding could certainly not be achieved from focus group discussions, interviews, or participant observation”. Through this method, one can get interpretative understanding of individual opinions. This was the perspective that I wanted to achieve, even if I knew that I was creating an unnatural situation. Just like McQuaire (in Morrison, 1998, p.154) argues, “viewers do not in their everyday lives sit around and discuss programmes in the guided fashion of a focus group”. But there is also
the argument that focus groups are more natural than individual interviews. Because they are more approximated to natural social activities of generating meanings (Hansen, 1998, p.263). In any case, I thought that these discussions could provide very interesting opinions about the programming of the Portuguese television, in different perspectives.

2.2 – Organising the discussions

When I was preparing the focus groups discussions, I realised that it would make more sense to look for ‘pre-constituted’ ‘interest groups’ or groups that existed prior to this work, just like other researchers had already done (see, for example, Corner et al, 1990). Since I did not want to compare the opinions of different types of people but, instead, to understand possible opinions of certain groups, I was not worried in finding groups with obvious oppositions. Even though, when I started to think about what segments of the Portuguese society I was interested in, I finally ended up with four groups that can be put in a certain opposition: young people/old people; less educated people/more educated people.

Since the focus groups discussions are not the only source of data of my research, I thought that four of them would be enough to give me the information I needed. It was far from my intentions to organise something like the pioneers of this method did (Morley, 1980; Liebes and Katz, 1990). As far as the number of participants, I concluded that between five and six would be the ideal, based on the “general consensus that the optimum group size for focus groups discussion is in the region of between five and nine people” (Hansen, 1998, p.270). Another concern that I had was that the groups should be homogenous, because this is understood to be a way of achieving compatibility (Morgan, 1998, p.60). There are demographic characteristics, like age, occupation or having the same background, that make people feel compatible.

As I did not have the intention to generalise, I would not have to go for the random sampling. As Millward (in Morrison, 1998, p.198) says, none the less, “it is important to employ a systematic strategy when deciding on group composition. The sample should be chosen on theoretical grounds as reflecting those segments of the population who will provide the most meaningful information in terms of the project objective”.

As far as the type of people that I wanted to listen, I excluded children from the beginning, since the topics that I wanted to discuss were obviously inadequate for them. The main reason was because I wanted to base the discussion on the comparison with the past and the present of the television and, naturally, they are not old enough to do this.

I decided to choose four different groups of people that would represent four of the most representative sectors of the Portuguese viewers, either because of their age, activity, and
social class or because of the combination of these characteristics. I organised one of these
discussions in July 2000, which was seen as a pilot-study. Since the results were good and
since no problems were identified (everything went properly with the interview guide, the role
of the moderator and the recording), I considered it as part of the study. The other three group
discussions took place in November 2000.
First, I realised that it was important to have the opinion of a part of the population that is
expressive: the factory workers. I contacted a trade union – Sindicato dos Operários do
Calçado – of S. João da Madeira, a city in the North of Portugal that is known for the industry
of shoes. The person in charge, Manuel Graça, was available to collaborate since the
beginning. He organised a group of six people who work in shoes’ factories. My objective
was to get the view that the people who work hard and live away from the big cities have
about television. In this case, age was not the most important factor.
I understood that old people would give me rich material, since they follow the television
programming since it’s beginning. Also, because they have a long experience of life and their
judgments are considered wise by the common sense. Thinking about a place where to find a
group of old people interested in participating in this work, I thought that the best would be
one of the universities for old people. These places are known for the interesting classes that
they proportionate to people who have time and interest to learn more. I contacted the
Universidade do Autodidacta, from Porto, and the director, Maria Teresa Mota, who
immediately agreed to collaborate. She organised a group of five people.
By opposition, I realised that young people would also be essential because they are normally
heavy consumers of television and it is something that they often talk about. Then, I decided
that I wanted educated young people. The best place to find them is in the universities. So, I
contacted the Federação Académica do Porto (Federation of the Students of Porto) and the
members of the direction, especially Daniel Vieira, agreed to organise a group of students.
Finally, I wanted the view of the people in the thirties, with university or technical degrees,
who are established in life. I could not think about a place where I could find a group with this
characteristic. So, I organised a group of people who had common friends. Although they do
not socialise together, they were comfortable with the situation because they share friends and
also some interests, like arts and movies. For this group, the contacts were established on a
private basis.
I asked all the people who operate as mediators the favour of organising groups of six people
and asked them permission to use the space of their institutions, so that the discussions would
happen in places where the participants would feel familiar. Another reason for this choice
was practicality, something that is pointed, for instance, by Hansen (1998, p.272). In the case
of the group of friends, the discussion took place in a friendly apartment, that all knew. In the
case of the university students, it happened in the federation of the students associations. In the case of the mature participants, the discussion took place in the university they all attend. In the case of the factory workers, the discussion was in the trade union building.

The dates and the hours were arranged always according to the preferences of the participants, so that the discussions would not interfere too much in their normal life. The only exception was with the factory workers. Because of their life, they would not be available after the working hours. So, for this discussion, they used one of the few days that are given to them by law to discuss their working problems in the union. I am especially grateful for this. With the group of older people, we had the discussion before one of the classes that they attend in the university. The other two groups were at night. With the students it was on a normal weekday but with the middle age educated people it was on a Friday because they would not have to be worried with the late hours, since they do not work on Saturdays.

All of them were told that the discussion had been prepared to last for one hour. No more than this. Giving them this information, I wanted to make sure that I was not taking too much of their time and I was letting them plan their lives after that. In three of the cases, the duration of the discussions was what had been determined. Only in the case of the middle age educated people the discussion took more than what it was supposed. The reason was because the participants were too interested in the discussion. In fact, they did not go home after the hour was up but instead stayed in the apartment talking about many other topics, which were originated in the discussion about the subject.

2.3 – The participants

The participants were told that their names would not appear in this work, as a way of protecting their privacy. This was my first intention. But then I realised two things. First, none of them seemed worried with protecting their privacy once the topic was not an issue. Second, some of them even asked me to send them copies of the work. I understood that not only they were interested in the work but they also wanted to see their participation, clearly. So, I decided to use their first names.

To have an idea of the participants, their likes about the media and general interests, I asked them to answer a short questionnaire before we started the discussions. The objective of the questionnaire was not to find data in quantitative terms, but to relate their interests and their opinions. All of the participants were told that if there was any question they did not feel comfortable with, they should not answer.
First, I asked the participants to write down personal information:

- Name
- Age
- Place of residence
- Activity
- Education
- Family

Then, I asked the participants to answer some questions about their use of the media and about other interests:

- Do you read newspapers and magazines?
- If yes, which ones?
- Do you listen to radio?
- If yes, which channels?
- How many hours of television do you watch per day?
- Which are your favourite channels and programmes?
- How do you normally spend your free time?

The answers given to these questions will only be used in the context of the analysis of the discourse and opinion of the participants. And this will only happen when it will be considered essential or important to understand their positions towards the media in general, and the television programming in particular.

Among the four focus group discussions, there were 22 participants: six in two groups and five in two groups. This is the description of the groups:

**Factory workers:** three women and three men, between 21 and 39. None of them has what is considered the minimum education of nine years. They have been four, five, six or seven years at school. They all live in small cities or villages in the area of S. João da Madeira, a city in the North of the country. The three men live with their parents (even the two who are in their late thirties), one young woman lives with her mother, the other two are married and one has two kids. They all work in shoes factories, with specific tasks.

**Older people:** four women and one man, between 58 and 77. As far as education, the man has the complete secondary school and attended the faculty. He is a business manager. Two of the women have degrees in education and arts, and are teachers. One woman has a university degree and is chemical engineer. One woman has a master’s degree in nursing. She is a nurse and she also teaches. In this group we find single, married and divorced people. Some live
with their partners, some live alone, one lives with her husband, the mother and a
granddaughter. Their jobs are (or were) teachers, manager, and chemical engineer.

University students: three women and two men, between 21 and 25. The participants were all
in their 3rd of 4th year of university and the eldest female participant had already finished her
degree and was starting to work as journalist. They are all single and living with their parents,
sometimes also with brothers or sisters.

Established middle aged: three women and three men, between 32 and 37. Three of them have
a degree in fine arts: two of them are teachers and one is a graphic designer. One man has a
degree in Journalism and is a journalist. One man has a degree in management and product
manager and consultant. One woman has the complete secondary school and various
professional courses. She works in her own business of beautician. Two of them are married,
two of them are living with the partners, one is single living alone and one is single living
with his parent and sister.

2.4 – The moderator and the guidelines of the discussions

Since the number of discussions that I was organising was considerably small, my first
decision, in what concerns the moderator, was that I should use only one. It was obvious that I
should be the one doing it. First, because I knew very well the questions I wanted to have
answered. Second, because I speak the same language as the participants do: Portuguese.

When I was preparing myself for the discussions, I had an idea in my mind of what is
supposed to be the role of the moderator. According to Hansen, there are three aspects that the
moderator has to ensure: that the topics outlined are covered; that there is a reasonable
balance between the participants; and that the discussion is kept on course and not allowed to
drift off in directions of little or no relevance to the study (Hansen, 1998, p.272). To ensure
that the first aspect would be achieved, I prepared guidelines, as I shall explain next. As far as
the other aspects, while I was conducting the discussions I had different types of reactions.

Factory workers sometimes stopped the talk and I would have to ask the ones who were more
silent to give their opinion. This only happened a few times with older people and university
students. In any of these three groups it was quite easy to move on with the topics. With the
established middle age people, the most frequent problem was to make them move on to the
following topics. All of them were so enthusiastic with the discussion that they always had
something more that they wanted to say. And sometimes I had difficulties in concentrating in
the subjects I had defined. I think that a certain point they forgot that they were participating
in a discussion with specific objectives and just behaved as if they were having a normal
discussion among friends. This statement might seem pretentious but the truth is that in the
end someone suggested that the group should do that more often, about any other topics, for instance, arts.

I prepared clear guidelines that I wanted to follow in the discussions. Not only because I did not want to follow the risk of forgetting something, but also because of a matter or organisation. Doing that, I would not face dangers pointed out, for instance, by Hansen.

“Though a major strength of the focus group discussion, compared with a survey questionnaire study, is precisely its openness and the flexibility it offers for participants to respond, at length, in their own ‘language’ and on their own terms, this characteristic should not be confused with a ‘free-for-all’ ‘unstructured chaos’” (Hansen et al, 1998, p.273)

To avoid the chaos, I prepared the guidelines that matched my purposes and that were followed in all the four group discussions. I divided them in three different periods: past, present and future. The time dedicated to each part of the debate was very important, so that I would reach the end of the time with all the topics discussed. So, I attributed 10 minutes to the past, 45 minutes for the present and 5 minutes for the future. My option was clearly centred in the presence because the actual experiences of the viewers were what most interest me at this point. The speculations about the future would certainly be for the specialists that I would interview ahead. With this division of the time, I knew that in the first quarter of hour I should have reached the fifth question. When half of the hour had gone I should have reached the tenth question. At 15 minutes from the end I should have finished the 13th question.
5.1 Guidelines for the focus group discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>HOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>First memories that you have from television.</td>
<td>15h00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did television change your life?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the 25th April 1974 (Portuguese revolution) change TV?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the privatisation bring many changes to the TV panorama?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Favourite channels and genres; as favourite hours to watch TV.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The importance of television in your life.</td>
<td>15h15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most important missions of TV: to educate, to inform or to entertain?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The best and the worst channel. Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is there space for RTP2?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Should the Government interfere more on the public TV?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the programmes spoken in Portuguese enough?</td>
<td>15h30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What are your concerns with violence and sex, having the children in mind?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do the advertisements take too long?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What is your opinion about the war of audiences?</td>
<td>15h45</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there programmes for everybody?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Is your use of television going to be different?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Will Cable TV, Digital TV and Satellites be generalised to the majority of the population soon?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When I was conducting the discussions, I had in mind the topics I wanted to be analysed. But I also knew that I could not interrupt the flow of the conversation too much, unless it was clearly going in a direction that would not give me interesting data and, at the same time, it would consume the time.

Following Morley, the aim was “the specific questions introduced did not ‘cut across the flow of the conversation’ but rather engaged with, and tried to develop, points already raised by the respondents” (Morley and Brunsdon, 1997, p.149). Even if this seems obvious, not always it is easy or possible to achieve. First, because the participants did not have the guidelines, so

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1 15h00 is just one example. In two cases it was around that hour that the discussions took place, but in the other two it was at around 21h00. Obviously, in these cases the information in the column of the right was different.
they did not know what really was important for my research. Second, because of a matter of
politeness, I could not just stop the participants by telling them I was not interested in that
point of view.

All the participants were aware that I was using a tape-recorder. As it is advised (see Hansen,
1998), I started to ask them to introduce themselves, so that I would recognise theirs voices
later on. Besides, while I was taking notes, I also wrote down the names of who was saying
what. These two practices helped a lot when I was transcribing the discussions. I did it first in
Portuguese and then translated them to English. When I finally had all the data as a transcript
I was ready to start the analysis.

I decided to organise the answers I got by the questions I had prepared. So, I was looking for
the most interesting answers to each question. As I wanted to find significant opinions and
since I was not interested in comparing the groups, I knew that I did not have to have
interesting answers to each question in each of the groups. It could happen that in one group I
would not find one answer that would be interesting for the analysis and, if so, this would not
be a problem. As Hansen (1998, quoting Schlesinger et al) proposes, I constructed a second
coding sweep, at a more detailed level, where the reasons for the opinions would be clarified,
whenever possible. So, not only I was looking for opinions but also I wanted to know why the
participants think the way they do.

A problem that seems impossible to avoid is the subjectivity of the selection of the quotes. I
am aware of the possible criticisms that the choosing of the particular following statements
carry. The intention was to understand some of the trends in the way Portuguese people
receive and talk about television. For this, I tried to use ‘sensibility and intuition’, as well as I

2.5 – The discussions

Although I had guidelines for the discussions, the four of them developed in different ways.
Sometimes, the discussion was very intense, sometimes it was just enough to give the
answers, and sometimes it was not possible to approach some of the topics. This last situation
happened because of different reasons: the participants were not interested in discussing it;
they did not have enough information; they did not have opinion about it. Because in some
groups the discussion about one topic was more enthusiastic than in others – and as this varied
according to the groups – the quotations might not look balanced. But it was never the
expectation to get equivalent interest to all the questions from the four different groups.

What follows are the parts of the discussions that I find more relevant for this study, in the
sense that they characterise better the way certain types of people consume television and
what they think about it. It is important to mention that all the discussions happened in a relaxed way. I have no reasons to think that the answers and opinions given by the participants were untrue. Nevertheless, I was surprised with a small part of the results. Specifically, I was surprised by the fact that factory workers say that they like to watch documentaries and that they dislike popular quiz shows.

**First memories of television**

In this topic of the discussion the experiences were considerably different due to the fact that the participants were between 21 and 77 years old. Obviously, we find in these groups people who grew up without television and others who always had it at home. In the group of the Old people significant information was given by one of the participants. She was probably one exception among the Portuguese population at the time, but it reflects that even though television was something fascinating, there was a certain resistance to it, especially with educated people. But that resistance was not strong enough. She got used to watch television and she has nice memories of the first programmes she used to see. In fact, when the participants in this discussion group mention the programmes of the first years of television, the tone of their voices shows that it was something they appreciated and that they miss.

**Extract 1 (Old people)**

**Aurora (female):** I remember the Portuguese movies. Also, programmes like “Zip-Zip” (interviews and entertainment) and “Melodias de Sempre” (“Melodies of Every Time”, about famous songs).

**Emilia (female):** I remember the time when we did not have television and not wanting to have it. The only place where there was television was in my mother in law’s house. Then, we ended up buying it, because we were “losing the train”. But we resisted to television for a long time.

**Alexandrina (female):** I always liked television! But, you know, television finished the social relations.

**Emilia (female):** You (talking to her sister, Aurora) bought it before I did.

**Aurora (female):** I bought it in 1958.

Aurora (a 64 years old, female nurse and teacher, who has a masters degree and lives alone) and her sister, Emilia (a 66 years old, female teacher of the secondary school, who has a first degree and also lives alone) represent a certain elite of the country: although they could afford it, they did not buy the television straight away. They were probably part of the group of
people who, at least at the time, might think that television could have negative effects. Even though, they mention some of the oldest programmes, namely the Portuguese ones. Nowadays, they watch between two and four hours of television per day, which means that they take something out of it. They mention as their favourites, entertainment and cultural programmes, the second public channel (RTP2), which is associated with culture, and also some cable channels.

In this extract, it is also important to notice that Alexandrina (a 57 years old, female teacher, who has a first degree and lives with her husband, her mother and her grand-daughter) thinks that television has the negative effect of stopping people to get together. This can be true if everybody has a television set at home, but it certainly was not in other cases. For instance, like the one that is represented in the following extract, taken from the discussion with the Factory workers. Some of the participants in this group are in their thirties and forties. When they were young television was already a reality in the country, but did not have it at home. Certainly, it was for economic reasons. So, they had to go somewhere else to watch it and, at the same time, it was a process of socialisation. When they talk about it, they express the feeling that it was something they did with pleasure.

**Extract 2 (Factory workers)**

Álvaro (male): When television appeared, I had no television set at home. So, I had to go to the café to watch it.

Interviewer: How old were you at that time?

Álvaro (male): I was 16 years old.

Interviewer: How was the moment when television finally arrived at your home? Did it change your life?

Álvaro (male): It didn’t change it a lot. It was an entertainment.

Interviewer: How old were you when you first had television at home?

Álvaro (male): About 20 years old.

Interviewer: What about the others?

Fernando (male): I remember that when I was little there was no television at home but one of our neighbours had it. There was a movie, Robin Wood that I really liked. So, we used to go to his place to watch it. At the time that we knew that it was broadcast, we would go there and he allowed us to go in and watch it.

Interviewer: How old were you when you had your first television?

Fernando (male): I don’t remember.

Interviewer: What about the others?

Rosa (female): I remember. I was little, around 8 years old. We used to watch the
For this part of the Portuguese society, television was something that took a long time to be usual at home. Rosa (a 31 years old, female factory worker, who studied for six years and who lives with her two young daughters) first got a television when she was 8 years old, in 1977. By this time, television had been established in Portugal already for more than 20 years. Doing some calculations, it is possible to find that Álvaro (a 39 years old, male factory worker, who studied for four years and who lives with his mother) acquired a television as late as 1981, one year after the colour television was launched in Portugal. Even if Fernando (a 38 years old, male factory worker, who studied for six years and who lives with his parents) does not remember when he had television, his story should not be considerably different from the others mentioned above.

In the focus group discussion with the established people in their thirties we find participants who had television since they were born and others who had only acquired it when they were around 6 years old. Some of them still remember the black and white programmes, but in other cases the memory does not go so far and the only programmes they can remember were coloured already. When I asked them to indicate some of the first programmes they used to watch, they refer the cartoons, a programme about agriculture, the Eurovision Song Contest, series like Bonanza and Little House of the Prairies. Also, some participants mention the news and the bull fights. Not because they appreciate these programmes as children, but because their parents used to watch. When discussing the frequency with which they used to watch when they were children, in this group we find the extremes: one woman that only watched it on weekends and another one that watched it as much as she could to establish daily records. In all the cases, they express the feeling of the importance that television had in their lives, at that time. It is frequent, during the discussion, to see them asking the others if they remember a certain programme and to react enthusiastically when they realise that they share the same old happy memories of television programmes.

**Extract 3 (Established people)**

**Paula (female):** I only watched television during the weekends.

**Interviewer:** Was it something imposed by your parents?

**Paula (female):** We did not even have television at home. I watched it in my grandparents’ home. I could only watch television on Sundays…

**António (male):** While you were having the traditional Portuguese Sunday lunch?…

**Paula (female):** It was before and after lunch. No more than that. At night it was unthinkable. Unthinkable!
Alexandre (male): At night I was allowed to watch the news and just a little bit more.

Paula (female): But I didn’t have the television at home.

Interviewer: And when you had, how was it?

Paula (female): It was terrible! Addictive! The only thing I used to do was to watch television. This is authentic! The silliest programmes, that had no interest at all, I would still watch them. I used to spend hours watching television.

António (male): It was so much that now you don’t watch it…

P. Cristina (female): I also had that fascination and I always had television at home. I used to count the hours that I spent watch television and find out the highest average.

Interviewer: But why?

P. Cristina (female): Just for fun. To make the act of watching television more fun.

Interviewer: Did your parents control the hours you spent watching?

P. Cristina (female): They tried to keep it at the minimum level. But, at the same time, it was comfortable for them because I was there, closed at home, watching the entire world.

At least two participants in this discussion group seem to have been very heavy consumers of television when they were children. And the parents did not seem very worried. Paula (a 36 years old female teacher, who has a first degree and who lives alone) assumes that she watched just for the pleasure of watching. Now a days she is the participant less enthusiastic about television and only watches what really interests her, regardless the channel, like news, documentaries, scientific programmes, cultural programmes and movies. P. Cristina (a 32 years old female designer, who has a first degree and lives with her boyfriend) has a funny story, of watching as much as she could. Now she prefers SIC, one of the private channels. Her favourite programmes are series and comedies.

Although they are the youngest participants, the students who participated in one of the four group discussions still remember the black and white and the happening of having a colour television for the first time.

Extract 4 (University students)

Pedro (male): I remember when we had colour television for the first time. I still remember the face of the person who carried it into our house. And the programmes I watched… children’s programmes. I used to get up very early in the morning to watch them. It started at nine in the morning until eleven, eleven thirty. Now I don’t know how I managed to do it.

Filipa (female): I think that the first memories I have about television is “TV Rural” (a programme about agriculture).
Pedro (male): That’s because they broadcast it before the cartoons. When we were waiting for the cartoons we would watch “TV Rural” (…)

Filipa (female): I remember very well the television in black and white. And I remember the day when my uncle brought a colour television from Japan. It was something! I was talking about “TV Rural” but I think that the first memories I have about television is “Gabriela” (a Brazilian ‘telenovela’).

Patrícia (female): Yes. The oldest image I have is of soap operas.

Henrique (male): I don’t remember the oldest image I have from television, but I remember it being in black and white. I remember when it started to be coloured. About the programmes, it happened the same as Pedro mentioned. I did not wake up so early, but I also watched the cartoons.

The first memories of these participants are cartoons, Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ and “TV Rural”. Even if they were not produced for children, Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ constituted, especially in the seventies and in the eighties, a phenomenon of audiences. So, it is not surprising that both Filipa (a 25 years old female recently graduated in Journalism, who lives alone) and Patrícia (a 22 years old female university student, who lives with her parents and one brother) mention them as the programmes that first come in their memories. The boys, Pedro (a 24 years old male university student, who lives with his mother and two sisters) and Henrique (a 24 years old, male university student, who lives with his parents) say that their oldest memories of television are the cartoons.

The revolution of 1974

The revolution for democracy that took place in 25th of April of 1974 is one episode of the Portuguese History that also affected television. The group of the old people is the one that has the most knowledge to compare how it was before and after the revolution.

Extract 5 (Old people)

Interviewer: When the revolution took place was it visible a big change on television?

Aurora (female): Not only on television. It was in everything. We had our mouths shut for a long time and, suddenly, we found out that there were things to say and things to discuss. Later, it reached the opposite extreme. I think that now, finally, there is some balance.

Libânia (female): For me, personally, the revolution was a very big thing.

Aurora (female): It was the biggest thing that happened in our country.

Libânia (female): Especially for me, because before the revolution I never had
progressions in my career…

*Interviewer:* In terms of the television programming, were there any improvements?

*Many participants:* Yes.

*Aurora (female):* After the normal excesses of the beginning. There was a transition from the censorship to the libertinage, which is not the same as freedom. After this process, we reached the balance.

Libânia (the 77 year old, female chemical engineer, who does not describe the situation of her family) is someone who appreciates the changes in the television. And she has a reason for it. At her age, she says that she does not read newspapers or magazines and that she does not listen to the radio. On the contrary, she considers herself a heavy viewer of television, stating that she watches many hours per day. She does not specify her favourite programmes, preferring to explain that she watches everything that interests her.

In the group discussion conducted with the factory workers, there is a clear idea of the changes in the television after the revolution. Even if that change was not visible at the time, later they realised it.

*Extract 6 (Factory workers)*

*Álvaro (male):* Today it is obvious that the censorship is over; there is freedom of expression. Of course that this is a big difference.

*Interviewer:* Fernando also noticed the difference?

*Fernando (male):* Looking back, of course there was a difference, at the level of the freedom of expression. Television was controlled by the Government. We did not know what was going on.

Because they were not born yet or only babies, this question was not discussed in the group with the university students. And even in the group of the established people who are in their thirties, one man could not say what changed in television in 1974, since they were very young. Even though, the two eldest ones have something to say.

*Extract 7 (Established people)*

*Paula (female):* The difference was big…

*Alexandre (male):* In the news the difference was amazing. New people appeared.

*Paula (female):* New people and the way the presented the news was also different. But I don’t remember the revolution very well. People did not speak a lot about it.
Alexandre (a 37 years old, male teacher, who has a first degree and lives with his father and his sister) is the only one in this group who has memories of the days of the revolution and he is also the first one to mention something very important that happened in the television: the replacement of the professionals. Paula emphasises other essential aspect: the news.

The privatisation

In 1992 and 1993 the Portuguese television saw the arrival of two more channels: SIC and TVI, both private. Even if at the time the university students were young, they can identify some differences and consequences of the overture to the private/commercial market. One of them is the argument that, before, television was more predictable.

Extract 8 (University students)

Filipa (female): Before the private channels, there were certain days for certain programmes. We knew, for instance, that on Mondays, after the ‘telenovela’, they would broadcast a movie and that it would probably be good. Today I have lots of problems to find out when are they showing good movies. Even if I have the schedules nothing is for sure. And the good movies are only late at night.

Another consequence identified by the participants in this group is the equal access of the different political parties to the television stations. Also, the expected increasing of quality is something that they talk about.

Extract 9 (University students)

Patrícia (female): I remember that before the privatisation there was a comedy show on RTP that was suspended because it offended some sensible people. When SIC appeared, its news was the big sensation because everybody could speak openly and criticise.

Pedro (male): The opening of the television market to the private channels was excellent in terms of political equality. Until then the only people who had access to television – RTP – were the ones who were part of the Government.

Filipa (female): The general public also started to have access to the television.

Henrique (male): It the beginning it seemed that the quality would increase in the programmes. But it happened exactly the opposite. Perhaps it was our fault.

Filipa (female): We are not demanding and we do not claim anything.

Henrique (male): I thought that the quality would increase with the private channels.
There were moments in which it happened, but in general it was precisely the opposite. I think that there are programmes that are unacceptable.

In the group of the factory workers, there is a young man who has a different opinion in what concerns quality. Luís (a 21 years old, male factory worker, who studied for six years and lives with his parents) says that he watches around four hours of television. And he seems to be happy with the output of the channels.

**Extract 10 (Factory workers)**

**Luís (male):** There were many differences with the privatisation. The channels started to have more quality, more prestige and became more similar with the foreign channels.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that people in general have something to win with that?

**Luís (male):** Yes. Because they have more information.

**Rosa (female):** They have more options. They don’t have to watch always the same channel. They can change. There is more competition.

In the group of the old people, Aurora identifies the most significant change. It is about the national production.

**Extract 11 (Old people)**

**Aurora (female):** What I see is a big emphasis in the national production. In the beginning everything was French, English and Italian. Now it changed and they have employed many Portuguese artists.

For different reasons, including because António, one of the participants, works for a television station, the group of the established people in their thirties was the one where the discussion about the privatisation was more interesting. They identify alterations at specific levels, like the formats and the contents.

**Extract 12 (Established people)**

**Interviewer:** What differences did you notice with the privatisation?

**Paula (female):** There is a wider offer.

**Alexandre (male):** I think that quality diminished.

While Paula thinks that privatisation was responsible for a wider choice in the television
scenario, Rosa Carlos (a 33 years old female self-established beautician, who completed the secondary school and lives with her husband) has a different opinion.

**Extract 13 (Established people)**

**Rosa Carlos (female):** At that time (before the privatisation) we had more choice. Because we could choose between cultural contests and lower taste programmes. We could choose and now we can’t.

**Alexandre (male):** The channels are getting more and more like the others.

**Rosa Carlos (female):** Each day that passes I watch less and less television because the choice is… The programmes are all the same at the same hour.

**Alexandre (female):** It’s amazing. It’s right.

One of the possible explanations for different opinions about the quality and the choice achieved by the private channels of television can be found in the simple fact that the history of the these stations already has different phases.

**Extract 14 (Established people)**

**José António (male):** There were different phases. In the beginning the private channels brought many differences and innovations, many of them associated with the choreographies and decorations.

**Cristina (female):** You mean, scenarios.

**José António (male):** The scenarios and the concern about beauty things.

**António (male):** And a concern about the contents! There is a big change in the contents. The scenarios are only the wrappings. But, perhaps, the fundamental are the contents. With the private television (stations) the anonymous person appears. The normal citizen wins access to the television. Here I’m referring mainly the channel SIC because at that time TVI was nor relevant. The common citizen can go to “Praça Pública” (Public Square, a programme of information to expose the problems of common people). Before that, only the politicians and the personalities had access to television.

**José António (male):** There were the quiz shows that were open to the public.

**António (male):** But in the quiz shows the anonymous person was not playing his own role but he was playing the role of a clown.

Because he works for TVI, António (a 32 year old, male journalist, who has a first degree and lives with his wife) is obviously very aware of all the new ways of working of the private channels. But José António (a 34 year old, male product manager, who has a first degree and
lives with his girlfriend), who has nothing to do with the business, also identifies a very important change: the new look of the programmes.

Just like Filipa had done in the group of the students, also António reminds that the, with the privatisation, the normal citizen wins access to the television. And another aspect that he clarifies was also identified in the discussion with the students, by the voice of Pedro: the television is not controlled by the State anymore and the different political groups have more access to the television channels.

**Extract 15 (Established people)**

**António (male):** For the first time in Portugal, in what concerns mass information, the forces in power lose control over the information that is broadcast. The Government used to control RTP. For the first time, with SIC, there is information of the counter-power, something that the newspapers never achieved.

**Interviewer:** That is something important to notice, since almost everybody realises that change, that is created by the fact that there is an alternative.

**António (male):** And it has more power because it is counter-power.

**P. Cristina (female):** Ah, that’s the reason why my grandfather started to watch the news in all the different channels…

**Interviewer:** To see the different approaches to the same event.

**P. Cristina (female):** He used to tell me that but I never understood the logic.

**António (male):** But it is true. I mean, I think it is true.

**José António (male):** I would like to say something else, which is the information about other countries. I think that now we have much more information about the exterior. Before, the news was tendentious and now, after the private channels, I observe a higher level of overture.

**P. Cristina (female):** For instance, we can watch more new about Brazil.

**José António (male):** They have correspondents that we can see, live from any part of the world. Sometimes we see them; sometimes we only listen to them. But before we never saw correspondents.

In this extract there is something that I consider very interesting. Because of the discussion, one of the participants finally understood why her grandfather likes to watch the news in the different channels even if the events, apparently, were the same. And the differences between private and public channels were also brought into the discussion about programming.
Extract 16 (Established people)

Interviewer: Do you think that a Portuguese person who lived in a different country for five years could now identify each of the four channels when watching them?

Rosa Carlos (female): I don’t think so. Because at all the times, but especially on prime time, they all broadcast the same type on quiz shows.

António (male): But you have to be fair! You don’t think that Big Brother could appear on RTP1, do you?

Rosa Carlos (female): I have no idea.

António (male): I don’t think so.

José António (male): I already thought about it, but I don’t know.

RTP1 and RTP2: the public service of television

The existence of two public channels in Portugal – one generalist (RTP1) and the other associated with culture and minorities (RTP2) – is something that divides the participants of the group of established people: some of them have a solid opinion about it; others have doubts.

Extract 17 (Established people)

Interviewer: Do you agree with the existence of RTP1 and RTP2, as they exist today?

José António (male): I agree with the existence of RTP2.

P. Cristina (female): I agree.

Interviewer: With the existence of one public channel?

P. Cristina (female): I think that there should be one public station, with a channel for the masses and one for the elites.

António (male): At this moment I have doubts about it.

José António (male): As long as it wouldn’t be influenced by politics, which is what happens now.

Alexandre (male): It is manipulated.

António (male): To be public it is inevitable that it has to be manipulated.

Rosa Carlos (female): I think that in the past it was more.

Even if they seem to accept that there has to be an influence of the State in the public television, the participants in this discussion do not seem happy about it. Regarding the money that the country spends in this public service, again, there are different opinions.
**Extract 18 (Established people)**

**Interviewer:** Do you agree with the public money that is given to RTP?

**Rosa Carlos (female):** We don’t think too much about it. That’s the way things are…

**Interviewer:** You don’t question the money the State gives to RTP?!

**Rosa Carlos (female):** I don’t like it very much, but there’s not much that we can do.

**Alexandre (male):** I think that RTP should offer a better public service than the one that it is offering.

**Interviewer:** How do you feel, as a taxpayer, with the output you get from RTP?

**Alexandre (male):** I’m not very happy about it. The only things in RTP that satisfy me are some programmes in RTP2.

**José António (male):** RTP2 does not have much quality.

**Alexandre (male):** It depends. Besides everything, it still has goes on… It’s the channel I watch more.

In the discussion with the students, there is one participant who is very critical about the money given to RTP and also the way it is administrated. Henrique thinks that RTP should be subject of a budget control, as well as a fiscalization of the programmes. In theory, for him a public station should not get money from the State. Pedro has a different opinion: it’s the only way of being able to produce cultural programmes.

**Extract 19 (University students)**

**Interviewer:** Do you think that the State, because of the money it gives to RTP, should have the right to control its programming?

**Henrique (male):** I thing that a television channel should be auto-sufficient: it shouldn’t get money from the State.

**Interviewer:** Even if it is a public television station? How would it be financed: television tax, advertisement?

**Filipa (female):** Advertisement.

**Pedro (male):** Private television stations have more funny programmes and that’s why they get more advertisements. In order to produce more cultural programmes, public channels should be subsidised.

**Henrique (male):** In that case, I want to question something: who administrates the channel? Is it independent people or people connected to the Government?

(No answer from the others)

**Interviewer:** What do you think of paying a television station that you almost don’t watch?
Pedro (male): Public television was created with a specific objective. We pay so many things and we don’t know where the money is going. It’s not the money that goes to television that gives me headaches!

Henrique (male): There should be a commission that would supervise the public service of television.

Interviewer: The money or the programmes?

Henrique (male): Everything.

In the focus group discussion with the workers, the topic of public television was not centred on the money it costs but in the programmes it produces. This topic is something that motivated the participants most.

Extract 20 (Factory workers)

Interviewer: Do you think that RTP, because it is public service, should be different from the other channels?

Luís (male): I think that when one of the other channels is showing, for instance football, it (RTP) should not show the same. It should show something different. Because it is frequent to turn on the television and to realise that they are showing the same type of programmes in different channels at the same time. There is no need to do this.

Rosa (female): They compete too much…

Interviewer: Do you think that the public service should not compete so directly with the private stations?

Rosa (female): I think it shouldn’t.

Interviewer: So, in your opinion, what should be the role of RTP? If it shouldn’t compete with the private televisions, what should it give to the people?

Rosa (female): I don’t know!

Fernando (male): I think that they should, for instance, change the times of the schedules. If SIC has the news at eight in the evening, RTP should have the news, let’s say, at nine!

Interviewer: Changing the times so that the people who can’t watch the news at the time all the stations broadcast them could have another chance of watching them. Is this what you mean?

Fernando (male): Precisely.

What results from this extract is that – even if Rosa has no opinion of how RTP should be – the other two participants who gave their opinion think that the public station should be an alternative to the private channels in terms of programming. They argue that RTP should differentiate the programmes and the times of transmission. And the idea that is subjacent is
that more people would have more options. Even if there is a tendency to think that only educated people like to watch RTP2, the talk with the factory workers showed something different.

Extract 21 (Factory workers)

**Interviewer:** What is your opinion about RTP2? Do you like its programming?
**Luís (male):** It’s a channel different from the others. It’s more historical.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that it is important to exist a channel like RTP2?
**Luís (male):** Yes, I think it is important. Each channel should have its characteristics.

**Interviewer:** Do you watch RTP2?
**Luís (male):** Yes, I watch it.

**Interviewer:** What type of programmes do you watch in RTP2?
**Luís (male):** Historical programmes, like the one of José Hermano Saraiva (José Hermano Saraiva is an historian who has a programme about the Portuguese History, showing many different cities, villages and places of the country where something important happened at a certain time)

**Álvaro (male):** I like to watch “Signs of the time” (RTP2). I love to watch those programmes that show what is going on in the world and in certain countries.

Through the discussions I conducted, it is possible to find people in the different groups who like to watch RTP2. Old people are particularly interested in this type of channel, although they have some criticisms. For instance, Libânia criticises the fact that it shows good programmes late at night and Carlos Carlos (a 76 year old business manager, who went to university for two years and who lives with his wife) thinks that the news of RTP2 is not good enough.

Extract 22 (Old people)

**Libânia (female):** RTP2 is good but the good programmes are scheduled late at night.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that RTP2 has a specific public?
**Aurora (female):** Its audience is more selective. It is less entertainment and more culture.

**Carlos (male):** RTP2 is needed. Although their best is not the news.

**Alexandrina (female):** It’s all disgraces.

**Carlos (male):** There are other news bulletins (in other channels) that I prefer. They are more all embracing. But they (RTP2) are trustworthy in what they do. It’s the only decent channel.

*(Laughs)*
Aurora (female): But it’s not entertainment. Even the movies they show, they make us think a lot.

In the group of the established people, there was also a bit of a dialogue about the contents of the public television. The argument of the alternative was presented again.

Extract 23 (Established people)

António (male): What does RTP do? Just follows the private stations.

P. Cristina (female): That’s deceiving. It’s making a private television with the public money.

Alexandre (male): A public television, to fulfil a public service, should, for instance, broadcast a debate about education or health in primetime.

Interviewer: Without thinking about the shares of the viewers?

Alexandre (male): Yes. A public television, to fulfil a public service, can’t think about shares but about giving information to the public.

António (male): Education.

As in other topics, the group of the established people is very aware of how things happen in the television sector. They even mention some of the missions of the public service in the middle of the talk. And this was, obviously, another subject that was important in the discussion.

The three missions: to educate, to inform and to entertain

When the discussions went on to the missions traditionally associated with the public service of television - to educate, to inform and to entertain – the groups who had no doubts that these missions should also be followed by the private channels of television were the one of the old people and the one of the university students.

Extract 24 (Old people)

Interviewer: What do you think that are the most important missions of the television? To inform, to educate, to entertain…

Carlos (male): All of them: to inform, to educate and to entertain.

Others: That’s right. All of them.

Interviewer: That is the motto attributed to the public service. Do you think that it also should be applied to the private channels of television?
All of them: Yes!

The University students also agree that all the channels should have the same three missions.

**Extract 25 (University students)**

**Interviewer:** What do you consider more important on television: to inform, to educate or to entertain?

**Filipa (female):** At the moment, what they do is to entertain.

**Interviewer:** And do you think that the public service should have more obligations of informing and educating?

**Pedro (male):** It should not have more, but it has. All of them should have that obligation.

**Filipa (female):** I think the same, but since the public service is paid by the taxpayers…

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, is RTP fulfilling the missions of the public service?

**Henrique (male):** In the past it fulfilled more.

In the group of the Established people the discussion about the missions had different points of view. Not surprisingly, António, who works for a private television station, thinks that private televisions are not concerned with it. P. Cristina argues that the private channels should only be concerned with a commercial logic, while Alexandre suggests that those missions should be more associated with the public sector.

**Extract 26 (Established people)**

**Interviewer:** Among the three missions of the public service – to educate, to inform and to entertain – which ones do you think are more important?

**José António (male):** All of them.

**Alexandre (male):** I put them in order. First, to educate. I always put education first. I speak like this because I know the pupils I have. Their talks are about the quiz shows and “Big Brother”. They know everything about it. But about what is more interesting (on television) they don’t talk. Sometimes, the problem is that they show the good programmes very late at night.

**Interviewer:** Is it only the public television that has those missions or the privates also have them?

**Alexandre (male):** It’s different. If there is a public station…

**P. Cristina (female):** They (the privates) should only have a business ethic and nothing else!
Alexandre (male): I don’t agree. There should be another ethic.

P. Cristina (female): The privates should not be imposed to have social obligations.

Alexandre (male): Obligations, not. But they should have a moral. There should be ethics as well. If it is only the business ethic…

P. Cristina (female): Of course, like it happens in other sectors. For instance, there is public and private education, public and private health… (…)

José António (male): What is important is to identify what is educational.

António (male): The privates are not worried with that.

José António (male): But I think they should be.

António (male): No.

The group of the factory workers speak about the missions that the television might have in their owns perspectives. After a little bit of talk, it was possible to conclude that the information part is important for this people. But television is also needed to entertain and to function as a company.

Extract 27 (Factory workers)

Interviewer: Television is normally associated with three missions: to inform, to educate and to entertain. For what you are telling me, I assume that the information bit is very important for you…

All of the participants: Yes. (They all speak at the same time).

Fernando (male): I think that everybody should be informed of what is going on.

Rosa (female): One should be informed and television is important for that. I read few newspapers or not even one. I know the news through the television or the radio.

The importance of television

Although the majority of the other participants seemed to be interested in at least some of the contents of the television, the group that presented itself more dependent on it were the factory workers. They expressed a need for information, entertainment, and also culture.

Extract 28 (Factory workers)

Interviewer: What is the importance that you give to television in your life? Would you imagine your life without television?

Mónica (female): It would be difficult.

Rosa (female): I think I can’t (imagine my life without television). Sometimes I am in the
kitchen and if I don’t turn the television on, it seems that everything is dead.  

*Mónica (female)*: I was on holidays for one week, without television and it was difficult!  
One week without watching…

*Interviewer*: What did you miss more? Information, entertainment…

*Mónica (female)*: Yes. Because when I was at the room I had nothing to look at. I did not have news or something to entertain me. So, if it were everyday, it would be a little bit complicated.

What Mónica (a 21 years old factory worker, who studied for seven years and who lives with her mother) says is also in agreement with the answers she gave to the questionnaires. When asked to point her favourite channels or programmes she simply answered: “All”. According to what she says, she really depends on television: she says she watches four hours a day. Other participants of this group also state that they need television to be informed (see Extract 27) or to have access to culture. When Álvaro was talking about RTP2, the conversation was about specific programmes.

**Extract 29 (Factory workers)**

*Interviewer*: Do you like to watch documentaries?

*Álvaro (male)*: I like to know what is going on those regions and those countries.

*Interviewer*: If you didn’t have television, would you look for books to get that same information about those different cultures?

*Álvaro (male)*: It would be difficult. On television, it’s easier to get interested and easier to get. Going to look for books would be more difficult.

**The programming**

Regarding programming, some genres easily become the topic of the conversation, either because they are loved or hated. For instance, in the group of the Old people, Alexandrina is very enthusiastic about a daily programme that is broadcast on RTP1, in the mornings. It is an entertainment live programme, with interviews, music and cookery. It is presented by Manuel Luis Goucha.

**Extract 30 (Old people)**

*Alexandrina (female)*: Write it there: Alexandrina loves Goucha!

*Carlos (male)*: Those programmes… I can’t stand them.

*Alexandrina (female)*: I like them!
Libânia (female): They are very repetitive.

Carlos (male): And what about that programmes, that have big shares of audiences, where the contestants say something foolish and everybody claps? I spend the time during those programmes reading. I’m reading and, once in a while, I glance at the television. There’s only one type of those programmes that I watch often. Those like “Who wants to be a millionaire?” I watch them to see the level of ignorance of the people. And there’s only one thing that I can say: ignorance, in Portugal, is very well paid!

Alexandrina (female): I would be ashamed.

Aurora (female): At home, in the chair, we might know the right answer. But I find it very funny when the contestants say: “This name does not mean anything to me”. It has nothing to do with knowledge.

Talking about the programming on television was not an easy task in the group of the Factory workers. So, I thought that the easiest thing, among this topic, to rouse the discussion would have to be the quiz shows.

Extract 31 (Factory workers)

Interviewer: What do you think about the programming in general?
(Silence)

Interviewer: Would you change anything, if you could?
(Silence)

Interviewer: For instance, the quiz shows. Do you watch them?
Mónica (female): Sometimes.

Interviewer: What do you think about the quiz shows?
Álvaro (male): I only watch them rarely, but when I watch them I am disgusted. They are nonsense. The quiz shows for adults look like quiz shows for kids.

Mónica (female): They are imitating each other. It’s all the same.

Álvaro (male): They are imitating each other to see who gets more of the shares. (…) They even show programmes with no interest at all just to get shares.

Interviewer: Which are those programmes?
Álvaro (male): Those quiz shows that has no interest. They are not educative.

Interviewer: But many people watch them…

Fernando (male): I don’t pay much attention to them and I don’t agree with their existence that much. But when we observe, when they are on television, most of the people stop and look at them.
Once again, there is something in this group that goes against conventional expectations. Factory workers could be associated with the social classes that watch popular quiz shows but this extract presents something in the opposite direction. One of the reasons could be because these people know that popular quiz-shows are associated with low level of culture and they do not want to be put in this category.

Filipa, who participated in the group of the University students, only brings a different genre of programme to discussion. She talks about the Portuguese sit-coms and two other students participate in the conversation. Sofia (a 21 year old university student of Psychology, who lives with her parents) introduces an important theme: the educational component of some entertainment programmes.

Extract 32 (University students)

Filipa (female): The Portuguese sit-coms they show on television are clownishness. The dialogues are bad stuff. I don’t find them funny at all. The only interesting ones are the ones that SIC produce.

Henrique (male): But some of the national series are good. Like “General Practitioner”.

Filipa (female): I only watched it once.

Sofia (female): It had an educational component.

Having national or foreign programmes on Portuguese television is something that the participants in the focus groups discussions found significant.

Extract 33 (University students)

Interviewer: What do you think about the quantity of the Portuguese programmes?

Pedro (male): I think there should be more programmes in Portuguese language.

Patrícia (female): Nowadays it’s nice and fashionable to listen to Portuguese music and to watch Portuguese programmes. Before, our artists were nobody and nowadays they are VIPs. If Portuguese programmes are good, I have nothing to oppose. But if American’s are better, they are better! We can’t say that just because they are Portuguese they are good!

Henrique (male): Being better or worse, the truth is that now we have more national programmes. There is an investment on national programmes.

Filipa (female): SIC was the master in terms of the production of good national movies.
The participants in the group of the Old people also do not seem very interested in having national programmes just because they are national. Besides, it is presented as an argument in favour of foreign programmes, which is not linked with the quality.

**Extract 34 (Old people)**

**Interviewer:** What about the programmes in foreign languages? Do you think that we should have less of them and more in Portuguese?

**Alexandrina (female):** Foreign languages are useful.

**Aurora (female):** Everything but dubbed programmes. They are saying something and the mouth goes in the opposite direction.

**Libânia (female):** It’s unpleasant.

The conversation about programming in the group of the Established people went in a different direction. The talk was about the commercial component of the stations and the way they market their products.

**Extract 35 (Established people)**

**Interviewer:** Do you think that television channels give to the people what they want to see?

**António (male):** Television gives to the people what they want to watch. There’s no discussion about that. The channels conceive a product, select a sample of the target group and show them the experimental programme. If those people like it, they will produce programme number two, and three, and four. But pay attention: it is not the producers educating the people. The process is the opposite: the channels give the people what they want to watch.

**Alexandre (male):** I choose what I want to see. The problem is with different age groups…

Alexandre is obviously worried about the children. Knowing them well, he knows that they consume everything that has good marketing campaigns. And José António is worried with having a balance on television programming.

**Extract 36 (Established people)**

**José António (male):** I think that televisions should have x hours of educative programmes, x hours of informative programmes, x hours of sports programmes. This should be applied to all the channels.
António (male): It can’t be like that.

Rosa Carlos (female): It can’t because some of them are private companies. There is no chance of imposing them those rules.

Interviewer: There are rules defined in the contracts of concession… (…)

José António (male): Those would be the rules. Respecting the rules and the defined times, the channels could do whatever they wanted, doing their best. After that, they could win market.

Even if José António’s arguments were not seen as something easy to put in practice, he mentioned something that was also a concern to the group of the factory workers: sports. Cristina (a 35 years old factory worker, who studied for five years and who lives with her husband a little daughter) was an athlete and, because of this special interest, she shows her preferences about different types of sports on television.

Extract 37 (Factory workers)

Interviewer: What other types of programmes do you like to watch on television?

Cristina (female): There is something that is real: on television they show a lot of news about football and just a bit of other news. Sometimes, there is interesting news that they show in seconds and then they broadcast football news for one hour.

Interviewer: Don’t you like football?

Cristina (female): I like it, but…

Fernando (male): I like football. (…)

Cristina (female): I like athletics a lot, but it is something that they rarely show. Rarely!

Interviewer: Do you think that RTP, because it is a public service, should show more different types of sports?

Cristina (female): Of course! Of course! They show just a little bit of athletics and lots of football. We have to wait for the Olympics to have a month of athletics on television. And that’s only because in those periods there is no football. If there was football, they wouldn’t show athletics.

One other criticism that the participants in the discussion of the factory workers have is about the lack of innovation in the schedules. Luís, for instance, suggests that the programmes should change more often.
Extract 38 (Factory workers)

Luís (male): I think that the programmes should be on television for shorter period of time. They shouldn’t broadcast the same programmes for years and years. It’s tiring to watch the same for years and years.

Interviewer: Do you think that when they change the schedules according to the seasons they should also change all the programmes?

Luís (male): Yes, yes!

Interviewer: Can you mention examples of those tiring programmes?

Luís (male): “Big Show SIC” (Popular music programme, very lively, presented by a popular artist, with dancers and a monkey on stage). They are doing the same for five years. It’s tiring and people are giving up of watching it. It’s just a way of filling the time they have of emission. (...)

Rosa (female): They also show lots of ‘telenovelas’. Now they even have them on Saturdays. Before it wasn’t like this. Now, it’s too much.

Advertisements

In all the groups there is the idea that the limits defined by law about the number of minutes per hour that the television channels are authorised to broadcast advertisements are not respected. And the participants in the discussions, even if one of them recognises that some ads are good, do not like the amount of time that they take on television. They also do not like the advertisements, themselves, because they do not believe in their messages. So, when I asked the Old people about this topic, they all showed expressions of displeasure.

Extract 39 (Old people)

Interviewer: What do you think about the advertisements?

Aurora (female): Boredom.

Libânia (female): Unbearable.

Alexandrina (female): And a fabrication! When they say: “Skip washes more white”. It’s a lie! It doesn’t wash whiter.

Emília (female): As I’m not watching all the time, one of these days I heard some classical music coming from the television and I went there to see what was it. It was an advert to a car! (...)

Carlos (male): I would be happy to pay the television tax just to have a television without advertisements.
Henrique, who participated in the discussion of the group of the University students, thinks that the legislation about the limits are not being respected because the penalties are not big enough, but it is in the middle of the movies that advertisements more irritate the viewers, or at least the ones who participated in these discussions.

Extract 40 (University students)
Henrique (male): The limits they have for the advertisement are not respected.
Interviewer: Do you think that someone should control it and make those limits to be respected?
Henrique (male): Yes. (…) The limits should be respected but there are no retaliations for those who do not do it… (…)
Filipa (female): To watch a movie on television it takes around three hours just because the disgusting advertisements!

One of the participants in the discussion of the group of the Factory workers, Álvaro, already lost his patience.

Extract 41 (Factory workers)
Álvaro (male): I don’t watch movies precisely because of that. They show a little bit of movies and then 15 minutes of advertisement. I always give up of watching television. We watch more advertisements than movies, that’s how it is! I hate to watches movies, precisely because of advertisement.

Minorities

The objective of the discussion of this topic was to find out the opinion of the participants about the cultural, religious and age minorities. The most significant answers appeared in the group of Old people and in the group of the University students. In both groups it is possible to find opposite opinions: yes, there are programmes for everybody; no, there aren’t programmes for everybody.

Extract 42 (Old people)
Interviewer: Do you think that there are programmes for everybody?
Carlos (male): I think that mediocrity is well served!
Aurora (female): With the zapping, there’s always something to watch. While we are
zapping, a bad programmes finishes and a less bad one begins.

The group of the old people can not only be considered a minority because of the age of the participants, but also a minority that enjoys what is normally labelled as ‘high culture’. And it is in this category that they focus, expressing the idea that they are not served by television.

**Extract 43 (Old people)**

*Aurora (female)*: I don’t know if I’ve been distracted, but at this moment I feel the absence of programmes with debates and cultural information, like “Acontece” (cultural magazine scheduled daily on RTP2), but a little bit longer. I would like it to take a longer time and to be deeper in the analysis.

*Carlos (male)*: It’s brief!

*Alexandrina (female)*: Opera and ballet are missing…

*Emília (female)*: And theatre.

**Interviewer:** Does that mean that some minorities, the ones that like cultural programmes, are not served by television?

**Many participants:** Yes.

Although the participants in the group of the old people do not mention their age group necessities, the University students do. In fact, the first concern they show with minorities is the concern with old people. Then, they move to cultural and religious minorities, but they do not seem to achieve a common opinion.

**Extract 44 (University students)**

**Interviewer:** Do you think that there are programmes for everybody? The minorities also have programmes that interest them?

*Filipa (female)*: Old people don’t have programmes for them

*Patricia (female)*: Old people like to watch soap operas!

*Filipa (female)*: But soap operas are not produced for old people.

*Henrique (male)*: I don’t agree. I think that there are programmes for everybody. But not in the proportion there should be.

*Filipa (female)*: I was comparing Portugal with the USA, where they have programmes and channels for the minorities.

*Patricia (female)*: That contributes to a horrible segregation of cultures.

*Filipa (female)*: I don’t think so. Because those minorities have specific problems that they would like to see discussed on television and that aren’t on television.
Pedro (male): I think that when a person is outside his home place, television can be very important. It’s not social exclusion; it’s contributing to make them know their new environment better.

Filipa (female): For instance, in the USA there is a Portuguese channel of television and that does not contribute to racism.

Interviewer: Do you think that Portuguese television should be producing programmes for the cultural minorities who live here?

Filipa (female): Why not? There are lots of Africans, Russians and even the gypsies. About the religious minorities, I don’t know…

Henrique (male): Why not? The basic rules of Portugal do not assume only one religion.

Pedro (male): I think that no religion should be on television. As there are too many, none of them should have space on television. This is my opinion.

So, if the minorities do not have what they want on television, what can they do? Rosa Carlos has the answer.

Extract 45 (Established people)

Rosa Carlos (female): The minorities entertain themselves with other things.

Paula (female): They (the television policy-makers) have no interest for the minorities; their interest is with the majorities.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say that minorities look for something else?

Rosa Carlos (female): For instance, I look for thematic channels or I read a book. Perhaps I wouldn’t do that if they were showing a good programme or a good movie.

Concerns with children: scenes of violence and sex

There is something that creates consensus among the participants of the different groups. They all agree that the television stations have no concern for children.

Extract 46 (Established people)

António (male): The idea I have is that they don’t have concerns with children at all. They don’t give a shit to kids. They just want to have lots of them watching. If it is educative or not… They want the kids to watch to get more advertisements.

Old people also agree that the broadcasters do not show any special concern with children. But one of the participants, Aurora, calls the attention for some programmes for children that
are produced with educative orientations. “Jardim da Celeste”, a Portuguese format, is a good example of the effort that RTP2 makes in order to have quality programmes for children.

Extract 47 (Old people)

Interviewer: Do you think that the television channels have concerns with children?

Many participants at the same time: No. Not at all!

Carlos (male): There are some programmes for children, but…

Aurora (female): They have some programmes, for instance “Jardim da Celeste”. Pedagogically I can’t evaluate because it’s not my area, but I think that it is a programme with interest. And I think that there were other valid efforts.

Not surprisingly, in the group of the Old people there is the common idea that there is too much violence and sex on television.

Extract 48 (Old people)

Interviewer: What do you have to say about the scenes of violence and sex on television?

All: There’s too much.

Alexandrina (female): It’s not only on television.

Carlos (male): I’m not exactly a puritan, but it gets to be disgusting.

Emilia (female): They put it in front of our eyes, and we don’t care anymore…

Just like Alexandrina emphasises, it is not only on television that we can see too much violence. Paula, in the group of the established people, develops this theory.

Extract 49 (Established people)

Paula (female): I agree when you say that television is too aggressive. But there’s also Internet, when we can see everything we want, at the time we want, the way we want… We pass by the newsstand and we see those amazing front pages of the magazines…

António (male): The big teats…

Paula (female): So, why shouldn’t it be on television as well? I question myself about this. Perhaps television should have a special concern about this because it still reaches more people.

In the group of the University students the opinions also seem to be more tolerant in what concerns sex and violence on television. Pedro, for instance, shows more concern about the
exploration of the human suffering. But another participant, Henrique, also introduces the idea that there should be rules concerning scenes of violence.

**Extract 50 (University students)**

**Interviewer:** What do you think about explicit sex on television?

**Pedro (male):** There should be space for everything. Explicit sex doesn’t shock me. It shocks me more to see reportage with a mother who just lost her child. This is what I consider violence in television and it should stop.

**Patrícia (female):** For instance, the violence of Dragon Ball. I normally spend some time with children and they repeat those scenes of violence. There should be limits for the exhibition of those scenes. It’s on television all the time.

**Henrique (male):** I’m not receptive to violence at all. But children learn through what they see and that’s what they are going to do. I think that that should be specific times for specific programmes. I’m not arguing if I like it and another person doesn’t. I agree with the existence of certain series, with lots of violence, but at certain hours, late at night, around eleven or mid-night. Or in codified channels. Or having a system that would allow parents to block the television set so that children couldn’t watch it.

**Filipa (female):** What about the sexual education that there is in the (Brazilian)’telenovelas’? One of these days, a friend of mine, who has children, was telling me that her oldest one, who is six years old, said to a girl: “I want to have sex with you”.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that it is because of television?

**Filipa (female):** It’s the only explanation!

Among the four groups, only in the one of the factory workers there were participants with young kids. Here, the opinions are much more centred on the personal experience. In the end, what rests is the feeling that there is nothing parents can do about it. At least, this is the opinion of Rosa.

**Extract 51 (Factory workers)**

**Interviewer:** Those of you who have children, what do you think about the way they consume television?

**Rosa (female):** My oldest daughter loves to watch cartoons. She can spend the whole mornings of Saturday and Sunday attached to television.

**Interviewer:** And what do you think about that? Is it bad?

**Rosa (female):** It shouldn’t be very good for her sight. She is always so close to the television. But I’m not forbidding her to watch the programmes she likes... Sometimes,
when the cartoons are too violent, I’m not very happy about it. But she likes them! What can I do?

**War for audiences and counter-programming**

The television channels, especially the two private ones (SIC and TVI) started a very aggressive competition in the last months (starting in September 2000). The shares completely changed when TVI started to broadcast ‘Big Brother’. Until then, it was a channel that nobody would pay attention to, including the public channel. Suddenly, everything changed. Because the ‘enemy’ became stronger, the war became harder to win. This made SIC rethink its strategy and fight on a daily basis, changing the schedules when it was needed. TVI also does the same. For instance, to get more viewers, one channel started to present the news two minutes before the time, in the other day the other channel started three minutes before the time, and so on. In general, the participants in the discussion do not like this behaviour. But António has an explanation.

*Extract 52 (Established people)*

**Interviewer:** Don’t you think that the viewer is disrespected when he/she is waiting for a programme that is on the schedule and they the channel changes the programming just because of what the other channel is showing?

**Rosa Carlos (female):** It’s manipulating the people!

**António (male):** No, it isn’t. I don’t think so.

**Rosa Carlos (female):** I think it is.

**António (male):** You are asking if it is disrespectful. There is an argument that is infallible… How does the counter-programming works? To compete with other channel you have to give to the people what they want to see. For instance, SIC is worried with ‘Big Brother’ (on TVI) so, they extend the duration of the ‘telenovelas’ (which are very popular) as long as ‘Big Brother’ is on air. That works because people want to watch the ‘telenovela’.

**Rosa Carlos (female):** Right.

**António (male):** So, people should only be happy about it.

**Paula (female):** But that shows a big lack of creativity of the channel.

This phenomenon happens, sometimes, without the viewers realising what is going on. In the group of old people, Alexandrina explains that she didn’t understand why, at certain days, the soap opera was going on four hours and not for the normal duration of one episode.
Extract 53 (old people)

Alexandrina (female): There is a ‘telenovela’ on SIC that I really like to watch. It used to start at nine in the evening but on Tuesdays it was going on until mid-night. With no breaks. We didn’t even have time to go to the toilet. Then someone told me that it was because on Tuesdays TVI had ‘Big Brother’.

Libânia (female): It’s a way a counterbalancing. It’s the war of audiences.

The University students are very critical about the war for audiences. The doubt lies on the future. Will people get tired?

Extract 54 (University students)

Interviewer: How do you see the war of audiences?

Pedro (male): It’s ridiculous.

Sofia (female): In the news on one channel they say some studies saying they are the leaders of the audiences and in the news of the other channel they say that they are the ones who are the leaders.

Filipa (female): It will come the time when they will have no more options, the time when everything was tried already. People wouldn’t be surprised because they saw everything and they will give up on watching television.

Henrique (male): I think it will still take some time.

The future

In the discussion about the future of television, the cable television and the wider options it opens are mentioned by many of the participants. Henrique, in the group of the University students, is one of them.

Extract 55 (University students)

Henrique (male): I think that people will watch more and more cable television. Not a specific thematic channel but many of them. And we can’t forget the interactive television. (…) At the present moment, television only has one direction: from them to us. I think that in the future it will have two ways. That’s how I see the future.

The problem with the cable television is that not everybody has the money to pay for it. For some social classes, cable television it is not still in the close future.
Extract 56 (Factory workers)
Álvaro (male): People can’t afford those channels. I speak for myself. If it was cheaper, I would like to have. But like this… It’s a lot of money and it is not worthy.

In the group of the established people there is the idea that in the future will have more choice. The development might have some risks but, for Paula, there is the certainty that the books will keep their place.

Extract 57 (Established people)
Alexandre (male): In the future we will choose what we want to see.
José António (male): In television it is like in the new technologies. The development drags everybody. What concerns me is that television is becoming the replacement of the cinema and the books.
Paula (female): In the future everything will be on the screen. But then I’ll pick up my little book…

The older people who participate in the discussion are divided between the opinion that nothing will change and the opinion that it is changing already.

Extract 58 (Old people)
Interviewer: How will you use the television in the future?
Alexandrina (female): Nothing will change!
Interviewer: Not even with the appearance of new types of programmes?
Aurora (female): I think that it’s changing already. For instance, my television doesn’t have “teletexto” (information about the lottery, pharmacies, results of football matches, weather and so on) but my sister has it. Sometimes, when I need to know what pharmacies are open after working hours, I call her and she checks on television. I think that this is a change already. It’s small but it the beginning of the interactivity. And there have been some quiz shows for children, which are interactive as well (computer games on television programmes).
Interviewer: Do you think that the access to cable television, digital television and new technologies will be generalised?
Emília (female): I think it will. First, people resist to the innovation but, then, they accept it.
2.6 Conclusions

Although some of the participants showed some resistance to television in the beginning, then they realised the positive aspects that it can give, like access to culture and entertainment. Largely due to the differences in the ages and social classes of the participants, it is not surprising that their formative experiences of television should vary greatly: some had the television since they were born; others, for a long time, had to go somewhere else to watch; others did not have because they did not want. For some of them, television was a factor of socialisation. For others, as children, it was an excitement. In all the cases, nobody seems to have been indifferent to television. One participant even says that she was addicted to television. Curiously enough, these days she is the one who watches the least television, now a days, among all the participants in these discussions.

The first schedules of the Portuguese television were based on national products. So, it is not surprising that many of the first memories of television that the participants have are about programmes of interviews, live music, news bulletins or even a programme about agriculture. Besides that, the youngest ones remember many different cartoons and series for young people. Although they are in their twenties, some of the university students still remember the black and white transmissions.

With the revolution for democracy, in 1974, the Portuguese television also won freedom. At least, this is the opinion of the participants in the group of the old people, of the factory workers, and of the established people. The main differences they noticed have to do with the end of the censorship and the news faces that arrived on the screen.

The discussion about the privatisation was one of the most interesting. Not only because some of the participants showed a special interest and knowledge, but also because the debates showed different perspectives. For example, one of the members of the factory workers thought that the privatisation brought more quality to the television programming while one member of the group of established people and one member of the group of University students thought precisely the opposite. But the contradictions also occurred in the same group, which proves that people who something in common (age or profession) do not always think the same way. One of these situations occurred in the group of the established people: one of the women says the privatisation brought more choice and one other says that it brought more of the same. The University students pointed a negative aspect: before the privatisation television was more predictable, they argue. But, in general, the participants identified more positive than negative aspects: equal access to television by political parties; access to television by the general citizens; more national production; better scenarios; more correspondents spread around the world.
Regarding the public service, there are different opinions, not only when comparing the different groups but also inside each group. For instance, in the group of the established people, two participants agree with the existence of RTP, one would prefer to have a public channel that would not be controlled by the Government, while another one has doubts about the existence of a public channel. About the money that it is given to the public channel, some of them do not even question but there is also someone who does not like the idea that his money is being given to a television that offers him very little. In the group of the University students, one of them was not worried with the public money that is being canalised to the public television, another one thinks that it should be controlled, while another one thinks that a public television should get no public money and find money by other means, like advertisement. The factory workers are more concerned with what they see in the public television. Contrary to what one might think, some of the participants in the group of the factory workers like to watch RTP2, even if they do not mention this preference in the questionnaires. But the truth is that they identify two programmes very characteristic of the channel. And they think that the RTP should be a real alternative to the private channels, in terms of programmes and times. The established people share this opinion about the public channel.

When it come to discussing the missions of the public service – to educate, to inform and to entertain –, the participants in the group of the old people and the participants in the group of the University students think that the private channels should have the same concerns. In the group of the established people there is more than one participant saying that private channels should not be obliged to have those concerns, based on the fact that they have a commercial logic.

In general, all the participants are very critical idea of the programming of the Portuguese television. They mention an excess of ‘telenovelas’, they criticise what they call the low level of the quiz-shows, they think that some programmes are on air for too long (this applies to programmes who take three hours of broadcasting time in the same day, and to programmes that pass through one schedule to the other, staying on exhibition for years), they would like to see more documentaries and cultural programmes on television. The majority of the participants show a preference about the national programmes, but one of the participants in the University students group makes the difference: she wants good programmes, no matters the origin. So, if an American programme is better than a Portuguese programme, she prefers the American.

The advertisement is probably the topic that creates the most consensuses. The participants realise that the limits established by law are not fulfilled. They say that it is too much, and some of them already gave up of watching movie on television because of the time the breaks
take.
The participants are divided over concerns about minorities. Some of them think that there are programmes for everybody, but some others do not think the same. In this case, there is a participant in the group of the established people who suggests that anyone who is not served with terrestrial television channels can look for alternatives, for instance, cable television or simply a book. There is also the opinion, presented by one of the participants in the University students group, that there are programmes for everybody but not in the right proportion. As for the war for audiences, the majority of the participants feel that the television channels are using the viewers and even manipulating them.

All the participants agree that television stations have no concerns with the children, even if some recognise that there are some attempts, especially on public television, to produce quality programmes for the younger viewers. Regarding the contents of sex and violence, the participants were divided. For instance, in the group of the old people they say that it is too much. In the group of the established people there is the opinion that it is just a reflection of what happens in society. About the future, the participants of the factory workers discussion give the idea that nothing much will change in their utilisation of the television. But in the other groups many identify a quick move to the new possibilities given by television, like a wider access to cable television and to interactive television.
Chapter 6: The era of the reality-shows

Introduction

The last months of the year 2000 may well have marked a turning point in the history of the Portuguese television. The Portuguese viewers were introduced to ‘Big Brother’, a format that had been experimented in other European countries. A group of people who had never seen each other before, normally young, are put in a house that offers them no privacy: as they are filmed 24 hours a day for three months. Every two weeks one of the participants is sent away, after the nominations made by the participants and the votes of the viewers. The participant who is left alone in the house is the winner. Meanwhile, the viewers can see what happens in the house, creating preferences and hates.

The first edition of the programme was broadcast on TVI, which, for a private television station was under performing in the so-called ‘ratings war’. This episode of the history of the Portuguese television was not expected so soon but it transformed the broadcasting scenario. Perhaps because they were drawn to the novelty of the programme’s format, newspapers and magazines discussed it extensively.

The panorama of the Portuguese television changed. SIC’s dominant lead in the ratings was no longer assured. Feeling the impact of ‘Big Brother’ more than ever, the Public station, RTP, also lost audiences. The phenomenon of the ‘Big Brother’ had other consequences. First of all, it opened the way to the reality shows, in many different formats. Second, the boundary between programming and information was broken, in the moment that the participants in the programme started to be interviewed in the news bulletins. Third, it sparked a wave of national controversy, to the point where it was debated in the Portuguese Parliament. Finally, it was the reason for changes at the highest levels of broadcasting: the man responsible for SIC’s success, Emídio Rangel, was removed from his posts of Director of Information and Director of Programming, after refusing ‘Big Brother’. Ironically in September 2001 he was invited to be in charge of RTP, the public station that he used to criticise. He accepted, and took many of his former colleagues at SIC with him from the days when it was the ratings leader. The future will tell if he will be successful in changing again the preferences of the Portuguese audiences. In April 2002 the Government changed and he was “invited” to leave the public station.

This new reality deserves, in my perspective, a new analysis. Based on a comparison of what was happening in November of 1999 and a year later.
The recent developments on Portuguese television

When I interviewed the Portuguese television critics in Summer 2000, ‘Big Brother’ was a format only known through the experience of the other countries. For instance, in June 2000 a Spanish researcher said, in a conference in Portugal, that Portuguese people should be prepared to the visit of a hurricane called ‘Big Brother’ that would shake the country (in Público, 2 June 2000). In Spain, the programme suddenly made the channel Telecinco the market leader. Because of it’s strong impact in some other European countries, the programme was expected with a mix of curiosity and fear. Miguel Gaspar, one of the critics of television that I interviewed, explained his perspective of what was about to happen.

“The problem is that we are witnessing a cultural transformation of the society. ‘Big Brother’ will introduce a cultural transformation. Now we will see people like us. Now, more than ever, people like you and me will want to participate in a quiz show to be known. This shocks me because the old trio – to educate, to inform and to entertain – has no longer connections with the actual television. It became the mirror of normal people and stopped to be a transmission of something from one level to the other. It is a big transformation and, in this sense, it is introducing big changes. (…) All these reality-shows give the impression that a person lives in a big city, too big to allow people to know each other. Suddenly, we meet anonymous people that become celebrities in those programmes. But, once again, there is something to be said: all this displeases me; I would rather have a television that would be a vehicle of information, that would give to the viewers more knowledge about the world. But the truth is that choices of the viewers are not going in that direction. The social problems exist and are not created by the television. We cannot look at the television as the main one to blame. Television reflects what exists in society”

(Miguel Gaspar)

This was how ‘Big Brother’ was expected. Before it was announced, SIC was clearly the leader of the audiences. The public television, RTP, seemed to be lacking in direction and identity. Even though, the president of RTP in May 2000, João Carlos Silva, was sure that this channel was “not condemned to disgrace”. He admitted that the station had problems but he also thought that it had everything it was needed to be a “role model company” (in Público, 13 May 2000). Meanwhile, TVI was preparing its future. In a public event, it presented one more series of national productions, explaining that it was giving priority to this genre of programmes (in Público, 15 May 2000).

The war for audience ratings had one of its first main episodes in May 2000. But, by this date, the competition was between SIC and RTP. TVI was still in the limbo. Because RTP had the
rights to transmit a very important football match, SIC decided to broadcast a popular Brazilian ‘telenovela’ throughout the duration of the match. It was one of the first clear examples of counter-programming. SIC would never broadcast the ‘telenovela’ for so long if RTP hadn’t been showing the game.

In the same month the High Authority for the Mass Media responded by recommending that the people in charge of the public stations should fulfil the missions of the public service, “without dividing and creating hierarchies among the public accordingly to supposed levels of demand” (in Público, 17 May 2000).

In July 2000, TVI announced that it is going to present not only ‘Big Brother’ but also ‘Survivor’, another reality-show. Although come September, only ‘Big Brother’ was broadcast (in Público, 22 July 2000). One of the first reactions came from Miguel Sousa Tavares, a famous opinion-maker, journalist and lawyer. For him, the programme had some advantages. He says that “‘Big Brother’ had one advantage that cannot be ignored as it was the first serious threat to SIC’s policy-making”, which was characterised, in his opinion, by having no rules. “This might only be a fright, but it is a deserved fright and can even be prophylactic. It is enough to observe how SIC reacted to the threat – not by giving alternative and quality, but also through two hours of ‘telenovelas’ from Globo and the reposition of that disloyal and illegal thing called Dot (a mechanism to make people only watch that channel in order to win prizes) – to understand the advantages of this episode” (in Público, 8 September 2000).

The director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz, explained what happened in an interview he gave to a magazine: “Until few months ago, SIC and RTP each had an equal share of audiences, forgetting that there was another channel that, at any moment, could be active. This happened and caught them a little bit unprepared, a fact that now is making them act a foolish” (in Visão, 14 September 2000).

In October 2000, something that never happened in the other countries happened in the Portuguese ‘Big Brother’: one of the male participants kicked one of the female participants. This scene of violence in ‘the house’ took place in the same day that the President of the Portuguese Republic, Jorge Sampaio, announced his new candidature to the place. TVI considered the kickboxing incident was the most important news of the day as it opened its main news bulletin with this episode of the ‘Big Brother’. But the images were only shown in the end of the bulletin, to make sure that the viewers would be watching the channel. After this episode TVI had a serious chance of beating SIC in the ratings war. On Tuesdays, the day when the participants are expelled from the house, TVI was closer to SIC than ever. TVI had around 34 per cent of the share and SIC oscillated between 36 and 39 per cent. On the 19th of October 2000, for the first time TVI beats SIC in terms of audience ratings. On that
day, TVI had 40.7 per cent, SIC had 36.7 per cent, RTP1 had 17.2 per cent and RTP2 had 5.1 per cent. The same feat only happened once in five years, with a football match. Meanwhile, in SIC, nobody talked about what was happening (in Público, 21 October 2000).

The opinion-makers went on saying what they though about the phenomenon of the ‘Big Brother’. José Manuel Fernandes, director of Público, said that the audiences just loved the scenes of sex and violence that happened in ‘the house’. Only a “very small minority were more offended than ever.” (In Público, 21 October 2000). According to José Manuel Fernandes, the participants in ‘Big Brother’, young people who live together with games of seduction and betrayal, and who use bad language, are just like all the other young people of the country. So, the programme is not only a weapon in the war for audiences, but it also reflects the Portuguese society.

The only solution that SIC had was, as their policy-makers admit (see next topic of this chapter), to use the same type of weapons, entering in the war of the reality-shows. Competition leads to more of the same. So, the station bought the rights to and broadcast ‘Chained’, another reality show. But it was not so successful as ‘Big Brother’, which was already in its second series. As the programme ‘Chained’ was not what SIC expected in terms of audiences, this channel decided to produce another reality television based programme: ‘The TV Bar’. The advantaged of this programme was that people could see the participants, because they were working in a bar opened to the public and created just for the purpose of the programme.

About all this new phase of Portuguese television, José Alberto Lemos, a journalist from Público, wrote an opinion article arguing that “with the beginning of ‘Big Brother’, TVI inaugurated one era of absolute promiscuity between information and news”. He mentions the fact that the stars of ‘Big Brother’ won the right to seat in the TVI’s news room, in the place where the recognised commentators used to tell the viewers their opinions about the actuality and considers this a “total shamelessness”. Even more, because of this war of audiences, SIC also changed its strategy and, sometimes, even sacrificed the news in favour of the reality-shows. Lemos argued that “SIC is more and more chained to the ‘telenovelas’ and to the populism ‘voyeurist’” (in Público, 24 January 2001).

Days later, the same journalist, José Alberto Lemos, said that in the scheduling of SIC, against what happened in the past, there was not one only space of information, reflection, debate, interview, or reportage, besides the two news bulletins that survived. He also says “among 20 hours of daily emission, only two are dedicated to the news. And why? Because the war of audiences led to that. And what is the justification for this war for audiences? Money, of course, money and nothing else.” (In Público, 1 February 2001).

In the middle of all the polemic that was surrounding reality-shows, and explaining that
personally he does not like them, the president of the High Authority for the Mass Media at the time, Gonçalves Pereira, said “there are good programmes and the stations did one attempt in that way”. But, “if the stations also feel the need to have those programmes (reality-shows) to call for audiences… I do not know; they are the policy-makers. But it is needed that those programmes will not deny dignity to the human beings” (in Briefing, 20 February 2001).

In March 2001, the director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz gave an interview to the magazine Nova Gente where he said that he “never covered up the importance that ‘Big Brother’ has for TVI”. But he underlines that this programme is not the only important thing on the channel. For him, TVI is based on three pillars: information, production of fiction and entertainment. And “ ‘Big Brother’ is the maximum exponent of the entertainment, just like the ‘telenovelas’ are the exponent of our production of fiction” (in Nova Gente, 7 March 2001).

‘Big Brother’ continued to divide press opinion months after first appearing. Richard Zimler, a teacher of journalism, was of the opinion that with regards to global programming, “the quality is frankly very low, with the exception of RTP2, which still has some programmes that serve the minority that wants to have a serious television” (in Diário de Notícias, 4 March 2001).

The Association of the Viewers (that later changed its name to the Association of the Consumers of the Media) considered that ‘Big Brother’ and ‘Chained’ were the worst of the Portuguese television of February 2001. This association explains that it is not against the reality-shows, but against the negative messages that they have and transmit to the viewers” (in Diário de Notícias, 9 March 2001).

In March 2001, at a congress on journalism on-line, in Coimbra, Paulo Bastos, head of TVI-Online, justified the strategy of having the programme ‘Big Brother’: the income it brings in allows the station to do things that it could never afford, for instance, to send reporters to foreign countries. When he was questioned about the criteria TVI follows to show, in the main news bulletin, 59 seconds of one scene of sex that happened in the house of ‘Big Brother’, Paulo Bastos replies: “It is the public. We are hostages, obliged to give the public what they want”.

Until this point, the opinion-makers, the policy-makers, and the critics discussed the phenomenon of the Portuguese television basically. The general public was distant from the discussion. In April 2001 a movement of citizens appeared in the Internet, promoting a protest against the “low level of the Portuguese television”. This movement invited the viewers to turn the televisions off for 15 minutes, between 20h00 and 20h15 of the 21st of April, a Saturday. The message said: “Join this protest to take the rubbish out of TV. Pass the message. You have rights and you should use them”. The origin of this message was unknown, but it is believed that started in Brazil. In any case, in Portugal it was associated
with certain cultural spheres, because it was first known in these circles. As it was mentioned in the press articles, this protest would not affect the most powerful aspect of the television: advertising. Because during those 15 minutes all the three main channels would be broadcasting their news bulletins (in *Diário de Notícias*, 21 April 2001). Of this initiative, the minister in charge of the Mass Media at the time, Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins, said, “a democratic State cannot be indifferent to all the fights for quality” (in *Diário de Notícias*, 22 April 2001).

Meanwhile, ‘Big Brother’ was at the centre of attention. Quality newspapers dedicated many of their pages to articles to the programme and everything it involved. For instance, *Diário de Notícias* published a report (22 April 2001) about the nights of expulsion of the participants in the programme. The only reason of this article was to explain what type of people went to see the moment of the expulsion live. This fact proves that if even the other media give space and time to ‘Big Brother’, it is because people want to know things about it.

In May 2001, the director of TVI, José Eduardo Moniz, presented the new scheduling to be adopted in the end of the summer. He presented a schedule with more reality-shows (besides the third ‘Big Brother’, the channels will also broadcast ‘Survivor’ and another Portuguese format), and more national productions, with special emphasis given to a Portuguese ‘telenovela’. The purpose of the strategy was to consolidate their shares of audiences, which had reached 32.8 per cent at that point. José Eduardo Moniz explained that TVI does not want to be the market leader of the television stations. He defends a balance between the channels, arguing that this situation would leave the three channels in a stronger position to negotiate for advertising (in *Diário de Notícias*, 10 May 2001).

On the 10th of May, SIC finally found a reality-show that could fight ‘Big Brother’. After the failure that ‘Chained’ was in this respect, SIC chose to produce ‘The bar of the TV’. It is a format similar to ‘Big Brother’ in the sense that the participants live in the same house and are also expelled. But they have to work every night in a real bar that is open to the public and where part of the ‘action’ is filmed. This programme did not give good audiences to SIC in its first episodes but suddenly it was also in the centre of a controversy. If the scene of kick boxing in ‘Big Brother’ originated discussions and many articles in the press, but ‘The bar of the TV’ also had a scene – with the participant Margarida in the centre of the scene (her parents did not agree with her participation in the programme and wanted to convince her to give up; the production of the programme made them do that live) which was as controversial as scenes in ‘Big Brother’, and which attracted the public’s attention, thus giving high ratings to SIC.

Only few days after ‘The bar of the TV’ had started, the parents of Margarida, a simple girl from a little town, decided to go to Lisbon to convince her to give up of the programme. The
argument was that a programme with nudity and bad language was not for her, a catholic girl who was embarrassing her parents. The discussion between the girl and her parents was transmitted live during 45 minutes. The discussion and the tears gave to SIC the lead in the ratings war. The problem that this scene originated was that the parents had to accept to have the discussion live, during primetime (in Diário de Notícias, 16 May 2001). The girl did not leave the programme but the discussions about the scene went on.

On the 17 May 2001, the quality newspaper Público dedicated its four first pages to the Margarida’s scene; asking if SIC had gone too far. One of the articles was by a member of the Parliament, António Reis, who argued that what SIC did – broadcasting a private talk between a family, live on television – is something punishable with a fine from 22,700 to 151,500 pounds. That member of the Parliament also considered the possibility of a suspension of the license. While the High Authority of the Mass Media was transmitting the same opinion, the people in charge of SIC were saying that particularly the High Authority was unfairly targeting this station for the Mass Media. SIC did not understand why this body had such a strong position against the scene of Margarida and never voiced any disapproval of the “the frequent transmissions of sex during the day” and “scenes of violence” showed by a competitor channel (TVI particularly on ‘Big Brother’).

The arguments about the low level of the programming of the Portuguese television were in its highest point, at least until then. Both the private channels had given to everybody many reasons to talk about the limits of the contents of the programming. The discussion about the fulfilment of the law, the levels of decency, the respect of the human beings and the interest of the reality-shows was bigger than ever and involved many different sectors of the society. Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins, the minister in charge of the Mass Media (at the time), and the Secretary of State for the Mass Media, Arons the Carvalho, wrote a letter to the High Authority for the Mass Media where they defended that changes in Portuguese television were “appealing to the most basic instincts of the audiences”. These members of the Government considered what was happening on the Portuguese television as “an obvious degradation in what concerns the fundamental rights of the people”, which constitutes “a national problem to which nobody can be indifferent” (in Diário de Notícias, 17 May 2001).

In Parliament, all the political parties agreed with the idea that, in general, the programming of the Portuguese television was something like a “tele-rubbish”. At the same time, because of the polemics created by the reality-shows, the Government was considering the possibility of reformulating the High Authority for the Mass Media (in Público, 18 May 2001). The question of the reality shows was now undoubtedly a matter of national concern. A survey published by Diário de Notícias (20 May 2001) was clear: 67 per cent of the Portuguese people think that reality-shows should be subject to a special regulation, in order to protect the
dignity of the participants.
The discussion about the limits was growing. The policy-makers of the private channels agreed in looking for a consensus about programming, even if it involved the end of the reality-shows. But Mário Mesquita, an opinion-maker and teacher of journalism, did not believe too much in that ‘moral revival’ (in Público, 20 May 2001). For him SIC and TVI are equivalent: they mix entertainment and information, and they manipulate people and their feelings.

In the same week that the final instalment of ‘Big Brother II’ gave to TVI its best share of ever – 43.4 per cent – the political parties showed their intention of modifying the Television Law. In a meeting with the High Authority for the Mass Media, members of all the political parties agreed that the Authority should have stronger powers and be able to act faster, when it came to intervening over the content of reality TV shows (in Diário Económico, 24 May 2001).

In answer to the accusation made by the High Authority for the Mass Media that SIC used violence and threats to make Margarida and her parents (‘The bar of the TV’) discuss their problem live, SIC said that the accusation was unfounded and does not have legal support (in Público, 25 May 2001). More than that SIC stated its surprise that in previous comparable situations such as the scenes of violence and sex in ‘Big Brother’ (TVI), the High Authority did not assume the same position.

For the Secretary of State of the Mass Media at the time, Arons de Carvalho, all these developments in the private channels of television only served to underline the importance of the public television. In his opinion, RTP “cannot have the intention of following the competitor channels, and it can take advantage of the degradation of their programming in order to grow” (Diário de Notícias, 28 May 2001).

Exposed to many pressures, the High Authority for the Mass Media asked the two private channels of television to make one agreement about the reality-shows. This agreement would have the format of self-regulation, touching two different matters: the excesses of the reality-shows and the mixture between entertainment and information (in Diário de Notícias, 1 June 2001). The president of SIC, Francisco Pinto Balsemão, in an interview he gave to Expresso (2 June 2001), said that he agrees with self-regulation. But this agreement was something that did not convince the opinion-makers. For instance, Sarsfield Cabral wrote in Público that “this talk about self-regulation is only to occupy silly people: with the lack of scruples by TVI and SIC, we can only expect that they will go even lower and become more degrading just to catch audiences” (2 June 2001). On the other side, not even the general citizens seemed to believe in one agreement between the channels to prevent exaggerations. A survey published by Expresso (2 May 2001) shows that only 35 per cent of the people believe in the agreement
for self-regulation. The same survey indicates that 85 per cent of them think that during the last times there were many excesses in the programming of the Portuguese television, and 53 per cent believe that the programme that contributed most to that was ‘The bar of the TV’.

In the first meeting between the three channels of television and the High Authority for the Mass Media, SIC proposed the end of the reality-shows, with the exception to those that have been already bought. TVI considered this proposal unacceptable. Then, the private channels moved on to the discussion about restrictions: SIC proposed that the reality-shows should be considered programmes for adults. This proposal meant that these programmes should only be broadcast after ten at night, but they would have no restrictions in its contents. TVI argued for the opposite scenario: no limits about the hours but certain restrictions about the contents (in Diário Económico, 8 June 2001).

While the television channels were discussing (with a questionable degree of commitment) the conditions of the agreement of self-regulation, the President of the Parliament at that time, Almeida Santos, gave one interview to SOS Saúde (June 2001) where he explained that, in his view, there should be three types of regulation: one that originated in the stations; one developed by the bodies created by law; one that would be the result of the public opinion.

After the first attempt to show that there was dissatisfaction among the viewers (with the boycott of 15 minutes in April), a Portuguese jurist, Joaquim Pedro Costa, organised a bigger protest: he sent 1,200 emails asking political parties, the media, and people in general not to watch TVI and SIC for the whole month of June-2001 as well as the cable channels associated to SIC. Although many people welcomed this initiative, the public figures did not join it, underlining that what is important is to make the sponsors of the reality-shows to stop giving money to support those programmes (in Expresso, 9 June 2001).

The discussion about the supposed agreement between channels went on during the summer. In the next step, SIC also wanted to regulate the information and wanted to limit the agreement to the terrestrial channels. On the other side, TVI was against the regulation of the information and wanted the agreement to be valid to all the operators in the television sector, which included cable television (in Público, 4 July 2001). Days later, it became apparent that the stations had agreed to two things: the reality-shows should have specific times where the participants would be in private; the information would also be regulated (in Público, 11 July 2001).

While the three channels were discussing common rules for the programming, the scenario of the Portuguese television changed. In September 2001, Emídio Rangel, the Director of Programmes and Information of SIC at the time, started to have problems in the station. At the same time, he was invited to assume the command of the public channel, taking with him many people who helped to build up SIC as a big television station. The transference of this
team from SIC to RTP was very controversial. Mainly because Rangel is associated with commercial and aggressive strategies for broadcasting, while the majority of the opinion makers feel that what RTP needs is a real sense of public service. On the day he was confirmed as the new director of RTP, Rangel explained that he agrees with the need of develop the idea of public service broadcasting (in Jornal de Notícias, 21 September 2001).

2 - The programming and the channels activity seen by the Minister

In May 2001, Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins was the Minister with the responsibility of the mass media. At that moment, the “war” between the two channels - SIC and TVI - was obvious and the fall of the public service orientated - RTP - was evident. In the interview that Oliveira Martins gave me, he was clearly aware of all the debate that was going on about the programming of the television. But the Minister at the time was especially concerned in defining the principles that RTP should follow to become a real station of public service:

- Impartiality and independence in the information sector
- Promotion of fields like education, sciences and culture
- Special protection of the Portuguese language
- Defence of the basic rights of the people, namely the limitations to violence
- Special attention to be given to the new technologies.

According to Oliveira Martins, these principles are also important to refuse any commercial logic of the public channel. Instead, the public channel should represent a service that refuses violence and low levels of quality.

The Minister recognised that RTP is going through some problems, particularly with regards to audiences. The shares show that the viewers have little interest in the public station. In Oliveira Martins’ opinion, RTP’s problem is that it does not have the loyalty of the viewers. He believes that the only way to have more people watching the public channel is to improve its quality. Against what many people argue, the Minister thinks that RTP should not join the “war” that the private channels of television are fighting. For this member of the Government, “RTP should distinguish itself through the quality and through a clear project”, which means that the viewers should know what to expect from the public station. At the moment, this is not happening.

For Oliveira Martins, the private channels also have responsibilities of public service, because “they are using a space that is public and that should be administrated according to the general interest”. The Minister believes that what is desirable, in terms of audiences, is a situation where the shares would be equally divided between the three stations: RTP (RTP1
and RTP2); SIC; TVI.
The Minister’s view of recent developments in Portuguese television is not as pessimistic as one could expect however. He underlines that “there have been some positive steps”. One of them is the agreement between the channels in order to find common rules for the programming (see topic 5 of this chapter). But he concedes that he is worried about the quality of the programming. In this aspect, he argued that there are only three ways of getting a solution for the problem: regulation (application of the law), auto-regulation (ruled defined by the channels voluntarily), and interference of the civil society and of the associations. The minister is clearly against any form of censorship. In a democratic society, it is desirable that the viewers should express their opinions and be able to choose for themselves, so that the channels can react to the critics. And, for the first time, in the spring and summer of 2001 there was more than one movement of citizens or associations against the low levels of quality in Portuguese television, particularly when it came to reality-shows.
Oliveira Martins is concerned with the decline in quality in Portuguese television, visible during 2000 and 2001. He is especially worried with the violence in the screen and admits, “There are international rules (about this matter) that are not respected in Portugal”. And, he argues, this also happens regarding the utilisation of images of sick or vulnerable people. In his opinion, rules are needed in this respect to protect the images of the people.
Other worrying phenomenon that Oliveira Martins sees in the television arena is the concentration and a certain type of anonymity: “the lack of knowledge about who dominates the market and about who controls it”. Once again, he believes that the citizens have the right and the duty to organise themselves in order to prevent this type of situation.

3 – The new moment seen by one of head of programmes

When I first interviewed António Borga, sub-director of programmes of SIC, in November 1999 (see chapter 3), his station was clearly leader in the shares of audiences. Because of this, he had the opinion that TVI should find a way. And it did, but obviously not in the sense that Borga was suggesting: “What I said at that time was that it would be good if the ‘war’ of the competition would be fought in terms of quality and not in any other terms”. Between the first and the second interview (July 2001) what changed in Portuguese television was not based on quality options. TVI chose to start the era of the reality-shows and SIC had no choice but to do the same. So, the “war” started to be fought on this level. Borga explains that SIC did not want to start this “war”. That is why his station did not buy ‘Big Brother. ‘SIC “did not want to give the first step for the introduction of the new generation of reality-shows in Portugal”.
More than that, the policy-makers of SIC understood that the station would have more
negative than positive effects if it had bought ‘Big Brother’. Because TVI showed ‘Big Brother’, SIC had to show some similar programmes, but the results were not as good as it was expected.

For Borga, the new scenario of the Portuguese television “did not change as much as many people argue”. The sub-director of programmes says that, at the moment of the second interview, “SIC still is leader of audiences, with 37 to 38 per cent of the share”. He admits that it is less than it was two years before and recognises that at the moment TVI is clearly the second channel in terms of audiences, with 32 to 33 per cent. Borga fears that RTP’s failure to attract substantial audiences may lead to “the worst possible scenario”: “a ‘war’ between the two private channels, at the level of a generalist programming not concerned with quality or with better products for the different types of audiences”. As for RTP, two things could happen as a result “a public service reduced to the lowest level of expression”; the privatisation of the public service that would only subsist for “national services, like RTP International”. This last possibility is, for Borga, the worst of the worst, because it would accentuate the competition even more, making the regulation for quality even more difficult.

António Borga argues that the future of SIC “will have to be found in the same route where it was before the ‘war’: quality fiction and quality entertainment”. Although many lobbies have been fighting this station, the sub-director of programmes is not very concerned with the critics. Whether they are politicians or moral campaigners. Instead the station is mainly concerned with the viewers. He recognises that the new scenario created some problems to his station, such as the decline of advertising income. But he also explains that, despite all the criticism SIC is moving on with its plans for expansion and points to the launch of two cable channels as proof of this.

As previously mentioned, there were major changes in personnel at SIC around this time as the Director of Programming and Director of Information, Emidio Rangel and his deputy at Programming Antonio Borga, left the channel (as a result of refusing ‘Big Brother’) and joined RTP. The challenge they faced there was to revive the quality of the channel.

4 - The opinion of the Association of the Consumers of the Media

The Association of the Consumers of the Media (ACMedia) is a Portuguese organisation created in 1986. Today it has around 8,000 members. Among its priorities, this association wants to develop the concept of auto-regulation, to denounce the lack of fulfilment over scheduling as well as to denounce the counter-programming, to fight the excessive advertising, to fight the transmission at inappropriate hours of images or programmes that might shock the viewers.
Nuno von Amann de Campos is the president of ACMedia. In the interview he gave me in July 2001, he explained that “the panorama of the Portuguese television is worrying” and that ACMedia’s members were apprehensive about future developments. In Campos’ opinion, the competition between the channels, during these last few months, is changing the meaning that a real television station should have. And this is applied not only to the public station, but also to the two private ones, because they signed a contract to specify rules and responsibilities.

For Campos, the private channels are taking advantage of a certain indifference of the bodies in charged of controlling those rules: “these bodies are not operating as they should, and there is a dispersion of the jurisdictions”. As a result, there is no control and the fines defined are not charged. Campos believes that if the private channels had respect for the rules of the contracts, “we would not be in this ‘jungle’ where we are”.

According to the president of the ACMedia, the bodies that should control the quality show “a lack of determination that allows the channels to broadcast whatever they want”. And the consequences, in his opinion, are obvious: excessive advertising; disrespect for the schedules; counter-programming; lack of concern with inappropriate scenes. The special concern of Campos is that all this overtakes programming for the most vulnerable segments of the society such as children and old people.

As for the reality-shows, Campos believes that they “are becoming more and more equivalent to degradation of the quality”. The ACMedia is worried with the future because in this genre, “a programme that replaces other is always worse”. This is why the president of ACMedia thinks that “we are going in the direction of a growing degradation” instead of having channels of television to educate and entertain.

Since the panorama of the television programming is so bleak, ACMedia is developing a pedagogical activity, with the viewers, in the hope that the quality of the channels will improve. One of the aims of this association is to inform the viewers in such a way that they will become more critical of what they watch, as well as more selective. Another mission of the ACMedia is, according to Campos, to tell the viewers that they should complain when they feel that the television channels disrespect them, for instance, when they do counter-programming or when they do not follow the schedules previously announced. The majority of the complaints that ACMedia was receiving at the time of the interview had to do with the lack of respect for the privacy and the excesses of pornography.

In Summer 2001, ACMedia produced a charter/manifesto/pamphlet intended to raise the quality of Portuguese television. The document is primarily a protest against the reality-shows. The people who signed it also committed themselves in with the idea that they will not watch those programmes and they assume they will not give preference to the products of the companies that sponsor those programmes.
5 - The view of two researchers of the field

One important perspective of the recent developments in Portuguese television comes from the researchers who work in the field. Manuel Pinto and Helena Sousa are researchers and teachers of mass communications in the University of Minho, Braga. Manuel Pinto believes that since ‘Big Brother’ started, he, as a viewer, reduced the time he spends watching television. But he recognises that this new strategy of TVI “obliged all the panorama of the Portuguese television to redefine itself”. And Pinto reminds “three months before the start of the programme, the threat was already in the air”.

Helena Sousa explains that the phenomenon of the ‘Big Brother’ is also interesting, from the point of view of the research, because it originated something new: a mixture between information and programming. “There is a rupture regarding the way we used to see the information until that moment. Having the news bulletins promoting the programming is something completely new”. As Pinto says, “the channel does not need an external reality anymore. It is the own reality of the channel that produces material for the news. The world of the information is the world of the channel”. Sousa adds that this happens not only with ‘Big Brother’, but also to the actors who take part in their productions, particularly ‘telenovelas’. Another aspect that Pinto underlines is that “the things of the daily life start to have an important place” in the media.

The new scenario of the Portuguese television also has a new aspect in the prime time. Until now, it was composed of news and Brazilian ‘telenovelas’. Now a days, the format is composed of Portuguese ‘telenovelas’. As Pinto identifies, it is the end of 20 years of dominance for the Brazilian productions over the Portuguese ones.

6 - Regulating the content of the programming

Even if in the past there were some programmes in the Portuguese television that were controversial, there was never so much discussion as the one originated by reality-shows. This discussion led to the question of the regulation of the programming.

As the president of ACMedia, Nuno von Amann de Campos, explains, first we have to look at the Law of Television and, then, at the High Authority for the Mass Media, a body whose mission is to analyse television programming. Campos explains that the High Authority does not intervene, as it should. But, according to Campos, this process of handing on the blame to each other creates a situation of emptiness, giving the channels enough freedom to do whatever they want. The president of ACMedia thinks that this is the time to make each body
to carry out their obligations.

Oliveira Martins, Minister responsible for the mass media until March 2002, thinks that the best solution is the auto-regulation. In March 2001 there was a good example of agreement between the television stations, on the informative sector. A bridge felt apart when a coach and some cars were crossing. After all the images of the tragedy, the television operators decided to stop the exploitation of the drama and agreed in some principles about the images and about the reports.

For the Minister, the auto-regulation is also the best solution to stop some of the main problems of the Portuguese television. One of them is the constant interruption of the programmes for advertisements. Oliveira Martins thinks that the rules in this matter should be clarified and respected. The second problem has to do with the disrespect for the schedules after they have been announced. He believes that the television stations should agree about the need to stick to the schedules at the right time. If not, the fine should be applied. The third problem identified by Oliveira Martins is counter-programming. He thinks that it is illegitimate to spy upon the other channels, and to change the schedules accordingly to what the competitors are doing. Again, this member of the previous Government asserts that if this happens, then the channels should be fined. What is needed to do is “to make the penalties more efficacious (than what they are now) and, if that would be the case, they should be revised so that they would act as a dissuasion mechanism”.

António Borga, sub-director of programmes of SIC, also thinks “the auto-regulation of the channels is always preferable to any possible direct interference by the State, the Government or whichever political party happens to be in power at a given date”. For this policy-maker, the best solution is when the relation between the mass media and the society happens in a harmonious way. If there are aspects in the mass media that create problems among the society or in certain sectors of the society, the policy-makers responsible for those problems should work towards auto-regulation. In the specific case of the reality-shows, for which there was national involvement in this matter, Borga agrees that the television channels should be called together to discuss the problem and its implications for the future of television in Portugal. But he knows that this is “little bit utopian, because this happens in a competition market”. Even though, he argues that there should be some form of agreement between the generalist channels. In Summer 2001 the television channels agreed that certain scenes of sex and violence should not be shown before 10 pm.

Manuel Pinto and Helena Sousa both agree that the mechanisms of auto-regulation among the television channels are important but it should not be used to replace the regulation that should be done by the institutional bodies. The problem pointed out by Pinto is that “the penalties (in case of disrespect of the law) are ridiculous, if we consider the interests and the
money involved”. This researcher explains that regulation of the activities of television channels does not work, because the process is too slow and, after three years, it becomes subject to forfeit. The other reason why the mechanism of regulation is not operational is because the “economic and political powers only actuate towards social pressure”. Pinto concludes, “We still have a civil society that rarely interferes”.
Conclusions

1. The context of this research

The aim of this study is to present and analyse different perspectives of the Portuguese broadcasting scenario, mainly after the privatisation of two channels, which occurred in 1992. When I started to analyse the policy-making in the programming of the Portuguese television (September 1998) my main interest was to observe and analyse how the policy-makers of the Portuguese television combine their interests with all the opinion about the programming that is generated at many different levels: viewers, critics, researchers, and bodies that rule and control the television activity. I was also very keen in understanding if there is a connection between the discourse and the action of the policy-makers.

What led to the actual situation of the Portuguese television in terms of programming is the main point of my research. Not only the past where this reality lies on, but also what happened during the period of this research: what made the policy-makers go in certain directions and how these options were received. The period of this research was the period of the inception of the reality-shows and the period of a strong investment in national production for television. And this is something that surprised me during the research.

In 1998 Portuguese television broadcast a considerable amount of North American movies and series, as well as Brazilian ‘telenovelas’. At a certain point, one of the private channels, TVI, decided to bet on Portuguese products and found that people enjoyed listening more often to their own language and seeing their own society portrayed on television. Suddenly, the policy-makers found out a new formula to increase their shares.

We need to understand these changes in terms of wider political, economical and social dimensions. Besides those broad aspects, in this study, the topic is also asked a number of different questions:

- What do the policy-makers say they do-
- What do the policy-makers do/ the schedules that they present
- How do the general public react to what they see on television
- How do the specialised people (critics, researchers and others) react to what is given by television.
My hypothesis, at the beginning of this work, were:

1. The public service of television, mainly the first channel (RTP1), is not fulfilling its missions.
2. There is no significant difference between the main public channel and the two private ones, in what concerns programming.
3. The generality of the programmes is chosen to achieve the highest possible shares, which means that the minorities are not well served.
4. The public, the critics and the people with responsibilities are not happy with the results of the policy-making in the television channels.

To verify my hypothesis,

- I interviewed the policy-makers of the two private channels, the presenter of the main news bulletin of the public channel, as well as the psychologist who works with the programming for children in the public channel.

My first intention was to interview the policy-makers responsible for the four channels of television. Even if Portugal is a small country, it is not easy to have access to them. Mainly because they are very busy people. Surprisingly, the heads of the private television were more interested in answering my questions.

António Borga was, at the time, sub-director of programmes of SIC, and he accepted to be interviewed by me twice. When I first met him, SIC was the market leader. Months later, it was not, and I found that it would be very interesting to listen to his interpretation of what had happened. I have to say that his attitude towards this work was refreshing. After all, he agreed to talk to me for the second time when his channel was going through a difficult period. Also, both in the first and in the second time, he answered openly to all my questions.

Similarly, after having interviewed José Eduardo Moniz, general director of TVI, I tried to ask him some questions about the way he surprised everybody by buying ‘Big Brother’ format and, consequently, changing the Portuguese broadcasting scenario. Unfortunately, this time he could not make it. Still, it was very important to have his initial contribution. This was extremely useful to understand the way policy-makers think and the wider dynamics of broadcasting.

In the public television (RTP1 and RTP2) it was much more difficult to have one interview with the heads of programming. First of all, because when I asked for the interview the channel had no specific director for this area. So, my option was talk with someone that is known for supporting the public service as not many other people at the time would do: José Rodrigues dos Santos. He has been, for many years now, the most famous news presenter of RTP1. Even if he does not have direct responsibilities in the programming of the public
channel, he has a deep knowledge of the policy-making followed by RTP1 and RTP2 and he is now director of Information. So, I think that his background and his information were also extremely important to find out the way the policy-makers of the public channels think. Trying to complete the perspectives of the public channels, I tried to find out more information about a specific area: children’s programming. Since RTP is the only channel that has a department specifically for this genre, I asked for an interview to the psychologist – Noémia Macedo – who, at the time, was replacing the director of that sector. She agreed and, doing that, helped me to understand specific needs of the children that RTP tries to fulfil. Obviously, it was also very important.

- To assess how well televisions output, during one week in (May 2000), measured up to the promises, rhetoric and vision that television executives had for their respective channels.

Since I could hardly videotape one whole week of programmes and then count the duration of each one of them, this work could never be done without the data from Marktest, a specialist company which works with audiences.

- To have an idea of viewers’ opinions, I conducted four focus-groups discussions.

Even if Portuguese people are not very used to be involved in academic research projects, all the people that I contacted for this purpose were available to collaborate straight away. Only one phone call to the Trade Union of Shoes’ Industry (“Sindicato dos Operários do Calçado”) of S. João da Madeira, another one to the University of Elderly People (“Universidade da Terceira Idade”) of Porto and another one to the Federation of the Students’ Union (“Federação Académica”) of Porto was enough to find people and to organise the discussions. The fourth group was arranged with the help of friends.

- To understand the concerns the people who represent the citizens, I interviewed the president of the Association of the Viewers.

This contact was also very easy to establish, as the president was very interested in participating in this research.

- To get a more in depth opinion, I interviewed four television critics.

When I contacted the four critics I thought that it would be difficult to interview them, since they have different professional obligations. Yet, for some reason, they all agreed to answer my questions, which obviously makes, at least in my point of view, this work more complete and interesting.

- To have an academic understanding of the problem, I collected the opinions of two teachers and researchers.

The two researchers I interviewed showed a special interest in participating in this work, since this is a field to which they dedicate much of their professional time. Also, their natural
kindness and interest in contributing for further and further research is notorious.

- To find the political context, I interviewed the minister responsible for the media. Interviewing ministers for research purposes is not always easy. But Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins, the Minister at the time, is a special person, who understands the importance of having research about subjects that have to do with people in general. His contribution is crucial to understand the main political options, regarding television, followed by the Government (Socialist Party) during the time of this research.

2. The historical context: politics, economy and society

a) Political interference

All the aspects of this research were framed in an historical context. The most important note to have in mind is that Portugal was a dictatorship until 1974. This means that the public service television (RTP), which began in 1957, operated under a system of censorship for many years. In that first year, RTP had in its body of decision-makers a person that had the right to interfere in the decisions of the stations whenever he felt that those decisions were illegal or inconvenient to the public interest (Teves, 1998, p. 30). More than that, the Portuguese fascist Government used RTP as an instrument of propaganda.

Portugal was no exception. Analysing the European Public Service Broadcasting systems, Humphreys (1996, p.114) explains: “It quickly became clear to those who wielded, or contended for, political power that the broadcast media had a very effective capacity to focus public attention, to contribute to the creation of public opinion, to legitimise (or de-legitimise) public policy, and even directly to influence voting behaviour”.

“The regime that was born with the Revolution of 1974 abolished the previous censorship, that existed in the country for more than 40 years” (Mesquita, 1994, p.360). But, even after the revolution, RTP has been living under the control of the Government, no matter which party has been elected. Sousa argues: “Since the early days of television in Portugal, no structural changes have occurred in the relationship between the medium and the political power. Direct censorship was abolished after the 1974 revolution but RTP remained under the control of successive governments” (Helena Sousas’s PhD Thesis submitted to City University, London).

The confirmation that the interference over the public channel of television went on, not only during the time of the dictatorship but also during the time of democracy, is given by the Rodrigues dos Santos: “When RTP was in a monopoly situation, it was subjected to permanent political pressure, and not only from the Government” (Chapter 3). After the achievement of democracy, RTP held a monopoly for 18 more years. Even nowadays, this
idea of interference in the public television is alive. Gaspar, critic of television, says that RTP1 “is used by the Government when it feels it is needed” (Chapter 4).

The understanding that the leaders (politicians, military people and opinion-leaders) have about the importance of television is very clear in Portugal. In 1974, RTP was one of the first institutions to be occupied by the troops in the military movement that established a democratic system in Portugal (Teves, 1998, p.200). At that time, the interest was mainly political.

Until the inception of the private television in Portugal, the public television – RTP – had many cultural, informative and entertainment components but, as has already been said, they were defined by the political power. After the revolution of 1974, the programming started to find space for new types of programmes: debate and political interventions (Teves, 1998, p.209). RTP changed with the new democratic reality but the options about programming were typical of a monopoly: there was no need for big concerns because there was no competition.

The history of the Portuguese broadcasting has different episodes where the politicians are also main actors in the field of the television. For instance, Ramalho Eanes, who later would became president of the Republic, was the director of programmes at RTP, after 1974, created different departments for different types of programmes (Teves, 1998, p.213). Another case is the president of the private channel of television, SIC, Pinto Balsemão, a social-democrat politician who had been prime minister.

There is an episode that reflects not only the interference of the politicians in the broadcasting scenario, but also the interest that other significant organisations show towards television. As a social democrat prime minister, in 1982, Pinto Balsemão promised a channel of television to the Catholic Church. So, he compromised his party with his promise and, years later, he, as a businessman, was fighting for the same: a frequency for a private channel of television. They both (the Catholic Church and the economic group of Pinto Balsemão) got it (Chapter 3). Interestingly enough, two years before, the major representatives of the Catholic presented a document saying that the Catholics did not want privileges comparing to other religions but they also assumed that they need the mass media to spread their word (Chapter 2).

b) Economical interests

Later on, the interest for the television channels would be not only political but, mainly, economical. This has been especially visible in the period after privatisation of two television channels, in 1992.
After more than one decade of democracy, the governments could not stop the process of having private/commercial television in Portugal. Not only because of the democracy itself, but also because of other factors, like lobbying from economic groups, globalisation and shifts in public opinion. The liberalisation was beginning and so was a general process of privatisation. The first step was given by a social democrat Government, by approving a new law for the television activity. Following the example of many other European countries, Portugal was opening the sector to the private initiative.

The first problem identified was the participation of foreign money in the capital of the enterprises that were candidates to two new private channels of television. First, it was established in 10 per cent and then it grew until 25 per cent. Another problem was the money needed for the infrastructure and the length of time it would take before a profit could be made. In 1991, Pinto Balsemão admitted that the Portuguese market of advertising was not big as in other European countries, but he was sure that it would grow and that the profits would be enough for everybody.

In economical terms, the privatisation of television was not an isolated option. In fact, the social democrat prime minister who was in power from 1985 to 1995, Cavaco Silva, was responsible for a broader process of privatisation. Besides the media, he also (fully or partially) privatised public companies in the financial sector, in the insurance market and beer production (Sousa Franco, 1994, p.270).

A review and analysis of articles published in the press shows two different perspectives of the opening of the television market in Portugal to private operators (Chapter 2). In the public channel’s perspective, the question could be resumed to “the end of the monopoly”. From the private operators’ point of view, the most important aspect was “the liberalisation of the market”.

Among other aspects that this analysis identifies, it comes the consequences and the appeals to principles. In what regards the consequences, the public television was undergoing “changes in the internal structure and in the outputs”, while the private operators were prepared to do what the public service never did: to broadcast normal problems of normal people. As for the appeals to principles, the public television station RTP was keen on keeping the subsidies from the State, promising to have big audiences in RTP1 and happy minorities in RTP2. As for the private policy-makers, they were underlining the need of respecting the free market in order to have a fair competition. And they did not hide their objectives: “The highest possible shares and the highest possible profits”. So, here it is, clearly, the economic aspect of television activity.

As for RTP, the television tax was abolished in the eighties by the social democrat Government, but the State still finances the public station. At the same time, the Portuguese
public television has a commercial activity. The main channel – RTP1 – fights for advertising just as the two private channels – SIC and TVI – do. The advertisement in RTP2 was abolished.

The question of the advertising is directly linked to the issue of the competition between channels. At the end of the line, what the policy-makers of each channel want is to have highest shares of audiences that they could realistically attain. To that end, they compete for each viewer. In Portugal, the most visible aspect of the competition is the counter-programming: the practice whereby competing channels scheduling programmes from the same genre at the same time. As a result, the schedules of the three main channels of television are frequently very similar and the overall the level of diversity declines. As it is said in the document that presents the International Conference about Television, that took place in Lisbon, in 1997, by the hand of the Foundation Friedrich Ebert (document written by Tânia de Morais Soares): “In a strategy of competition, the different channels offer equivalent products, at equivalent time-tables, since the aim is a mass with the same characteristics as a public. As a consequence, very often, what happens is a process where the television offer is uniform, with the same genre of programmes at the same time”. Logically, it is the channel that is having the highest shares that is followed by the others.

After a strong war for audiences that is described in Chapter 6 the issue of maintaining the two public channels has been discussed more and more. After an era of regulation and of another one of deregulation, Portugal is now living an era of re-regulation: the new social-democrat Government announced the intention of selling one public channel, going against what is been done in the majority of the European countries. The most visible reason is the economic aspect: RTP, the public station, is in a very difficult financial situation.

The taxpayers know that the public service of television is expensive but the general consensus still seems to be in favour of having it (McQuail, 1993, p.27). With the result that “there will be a mixture of public and commercial providers with a continuing effort to maintain at least one public channel with a significant share of the audience and not primarily dependent on advertising revenue”.

c) The Portuguese society

If the political landscape of Portugal changed drastically in the 1970s, enormous changes in social structure could be traced back to the previous decade. In many respects the changes Portuguese society has undergone since the 1960s mirror those, which have occurred in other Western European nations. At the same time Portuguese modern history has its own peculiarities. Emigration, for instance, which resulted in an ageing of the rural populations,
emptiness of the villages, abandonment of the fields, increased salaries, lack of working people in the fields, etc” (Barreto and Preto, 1996, p.12). At the same time, people were moving from the interior of the country to the big cities, namely Lisbon, the capital, and Porto, the second city.

Industry and tourism both grew; new roads were built; and electricity was more widely available and thus more used. Economically the country grew. While socially the middle class started to have social and cultural aspirations, which included higher levels of consumption. And universal education was provided for all children up to the age of 10 (Barreto and Preto, 1996).

Internationally, Portugal lost almost all its colonies in Africa and Asia.

From the mid-seventies until the mid-eighties Portugal was changing and trying to live with the new democratic reality. Barreto and Preto (1996, p.18) write about a rupture with the old times. This was not only a result of the end of the Empire and the loss of the African colonies, but also because of the emergence of associations, trade-unions and regional culture and their impact on democratic life. At the same time, society and the economy were changing. Sociologically, less people are dying at birth, living longer lives and less people being born. Economically, agriculture was becoming less important and industry was growing. According to Barreto and Preto, it was only after 1985 that political stability could finally be said to be established in Portugal. The economy became more trustful and the country joined the European Union. Most homes came to own a television set. And the number of hours of television broadcast increased. Even though the development, the Portuguese people did not increase the habit of reading newspapers.

According to the latest demographic figures (made by the Portuguese Institute of Statistics), in 1997 56,2 per cent of the families had a car, 79,7 per cent of the families had a phone, 96,2 per cent of the families had a television, 46,2 per cent of the families had a video and 14,3 per cent had a computer.

3. General ideas of this study

The rules of the Portuguese television

In 1990 the social democrat Government published the Regime of the Television Activity. At this point, there were some concerns more suitable with a democratic regime. It outlines a vision of television, that is characterised by pluralism, the straightness and objective and balanced reportage and current affairs programming in such a way so as to safeguard their
independence from the Government, the Public Administration and other public powers (Chapter 2).

That Regime also specified rules over the content. According to this law, Portuguese television it is not permitted to show pornographic or obscene programmes, programmes that incite violence or crime, or that generally violate the fundamental rights, freedoms and guaranties. Also, programmes susceptible to negative influencing the personality of children or adolescents, or to impressing other viewers particularly vulnerable through the exhibition of scenes particularly violent or shocking must be forewarned by express warning, accompanied by appropriated classification and must always be broadcast after 10 pm.

Even if the policy-makers of the private stations feel that they also have obligations more often associated with the public service, there is the idea that the Portuguese public service of television is far away from what it was supposed to be. During the time of this research, all opinion that I collected about the public television pointed in the same direction: RTP is not fulfilling the missions of the public service. The people in charge of this channel from 1998 to 2001 are the first ones to recognise that situation: “RTP is not performing the public service; it is trying, everyday, to deliver more public service” (José Grego Esteves, director of RTP, quoted in Chapter 2).

**Criticisms to the public television**

The high costs involved in RTP are one of the main criticisms directed to this public station. The directors that have tried to find a way to the public station often recognise this problem (Chapter 3). The criticism about the amount of money that is being given by the State to RTP is especially strong when it is associated to criticisms about the lack of investment in national productions (Chapter 3): RTP does not invest as much as it should in national productions. Finally, the public station is often accused of not offering programmes for minorities, as the participants in the focus-groups discussions generally agree (Chapter 5).

Besides the accusations of bad administration of the public money, an inspection to the accounts of the public television showed that, during the year of 2000, income from advertising only covered 47 per cent of the expenses of programming (Independente, 4 January 2002). Thus reaffirming one of the most frequently made criticisms of RTP.

There is another criticism that is very often directed to the public station (RTP): the poor quality of some programmes. When I interviewed the policy-makers, António Borga was the sub-director of programmes of SIC. Now he is working for the public channel. He believed that the private channels were “producing fiction with one thousand times more quality than that fiction that we watched when RTP had the monopoly”.

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Borga, while sub-director of programming of SIC, accused RTP of building its schedules “regardless the tastes and the interests of the public”. And what does the public think about this? At least, what do the people who participated in the focus groups discussions that I organise think about this? One participant argues that what RTP does is to follow the others. What this means is that viewers who analyse the schedules can easily understand that RTP copies those formats, which have proven the most commercially successful for the private channels.

All the participants in the discussions seemed to agree. For instance, the factory workers who participated in one of those discussions would like to see the public station being an alternative to the private channels in terms of programming. They argue that RTP should differentiate the programmes and the times of transmission (see also the topic “War for audiences”). And the idea that is subjacent is that more people would have more options (Chapter 5).

Alfredo Barroso, a commentator who frequently writes about television, thinks that RTP “should be concerned with the general knowledge of the people. It cannot have the immediate logic of earning money every day. It should not lose interest in the concept of the generalist television”. But all the critics seem to agree that the Portuguese public service is not doing this, with rare exceptions: they agree that sometimes it is possible to find good programmes.

Emídio Rangel, the man who was responsible for the success of SIC in the first years of its existence, was invited to take charge of RTP in 2001. He promised a new breath in the programming of the public channel for the year 2002: the production of national series, soap operas, comedies and programmes of light entertainment (Diário de Notícias, 17 November 2001). This is something that, according to what the critics of television told me (Chapter 4), should be welcomed by everybody. At the time that I am writing, the new Government was not showing interest in the permanence of Rangel in RTP.

Privatisation of two channels of television

Almost ten years later, criticisms of the private channels of television in Portugal come from all the sectors of the society, as it is possible to conclude through all the interviews and focus groups that I conducted for this research. First of all because the choice they brought to the panorama was not as good as many would expect. The common people followed the opinion-makers and the critics of television shared, broadly speaking, and the same opinion: the programmes – mainly on private channels – have very low levels of quality and interest. As I explain in Chapter 3, Cádima (1997, p.83), a Portuguese researcher, has no doubts about the link between low quality, privatisation and advertising: “It is common sense that, with the
privatisation, the quality of the programmes did not increase. It is difficult to find a responsible for this. It is the result of a group of factors that has to do with the commercial logic and with the resistance of the enterprises, since all of them, including RTP, depend on the same source: the incomes of the advertisement”.

Arons de Carvalho, the Secretary of State responsible for the Mass Media in the Socialist Government (1995/2001) was one of the participants in the International Conference about Television (1997) resumed by Tânia de Morais Soares. He believed that the inception of the private television originated a generalised diminution of the quality in the television programming. This is visible in the excess of sensational, violent and less interesting programmes.

The war for audiences

In summary, I can say that the battle that was fought for the audiences in Portugal, at least between 1998 and 2001, was based in two strategies: the counter-programming and the search for new products. In both cases, the private channels especially used these weapons, with RTP following them.

1. Counter-programming: a certain genre against the same genre

Even if the majority of the people interviewed for this research agree that the counter-programming is something done mainly by the private channels of television, the analysis of the schedules of the four channels that I did (Chapter 4) show that the main public channel (RTP1) also uses the strategy of presenting, for instance, “news against news”. And the viewers think that this is especially wrong in the case of the public channel.

The participants in the focus-groups discussions do not agree with the practice of counter-programming in the Portuguese television. One factory worker is affirmative: “I think that when one of the other channels is showing, for instance football, it (RTP) should not show the same. It should show something different. Because it is frequent to turn on the television and to realise that they are showing the same type of programmes in different channels at the same time. There is no need to do this”.

But not all the participants agreed with him on this matter, however. But there is something else that even originates stronger negative reactions. Against all the claims for different programmes and different timetables, the three main Portuguese channels of television still broadcast the news bulletins at the same hour, leaving the viewer almost without alternative (if we agree that the programming of RTP2 does not reach everybody).
During the period of my research (1998/2001), besides the change in the leadership, there was also a change in the contents of the programming. When I started, SIC was the leader of audiences and this station was only (a little worried) with the other private station: TVI. The public station – RTP – was no threat to any of those. While RTP was looking for a direction and SIC was happily living with the success of its audience share and income from advertising TVI made two decisions about programming that changed everything: it bought ‘Big Brother’, and decided to produce quality Portuguese ‘telenovelas’.

At this point it is important to emphasise that one of the main options for the private stations in the end of the 1990s that had developments in the following years was the production of national programmes. In January 2000, while TVI was planning its strategy, SIC station showed the first film specifically made for television in Portugal. It attracted 2.4 million viewers, out of a population of less than 10 million people.

One can argue that the privatisation was inevitable and also that the era of the reality-shows should be expected. Based on other countries, these two episodes are not surprising. But the Portuguese recent history of television has two characteristics that define its peculiarity. First, the Catholic Church won the right to administrate one channel of television – TVI –, when everybody thought that it was going to be given to the most powerful economic group. Then, the Catholic Church lost control of that station. When the other private station – SIC – was clearly the leader of the audiences, nobody suspected that the panorama would change substantially. But it did.

After all the wrong options in terms of programming and the financial problems that resulted from those options, TVI was ready to surprise. Surprising everybody and facing the critics of almost all the opinion-makers, TVI bought the ‘Big Brother’ format and started the era of the reality-shows in Portugal starting in the year 2000. When I interviewed José Eduardo Moniz, director of TVI (November 1999), he knew that TVI would be known in a short while not only because of the reality-shows but also because of the ‘telenovelas’ produced in Portugal. As I explained in different stages of the thesis, his policies gave him what he wanted: more viewers and, consequently, more advertisement and more money.

The first consequence of the era of the reality-shows was that, more than never, the country started to discuss the need of regulating the contents of the television, since the channels were not respecting the regulation done through the law. In fact, there was, during the period of this research, a deregulation in the Portuguese television scenario.

The president of the Portuguese Association of the Viewers (ACMedia), Nuno von Amann de Campos, believes that the television channels “are becoming more and more the culminating
point of the degradation of the quality” (Chapter 6). The ACMedia is worried for the future because, in this genre, “a programme that replaces other is always worse”. This is why the president of ACMedia thinks that “we are going in the direction of a growing degradation” instead of having channels of television that should educate and entertain.

Against what many people argue, Oliveira Martins, minister responsible for the media until 2002, thinks that RTP should not join the “war” that the private channels of television are fighting. For this ex-member of the Government, “RTP should distinguish itself through the quality and through a clear project”, which means that the viewers should know what to expect from the public station. At the moment, this still does not happen. The future, and further research, might show if this will happen.

There are two opinions that are important to highlight, about the participation of the different channels in the “war for audiences”. For instance, Mário Castrim, critic of television, argues, “a public station is not supposed to fight for competition. Instead, it should only be interested in art, culture, political pluralism, with total abnegation of advertising” (Chapter 4). And António Borga, while he was sub-director of programmes of SIC, believed that the future of this station “will have to be found in the same route where it was before the ‘war’: quality fiction and quality entertainment”.

And what do the Portuguese researchers think about all this “war”? Manuel Pinto says that since ‘Big Brother’ started, he as a viewer reduced the amount of time he spends watching television. But this researcher recognises that this new strategy of TVI “obliged all the panorama of the Portuguese television to redefine itself” (Chapter 6). As far as the work of the researchers is concerned, Helena Sousa argues that there is something new in the television scenario to explore: for the first time, with ‘Big Brother’, programmes and news were mixed, when the participants in the programme were interviewed in the informative bulletins, just as any other “traditional” national personality.

The reality-shows took to the Portuguese scenario of television something that had never be seen before: people that in the month before were complete strangers to each other having sex, live, on television and real families arguing in front of thousands of viewers are the two main examples which would have seemed unthinkable before.

Pressurised by many opinion-makers, associations and politicians, the television channels finally agreed in defining the basic rules of the programming. In Summer 2001 the television channels agreed that certain scenes of sex and violence should not be showed before 10 pm. Even if the policy-makers agreed in discussing the problem, the truth is that, as Borga says, a real and serious agreement is a “little bit utopian, because this happens in a competition market” (Chapter 6). The future would show that the agreement would not be possible to keep for a long time.
The disrespect for the viewers

The disrespect for the schedules and the counter-programming are two aspects that the viewers feel more upset with, in Portuguese television. The main problem identified by the participants in the focus-groups discussions was that the schedules presented by the channels do not correspond to what they broadcast. They announce a certain programme and then that replace it or they broadcast it later, regardless the expectations of the viewers who are waiting for it.

There are also another aspects of the options made by the policy-makers that are not welcomed by either viewers or critics: the lack of concern for children and other sensitive groups.

If we take the participants in the focus groups discussions as a representative sample of Portuguese viewers, they feel that the policy-makers are not worried about the viewers but only worried with the shares and the money. This is most apparent in the case of programming for children. One of the participants in the focus-groups discussion with established people is sure that the television channels are only interested in maximising the number of children watching their programmes, in order to be able to charge higher advertising rates (Chapter 5).

Another aspect that seems to be very worrying was pointed by Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins, the minister responsible for the media, when I interviewed him. He was not only worried with the lack of quality programming in Portuguese television generally, but also with the frequency of screen violence. He admits, “there are international rules (about this matter) that are not respected in Portugal” (Chapter 6). And, he argues, this also happens regarding the utilisation of images of sick or vulnerable people. In his opinion, what is needed is to respect the rules that protect the image of the people.

The programming and the viewers

The interviews with the critics and the focus-groups discussions that I conducted identified a negative opinion, in general, about the programming of the Portuguese television. When it comes to the issue of quality (or the lack of quality), the television critic Alfredo Barroso, is scathing: the programming has become “a mix of tele-rubish with tele-show”. The president of the Association of the Viewers, Nuno von Amann de Campos, speaks about a “jungle” when he refers to the television activity and is worried with the “degradation” of the programming.

Even if he is one of the most pessimistic people interviewed during this research, Mário...
Castrim, critic of television, makes no exception when he analyses the panorama of the Portuguese television. For him, it is a “television based on a strong foreign production with a tiny national production, that in general is of bad quality. It is essentially orientated towards the entertainment” (Chapter 4). Nowadays, the amount of national production has been growing but Castrim, in his articles, is still very critical of Portuguese programming.

The focus-group discussions showed some opinions that particular types of Portuguese people have concerning the programming of the television: too many ‘telenovelas’; low level of the quiz shows; lack of concern with educational matters; shortage of documentaries. The news bulletins are considered good but also violent. Over questions about sex and violence, some of them argue that it is too much, but others see these aspects as a mirror of the society. All of them seem to agree in the criticisms they make about counter-programming and to the excessive advertising.

As I observed in Chapter 5, in general, all the participants are very critical towards the programming of the Portuguese television. Even if, in general, they think that there is an excess of ‘telenovelas’, they assume that they like to watch national programmes. In fact, research across Europe supports this. Domestically produced programmes are the most popular; followed by American imports with programmes produced in other European countries being the least popular of all (see Collins, 1994). This may be one explanation for the success of TVI, based on Portuguese ‘telenovelas’.

One question that I want to leave here has to do with the cycles. Just like this is the cycle of the national production and of the reality-shows, is it not possible to think that in the future the preferences of the viewers will change? Just like Patricia, one of the participants in the focus-group discussions, said: “Nowadays it’s nice and fashionable to listen to Portuguese music and to watch Portuguese programmes. Before, our artists were nobody and nowadays they are VIPs.”

After all the information I have collected during this research I do not think that is the preferences of the viewers that change. On the contrary, it is the imagination of the policy-makers that is always working. In the beginning of the 1990’s, Emídio Rangel, on SIC, invested on Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ and won. In the end of the decade, José Eduardo Moniz, on TVI, invested on Portuguese ‘telenovelas’ and reality-shows and won. People did not ask for these products. People just react to what is given to them.

But there is something that, at least, one person asks for. One of the participants in the focus-groups discussions would like to see the programmes changing more often. For this participant, a factory worker, this change should mean more innovation in the schedules, so that people could be more motivated to watch the programmes.

The majority of the participants in the focus-groups discussions also say that they would like
to have more documentaries and cultural programmes on television, but one never knows what they really chose to watch when they have ‘Big Brother’ on TVI and a History programme on RTP2. The shares show that the majority prefer reality-shows. One conclusion that I might take out of this apparent contradiction is that in general people enjoy the idea of having a cultural alternative on the television but they watch it only occasionally.

The opinions of the participants in the focus-groups discussions did not surprise one of the policy-makers that collaborated in the project. António Borga, ex-sub-director of programmes of SIC, already knew what the general public think about Portuguese television. But one fundamental question is: are the policy-makers giving the viewers what they want to see?

The conclusion that I can present will have to be based on the analysis of the schedules that I presented on Chapter 4 and the opinions that I collected in the focus-groups discussions in Chapter 5.

In May 2000, during all the days of the week, the types of programmes that occupy more time of the schedules, in the different channels, were as it follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>RTP2</th>
<th>SIC</th>
<th>TVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>Euro news 37.3%</td>
<td>Live-entert. 14.8%</td>
<td>Children 20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. News</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>Sports 13.1%</td>
<td>Children 13.9%</td>
<td>Movies 19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>Movies 9.1%</td>
<td>Movies 10.8%</td>
<td>Series 14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>Documentaries 6.4%</td>
<td>‘Telenovela’ 10.5%</td>
<td>Tele-shop 9.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the major conclusions that I took out of the focus-group discussions is that people would like to see more documentaries and cultural programmes on television. As it is possible to observe from the table, in May 2000, only RTP2 had one of those types of programmes occupying a prominent position in its schedules. But when the viewers say that they would like to see more of something, this cannot mean that they do not like what they already have in abundant supply. The truth is that during the focus-group discussions I realised that many of the participants enjoyed watching, for instance, news, ‘telenovelas’ and live-entertainment, three of the types of programmes more broadcast on Portuguese television.

Naturally, the option to have many programmes for children is obvious: they spend many free hours at home. During this research, children were always present as a main concern. I wanted to know how the policy-makers address their concerns and interests. And I concluded that they say they have concerns with the programmes they chose for children (Chapter 3), even if all the other opinions that I collected generally go in the opposite direction (Chapter 4
and Chapter 5). Here, it is important to highlight that RTP was playing the lead role in terms of quality. Both the critics of television and the participants in the focus groups agree that the programmes for children on the public channels have a special concern.

In addition to the type of programmes that are scheduled by the Portuguese television channel in comparison with the preference of the viewers, it is also important to observe what happens with the national programmes. The majority of the participants in the focus-groups discussions show a preference for the national programmes. Were the policy-makers fulfilling this preference in the week of May 2000?

The analysis of the scheduling that I did gives a positive answer. Both RTP1 and SIC decided to broadcast In-house programmes the majority of the time (Chapter 4). At the time of the analysis, TVI still had a significant percentage of American programmes although their predominance was in decline. Nowadays, the programmes the most common programmes are Portuguese ‘telenovelas’ on TVI.

**What the minister says versus what happens**

As we have seen, this thesis has its main basis in the discourse and practice of the policy-makers of the Portuguese channels, in the analysis of the schedules, in the opinion of four groups of viewers, in the opinion of people professionally involved with television (critics, researchers, association of the viewers) and, finally, in the opinion of a minister. Guilherme d’Oliveira Martins was one of the ministers in charge of the mass media matters in the socialist Government (in power from 1995 to 2002). When I interviewed him, he clearly identified what, in his opinion, a public channel of television should be. As the policy-makers of the private channels also argue that have similar missions (Chapter 3), one way of putting one end to these conclusions is trying to find out if those missions are being fulfilled, according this piece of research.

As I explain in Chapter 6, Oliveira Martins, the ex-minister, believes that a public television station should follow five principles:

- Impartiality and independence in the information sector
- Valorisation of fields like education, sciences and culture
- Special protection of the Portuguese language
- Defence of the basic rights of the people, and specifically limitations to violence
- Special attention to be given to the new technologies.

It was not the aim of this research to analyse the information (news) sector, so I exclude any possible analysis of this aspect. Also, it was not my intention to go through the new
technologies field. Even if I think that both these subjects are very interesting and even if I
would like to analyse them in future, for now, my interest was about entertainment and arts-
based programming. So, I can only try to verify if the policy-makers are taking the conditions
the ex-minister considers essential seriously.

When it comes to fields like education, sciences and culture, I can conclude, through the
analysis I did of the schedules (Chapter 4), that the majority of the time of broadcasting is not
dedicated to these areas. At least in May 2000, the preferences of the policy-maker of the
Portuguese channels of television were for movies, children’s programmes (mainly
entertainment), news and live-entertainment.

In the interviews that I conducted with the policy-makers I asked them about the accusation
that they fail to take children’s education seriously enough. They did not accept this criticism.
António Borga, formerly sub-director of programmes of SIC, explains that “in the beginning”
the station had to face much hostile opinion particularly from the educational sector of the
country. Inside the station this was always understood as something ironic “because these
sectors frequently transfer to the television the responsibilities of the school, not to talk about
the responsibilities of the family”.

When it comes to the provision for the special protection of the Portuguese language, I am
very pleased to conclude that this was probably the only positive consequence of the
complicated process of the “war for audiences” that took place in Portugal during the last few
years, as it was showed along as can be seen throughout this thesis.

As for the defence of the basic rights of the people, with particular respect for limitations over
the amount of violence, one possibility of finding a conclusion is through the opinion of the
people I interviewed. But this is not something that one can count; it is a matter of opinion.
So, I turn to the opinions that I collected during this research to find out possible answers to
the question if the television channels are being moderated in this matter.

Rodrigues dos Santos, journalist and news presenter of RTP, thinks that there is a remarkable
difference between the public channel and the others, at least when it comes to the amount of
violence in the programmes for the younger viewers: “It is a fact that the programmes for
children on RTP are less violent than the programmes of the private channels.” And if we
look at the opinion of the policy-makers themselves, for instance, António Borga was
following a specific orientation: to give products that please the kids, without free violence.
The problem is the difference that often goes from the intentions to the practices. For
instance, the old people who participated in the focus group that I conducted all agree that
there is still too much violence and sex on television.

At this final stage, I think that it is important not to forget the conditions to get a licence of a
private channel of television. Besides the economic and technical aspects, the law says that
the duration and the scheduling of cultural, fictional and informative programmes is determinant. It is also vitally important that the channels broadcast national and European products, and are able to offer diversity in the interest of public service. Bearing all this in mind, and remembering that the licences for the private service last for fifteen years and that ten are already gone, I think that it is time to think about what is going to happen in the future. I would argue that more research is needed here. My first aim was to understand what is behind the policy-makers’ decisions. I wanted to put in confrontation their options and the opinion of the people involved. Not only the critics and the people with responsibilities in the media field, but also – and especially – the viewers. Since the scenario now is already different, I think that it is important to go on analysing the phenomenon.

4. Portugal in the European scenario: a case of deregulation?

Humphreys (1996, pp.122-3) explains, “with respect to ownership and finance, Western Europe has displayed a diversity of structures”. Quoting Brants and Siune, he characterises those different structures as “‘pure’ public monopolies funded solely by the licence fee; ‘mixed revenue’ public monopolies drawing on licence fees and advertising; and ‘dual’ systems where a public sector coexists with a private commercial one”. The Portuguese case is something else: it consists of a public service, which is funded by both advertising and a license fee, co-existing with a commercial sector. Comparatively speaking Portuguese television is structurally different from that in other European countries. According to Dominique Wolton (in RTP2, 12 April 2002), Portugal is the only European country that does not seem interested in giving more support to the public channels of television so that they will achieve more quality and fulfil better its missions. Instead, the Portuguese public television has been fighting for audiences just the same way the two private stations do. The new Portuguese Government (social-democrat, just like the Government that allowed the privatisation of two channels of television) announced the intentions of having only one public channel of television, without advertising and without the possibility of getting extra money besides its income from the public money. Wolton says that the problems of the public service of television are no reason to abolish RTP. This researcher says that “the battle, in Portugal, should not be to extinguish the public service but to strength it” (Público, 10 April 2002).

The question is why had Portugal, until now, a system where the public channel was fighting the same war for audiences, wants to change to a system where the public television (reduced to one channel) shall not compete with the commercial channels? Humphreys (1996, p.111)
says “different national models can be explained, to an important degree, by reference to the different political contexts – historical, cultural and institutional – in which have been embedded”. Besides the obvious change in the political scenario, Portugal also saw, in recent years, changes in the television scenario.

Looking at the European broadcasting system, the Portuguese case has its own peculiarities but also followed some trends. For instance across Europe, “the public-service broadcasters have embraced, albeit to varying degrees, more commercial standards and practices” (Humphreys, 1996, pp.160-1) and Portugal was no exception. This country was in the process of “marketisation of broadcasting”: “Consumer choice, expressed as audience preferences, should therefore replace the regulated media”.

One possible consequence of the privatisation of television has been a change in the content. Siune (1998, p.2) says: “The content of the media has changed during the past 10 years. On television all over Europe we find less educational programmes which, furthermore, seem to become more and more alike everywhere”. If this was true, some years ago, because of the American series, now it is also true mainly because of the reality-shows, with the same formats being adapted by and with native people.

There are other aspects that make the “marketisation of broadcasting” in Portugal similar to what has been described in other European countries. Even if Humphreys (1996, pp.162-3) argues that “in competitive markets, quality drama would be too ‘cost-inefficient’ to produce in significant measure anymore”, the two Portuguese private channels of television had the highest shares of audiences through national films and soap operas made for television. And this goes in the same direction of the trend presented by Siune and Hultén (1998, p.30), when they argue that dominant national channels devote more time and resources to domestic productions than before.

Another aspect is the reason to go for the privatisation. According to the same author, many small European countries did it because they were being victims of the “imported deregulation” as a result of the penetration of foreign commercial television channels. This was not the case in Portugal. Before the privatisation cable television did not exist and satellite was insignificant. So, the Portuguese deregulation and liberalisation was not designed to encourage a response from indigenous commercial interests.

The discussion about the “deregulation or re-regulation” can also be applied to the Portuguese case. By opening the broadcasting field to the private companies, it did not mean that the regulation disappeared. Just like in the French case (Humphreys, 1996, pp.193-4), in Portugal the inception of commercial television meant more regulation (Regime of Television Activity, a new Law of Television, and the High Authority for the Media), in the specific sense.
5. The confirmation of the hypothesis

Going back to the initial stage, after analysing all the data of this research and facing my hypothesis, I can conclude:

1. Yes, the public service of television, mainly the first channel (RTP1) is not fulfilling its missions.

2. Yes, there is no significant difference in output between the main public channel and the two private ones.

3. Yes, that generality programmes are chosen to achieve the highest possible shares, which means that the minorities are not well served.

4. Yes, the public, the critics and the people with responsibilities are not happy with the results of the policy-making in the television channels.

Although these confirmations might appear as a very pessimistic scenario, there are other factors – not directly identified in the hypothesis – that have to be taken in consideration. If, in general, it is true that people are not happy with what they get from television terrestrial channels, in a more detailed analysis (as I have showed) there is at least one aspect that pleases the majority of the people who took part in this research: the existence, now a days, of more programmes produced in Portugal. Not only talk shows, but also ‘telenovelas’, movies and series produced specifically for television.

Also, comparing the present output of television to the one the existed under monopoly arrangements, which people do not seem to want to go back to. Mainly because, as many participants in the focus-group discussions explained, those were times when censorship was obvious. Now a days, as the news presenter and one of the researcher said, there is still censorship at the public television, but it is at a lower level. And the proof is that nothing stopped the public television of trying to fight the “war of the audiences” of the private channels, with the same “weapons”, even if those “weapons” were against the notions of the public service. Like, for instance, the disrespect for the viewers.

In conclusion, I can argue that the Portuguese people, in general, do not like the television programmes that they are given, but also that they never had something that satisfied them. Everybody seems to dream about a perfect television, with educational and cultural programmes. But the truth is that it was a programme like ‘Big Brother’ that had audiences
never seen before. The only consolation is that, because they were tuned in that channel – TVI – people started to see the other programmes on its schedule, including the national productions. This is positive not only because it helps the national production industry, but also because it strengthens the national language.
Appendix 1: Chronology of the privatisation

January/1990
1. Reformulation of the direction of RTP to face the new-comings reality of the private channels.

June/1990
2. Disclosed the information that the Prime Minister in charge in 1982, Pinto Balsemão, promised a television channel to the Catholic Church.
3. Negative reactions to the impossibility of foreign capital to represent more than 10% of each new private channel.
4. The Catholic Church announces the intention of being candidate to one of the frequencies.

July/1990
5. The economic group Sonae admits that it should not be candidate to one of the frequencies.
6. The Catholic Church says it does not want privileges but argues that needs the media to spread its word.
7. The Government finally approves the possibility of private enterprises to apply for a licence of private television.

September/1990
8. Balsemão presented his project for a private television, based on news and ‘telenovelas’.
9. The different candidates present doubts concerning the rules of the contest.

October/1990
10. RTP was formally divided into two channels.

November/1990
11. The possible dates for candidates to submit their application were released. Three groups were still interested (Pinto Balsemão; Catholic Church with Magalhães Crespo; Proença de Carvalho with Carlos Barbosa). Two had given up (Telecine; the economic group that owns ‘Jornal de Notícias’). One (Sonae with Belmiro de Azevedo) was still deciding.

December/1990
12. The criteria that would be used to choose who would get the frequencies were still unclear.
13. The strongest candidates to the frequencies said that the prices that the private companies would have to pay for the use of the airwaves was to high.

January/1991
14. Sonae created a company called “TV Nova”.
15. Balsemão and Carlos Barbosa are presented as the strongest candidates and the Catholic Church is said to be facing difficulties.
16. Balsemão was planning as “intelligent and popular” television channel that would be profitable after five years.

**February/1991**

17. Governmental sources believe that a 4th channel would never exist.
18. Balsemão starts to negotiate with possible partners for his channel – SIC – in case he wins a frequency.
19. The Catholic Church announced the name of its channel, if it wins a frequency: TVI.
20. The Catholic Church presented its project.

**March/1991**

21. The organisation of Catholics in Rome stressed the importance of the Portuguese Catholic Church having a channel of television, since there wasn’t one like that in Europe.
22. One week before the dead line to present the projects, three official candidates were known: TVI (Catholic Church and ‘Rádio Renascença’, the Catholic National Radio Station), TV1 (Proença de Carvalho and Carlos Barbosa) and SIC (Pinto Balsemão).
23. TVI and SIC announced that they were planning to increase the amount of investment in their projects.
24. TVI and TV1 admitted the possibility of combining their two projects in one.

**April/1991**

25. The possible alliance of TVI and TV1 did not work out.
27. The guidelines of the three projects were known. TVI presents a popular channel with a strong component of national productions.
28. RTP signed a contract with the Spanish public television – TVE – to face the coming competition.
29. RTP received a considerable amount of money from the Government. It was understood as a compensation for the coming competition and also because the television tax was abolished.
30. Even before they started to broadcast, the private channels started already a “war” with the public service, because of the money that it was getting from the State.

**May/1991**

31. The process of the decision was clarified: the High Authority for the Media would give its opinion about the candidates in the end of July but the Government would have the final decision.
32. The responsible for the project of the Catholic project said that he would change his vote in the following elections if the Catholic Church would not get a frequency.
33. 34. 35. The main political parties (Social Democrats – PSD –, in the Government at the time, and Socialists – PS) discussed the privatisation of television in the Parliament. The debate was centred in the interference of the Government in the public channel.

36. Balsemão was almost sure that he would win a frequency and admitted that the decision would be not only technical but also political. He said that his project would avoid violence, especially at those times when children are awake.

*July/1991*

37. The weekly newspaper “Expresso” compares the three different projects.

38. The Government was avoiding a decision before the general elections.

39. The High Authority for the Media assured that the delays in the analysis of the projects had nothing to do with political reasons.

*August/1991*

40. The daily newspaper “Público” announced the first conclusions of the report of the High Authority for the Media, where SIC and TVI were presented as the possible winners. TV1 was not happy with these first results.

41. “Expresso” says that the first conclusions of the High Authority for the Media was a “volt-face” since the project considered as the poorest – TVI – was about to get one of the frequencies of television.

42. A new document from the High Authority for the Media says that TVI and TV1 are in similar conditions.

43. Since the new document does not present the candidates in a hierarchy, the Government is free to make its own choice.

*December/1991*

44. The RTP was going through transformations: it would have a contract of concession for 15 years; a body that would analyse the programming; the amount of public money given to this station was defined.

45. The Minister responsible for the Media showed its preference for SIC and TV1, arguing that TVI could have a space to broadcast in RTP2.

*February/1992*

46. The Government announced that the Prime Minister would announce the results himself.

47. The results were known: SIC and TVI won; TV1 lost. The explanation was that TV1 project was unrealistic. The Government ensured that the result was not based on political issues. The Government chose the “balanced” proposal of SIC and the “modest” proposal of TVI, rejecting the “fearless” proposal of TV1.

48. “Expresso” reveals what happened in the meeting where the decision was made, ensuring that the Minister did not interfere.
49. A new Council of Management was nominated for RTP and the Secretary of State responsible for the media assured that the public station no longer had economic difficulties and that it the State is proud of the quality of the station.

May/1992

50. The new private channels of television – SIC and TVI – questioned the amount of money that the State was giving the public channel, as well as the amount of money RTP was charging for its archives.

September/1992

51. RTP was said to be receiving more and more money because of the competition of the private channels. These ones seemed to have only one weapon: look for good programmes and for good professionals.

October/1992

52. The Secretary of State of Culture announced his intention of producing a law to limit the violence and explicit Sex on television programming; a reality much brought by the private channels.

53. The details of this law were known, as well as the fines for the breaking of those rules.

November/1992

54. The Head of the National Secretary for the Mass Media criticised the public television, arguing that is should not follow that other European public television when they followed the private ones in what regards the content of the programming.

December/1992

55. It was announced the possibility of the RTP-International to be transformed into pay-per-view, instead of being free of charge, as until then.

February/1993

56. A study about the public television explained that it was spending more than what the Government wanted.

57. RTP was in crisis, namely because of the director.

58. A new director for RTP was presented – Freitas da Cruz.

59. According to “Público”, the choice of the new president was political.

60. According to the weekly newspaper “Independente”, the choice of the new president might be a signal to the possible intentions of privatising the public channel.

61. “Independente” says that an inquiry to RTP proved a deficient financial management.

62. “Expresso” adds that many movies that were bought were never broadcast.

March/1993

63. The Government announces the intention of making the RTP get out of the “war of audiences” with the private channels, by having a more cultural image.
64. The president of TVI questioned the money that RTP was getting from the taxes, while it was the television channel that had more shares of advertisement.

65. The Contract of Concession of the Public Service was signed: the financial status of the enterprise would be inspected twice a year.

66. RTP was obliged to have alternative programmes and sports in the second channel.

**May 1993**

67. The directors of the two private channels say to “Diário de Notícias” that there is now more quality and that the public channels are a real alternative.

**October 1993**

68. “Expresso” presented the balance of one year of privatisation: the news improved but the sensationalism increased; more offer but more programmes without “quality”.

69. “Jornal de Notícias” concludes that, after one-year of privatisation, politicians were more “controlled”.

70. The Government admitted that the channels of television were violating the rules about advertisement.

71. “Público” refers to the improvement of the news but also presents a scenario with more “cheap products of entertainment”. RTP was still having ¾ of the audience but SIC had overtaken RTP2 already. Balsemão accused RTP of not respecting the Contract of Concession that it signed.

**January 1994**

72. Balsemão considered that RTP was doing “disloyal competition” to the private channels.

73. Na opinion-maker says the money from the advertisement is not enough for the four channels of television.

**Abril 1994**

74. The Portuguese Association of the Viewers says that the most positive aspect of the privatisation of television is the news and the most negative aspect is the programming subordinated to the fight for audiences.

**February 1995**

75. Arons de Carvalho, deputy from the Socialist Party, argued that RTP is not doing public service.

**December 1995**

76. Because of the discussion about the role of the public service, a new director of information was nominated: the news presenter of RTP2.

**February 1996**

77. “Público” argues that the only channel that is respecting the law in what concerns advertisement is RTP2. At this time, SIC is already leader of the audiences.
April/1996
78. Another opinion-maker says that the Portuguese people do not need a public service that
gives them what the private channels do.

March/1996
79. 80. The new Secretary of State of the Mass Communications, Arons de Carvalho, says the
solution for RTP is not the privatisation, as some were defending. He also regrets the
abolition of the television tax, decided by the previous Government.

February/1997
81. Although RTP/Porto was facing some difficulties, its president assured that this section of
RTP would not be closed.

March/1997
82. Commemorating the 40 years of RTP, “Público” presents a special edition of its
magazine. The director of the newspaper says that the private television channels did what
RTP never did: bring the people inside the screen.

May/1997
83. “Expresso” presents the opinion of many famous people about RTP. Also, it says that
there are more people watching television but few hours.

June/1997
84. The critic of television, Cintra Torres, argues that the Prime Minister, António Guterres, is
using the television as an objective to achieve his objectives.
85. The public service was discussed in a conference in Lisbon. The responsible for RTP
criticises the way the private channels compete with the public ones.

October/1997
86. “Público” published an article making the balance of five years of SIC’s existence.
Appendix 2: The discourse of the policy-makers through tables

In order to make the data collected in Chapter 3 more concise, here I present in tables the main quotations of the interviews and of the articles quoted, organised by topics. The conclusions follow each table, in a concise way.
### CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT THE CHANNELS:

- Although SIC presents itself as an open station, the others also are.
- RTP wants to be close to the public; SIC wants to inform and to entertain; TVI wants to show good fiction.
- Both RTP and SIC want to achieve a variety of audience groups, while TVI is mainly concerned with the high classes.
- SIC is trying to fight for the international market of Portuguese emigrants.
Ap. 2.2 PRIVATISATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP (public)</th>
<th>SIC (private)</th>
<th>TVI (private)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantages: “The public service can only have some efficiency if there is competition. A new style, more competitive, appeared.” The private channels are doing public service. “Their logic is to be profitable. They programme for the majority, which is not everybody.” They say they have programmes for the minorities. If we ask about them, they say: we have a documentary. At what time? Three in the morning! I’m sorry, but you are joking with me...” (J. R. Santos, News Presenter of RTP1)</td>
<td>Advantages: “More programmes to watch and higher standards in the national production” “Everything that is public interest and that interests the people ends up being public service. It is evident that all the channels fulfil public service criteria: a good daily news bulletin is a public service that is performed.” “SIC also does public service when it promotes the theatre” (A. Borga, Sub-Director of Programmes of SIC)</td>
<td>“One of the consequences of privatisation is that the role of the public service has to be re-thought” “The private channels end up offering a public service, in the sense that they use an instrument that is public and in the sense that they agreed with the obligations defined in the public contest they applied to.” “When they produce good fiction, when they provide good products, when they organise debates, they are basically doing the same as the public station does.” (J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
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CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT PRIVATISATION:

- All agree that the privatisation was good: more competition, more variety, and more quality.
- Disagreement: the privates are accused of thinking only about the profits; they answer saying that they are fulfilling the mission of the public service giving good programmes, supporting activities like the theatre and using public goods.
### Ap. 2.3 PUBLIC SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP (public)</th>
<th>SIC (private)</th>
<th>TVI (private)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“RTP is not performing the public service; it is trying, everyday, to deliver more public service.”</td>
<td>“Instead of producing quiz-shows, the public service should be using the money to buy programmes of good quality from the independent market.”</td>
<td>Wanting the public service to answer to the diversity of channels (including cable and satellite) “is a chimera”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“RTP has a problem of image, which is the result of many years of arrogant monopoly.”</td>
<td>“RTP should be using the national archives and national institutions to deliver what it is obliged to produce by law.”</td>
<td>(J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To fight the crisis: new team, new schedule, and new perspective.</td>
<td>The State should stop financing RTP because “it does the same, in a worse way, than what the others do.”</td>
<td>(A. Borga, Sub-Director of Programmes of SIC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT PUBLIC SERVICE:

- The public service recognises the internal crisis and a bad image and it is trying to do something about it.
- SIC feels that RTP is failing in its missions.
- TVI admits that the public service cannot be as good as all the others together.
• RTP recognises inefficiency but explains that is suffering from the cuts.
• SIC says that the only way of being independent is being self-financed.
Ap. 2.5 PERCENTAGES OF ADVERTISING

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: AGB Portugal)

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE PERCENTAGES OF ADVERTISING:

- RTP is losing advertisement for both the private channels, but mainly for SIC.
- The numbers seem to be stable.
- Also: SIC has no debts since 1995 and TVI has no debts since 1999, while the debt of RTP was growing every year.
**Ap. 2.6 IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RTP (public)</th>
<th>SIC (private)</th>
<th>TVI (private)</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 2000 – the new direction started a new era of production of series.</td>
<td>January 2000 – first film made for television: 2.4 millions of viewers.</td>
<td>“We want to work with the market. We do not want to create a big internal structure of production. We want to have the capacity to conceive of projects and to follow their execution. But we want the market to do the most of it.” (J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP “has an investment in Portuguese fiction that the private ones do not have, for instance, in soap-operas, which is the most important product of fiction in the Portuguese television. (...) These are things that the privates do not do!” (J. R. Santos, News Presenter of RTP1)</td>
<td>“RTP never produced anything, it does not have its own programmes, and it never did in-house production.” “We (the private channels) are producing fiction with one thousand times more quality than that fiction that we watched when RTP had the monopoly.” “This station wants to be fed by the market.” (A. Borga, Sub-Director of Programmes of SIC)</td>
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**CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION:**

- Both RTP and SIC accuse each other of not producing their own fiction in Portuguese. But they are talking of different things: RTP produces soap operas and SIC does not; SIC produces films and RTP does not (yet).
- Both SIC and TVI want to work with the independent market.
### CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT CHILDREN:

- RTP is accused of being too girlish and SIC is accused of being too violent.
- The main concern of RTP is to educate and then to entertain.
- The orientation of SIC is to give products that please the kids, without free violence.
- The strategy of TVI is to give childish programmes for young kids and live programmes for the older ones.
- There is not a considerable amount of in-house production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP (public)</th>
<th>SIC (private)</th>
<th>TVI (private)</th>
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<tr>
<td>“It is a fact that the programmes for children on RTP are less violent than the programmes of the private channels.”</td>
<td>“It is obvious that we attribute a great importance to the children”: 70% of children who watch TV watch our channel (November/1999)</td>
<td>TVI also does not have a department for children’s programming, but it is possible that one will be created in the present reformulation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“RTP is probably more interested in a female audience, they’re our main target audience.”</td>
<td>Although this station does not have a department for children’s programmes, they recognised that this area “demands a specific know-how with regards to production.”</td>
<td>“We are having good results [with the new programmes] and are going to invest in this audience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(J. R. Santos, News Presenter of RTP1)</td>
<td>“There is a lack of in-house production and independent production for children, so our programmes are still very based on foreign products.”</td>
<td>The programmes for children “are not the easiest ones to sell” but we want “to win the fidelity of the generations as soon as possible.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We have heroes for girls and heroes for boys. We respect the quotas of international programmes. Among the documentaries, we diversify in the areas of the knowledge: arts, cinema and history. Among quiz shows, we also diversify: languages, arts, and mathematics. We follow an educational line with entertainment.”</td>
<td>Criteria: “Programming suitable with the tastes and interests of the children”; “obey to the common sense that all programming should adhere to”; “no gratuitous violence”.</td>
<td>Strategies: we give childish programmes to young children featuring a lot of repetition; whereas we increase the liveliness in the programmes to cater for the older ones.”</td>
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<td>(N. Macedo, Psychologist of RTP’s Children Department)</td>
<td>RTP is being “amateur and artisan”. “It only attracted children before the privatisation because they had no choice.”</td>
<td>Rule: “Never broadcast hard stuff before 10 pm”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We do not go beyond certain limits (...) but we have our little sins.”</td>
<td>SIC has been accused by the “moralist lobby” of being to violent, but the responsible say that they cannot ignore the social dysfunction that lead to violence.</td>
<td>(J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(J. G. Esteves, Director of RTP)</td>
<td>(A. Borga, Sub-Director of Programmes of SIC)</td>
<td>Children do not become violent because of what they see on television. (J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
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Ap. 2.8 SHARES (RATINGS) IN PERCENTAGES

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>09.7</td>
<td>06.4</td>
<td>06.5</td>
<td>05.6</td>
<td>06.2</td>
<td>05.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>06.3</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>00.0</td>
<td>06.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B: Shares (Source: AGB Portugal)

Ap. 2.9 AUDIENCES AND RATINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP (public)</th>
<th>SIC (private)</th>
<th>TVI (private)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“It does not matter whether we lose audiences, what matters is why.” (J. G. Esteves, Director of RTP)</td>
<td>“Our main competitor still is RTP.” (A. Borga, Sub-Director of Programmes of SIC)</td>
<td>“We still have our ups and downs, but in some days we are doing very well.” (J. E. Moniz, Director of TVI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP is “ambitious about the shares” but this does not mean that the public service has to run after the shares”. Nevertheless, “without audiences, the public service would lose its meaning.” (B. Brito, Administrator of RTP)</td>
<td>New slogan: “The station is the leader of the audiences”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS OF THE TABLE ABOUT AUDIENCES RATINGS:

- RTP is losing audiences everyday to the private channels, especially for SIC.
- TVI is slowly achieving its results that are not so ambitious as the ones SIC have.
- SIC conquered almost half of the audiences in four years.
- The shares seem now to be stable.
Appendix 3: Detailed analysis of the schedules

The conclusions reached in the tables presented in Chapter 4 are the result of a detailed study, which is presented now. It specifies the analysis done with the major important information taken from all the data given by the application of SPSS. The data is divided by topics, which allowed the construction of following tables. Then, the conclusions are the result of the interpretation of these tables.
Conclusions about the general policies of programming in what concerns the genre:

- There is a predominance of the entertainment among the Portuguese television:
  
  * RTP1: almost half of the programming is of entertainment (46.6% = 22.7% of factual entertainment and 23.9% of fictional entertainment).
  * RTP2: more than half of the programming is information/news (50.9%), explained by the non-stop emission of Euro news.
  * SIC: the majority of the programming is entertainment (59.2% = 29.1% of factual entertainment and 30.1% of fictional entertainment).
  * TVI: the majority of the programming is also entertainment (57.6% = 14.4% of factual entertainment and 43.1% of fictional entertainment).
  * There is a predominance of the entertainment among the Portuguese television.
  * The channel that has more entertainment is SIC. This station also has a balance between factual and fictional entertainment while TVI shows a clear preference for fiction.

- TVI is the station that dedicates more time to the programmes for children (20.7% whilst SIC has 13.9%, RTP1 has 11.4% and RTP2 has 3.0%).

- In what concerns the information – and excluding the specific case of RTP2 – RTP1 dedicates almost twice of the time that SIC dedicates and the triple of the time that TVI dedicates.
  
  RTP1 = 33.3% (16.9% of news and 16.4% of diverse)
  SIC = 17.7% (10.7% of news and 7.0% of diverse)
  TVI = 11.8% (7.8% of news and 4.0% of diverse).
### AP. 3.2 TOPS OF TYPES OF PROGRAMMES BY WEEKDAYS

#### Whole week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RTP1</strong></td>
<td>Children = 11.4%</td>
<td>Other fict. ent. = 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General news = 10.3%</td>
<td>European news = 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Magazine = 9.8%</td>
<td>Satirical = 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movie = 9.4%</td>
<td>Quiz-shows = 0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-existent:** Tele-movies, Porno-movies, General debates, Other info/diverse, African news, Cultural news, Religious news, Open University, Eucharistry, Other Miscellaneous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RTP2</strong></td>
<td>European news = 37.3%</td>
<td>African news = 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports = 13.1%</td>
<td>Eucharisty = 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movie = 9.1%</td>
<td>Other info/div. = 0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentary = 6.4%</td>
<td>Sports news = 0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-existent:** Live entertainment, Quiz-shows, Talk-shows, Music, Videos, Other factual entertainment, Soap-operas, Series, Tele-movies, Porno movies, Satirical, Interviews, Magazines, Regional news, Tele-shop, Other Miscellaneous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIC</strong></td>
<td>Live entertain. = 14.8%</td>
<td>Sports = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 13.9%</td>
<td>Other fict. ent. = 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movie = 10.8%</td>
<td>Tele-movies = 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telenovela = 10.5%</td>
<td>Interview = 0.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-existent:** Music, Videos, Satirical, General debates, Magazine, Culture, Regional news, African news, Economic news, Cultural news, Religious news, Other info/news, Open university, Eucharistry, Other miscellaneous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TVI</strong></td>
<td>Children = 20.7%</td>
<td>Economic news = 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 19.8%</td>
<td>Other real ent. = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Series = 14.4%</td>
<td>Interviews = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tele-shop = 9.3%</td>
<td>Religious news = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Non-existent:** Quiz-shows, Talk-shows, Sit-com, Tele-movies, Satirical, Other fictional entertainment, Magazines, Documentaries, Culture, Other Info/diverse, Regional news, African news, European news, Cultural news, Other Info/news, Open University, Other miscellaneous.
Weekdays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
<td>Magazine = 14.3%</td>
<td>Satirical = 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live ent. = 11.5%</td>
<td>Other fict. ent. = 0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General news = 10.9%</td>
<td>Quiz-show = 0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 8.6%</td>
<td>Other real ent. = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Documentaries = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Celebrities, Music, Culture, European news.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
<td>European news = 48.5%</td>
<td>Culture = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 10.5%</td>
<td>Open university = 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports = 7.7%</td>
<td>Economic news = 1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentaries = 6.1%</td>
<td>Cultural news = 1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Celebrities, Other fictional entertainment, Sports debate, other info/diverse, Sports news, Eucharisty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>Live ent. = 15.5%</td>
<td>Sports = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk-shows = 14.0%</td>
<td>Tele-movies = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telenovelas = 13.4%</td>
<td>Documentaries = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 11.1%</td>
<td>Interviews = 0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Quiz shows, Celebrities, Other fictional entertainment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>Children = 25.7%</td>
<td>Economic news = 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 17.0%</td>
<td>Other real ent. = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Series = 13.2%</td>
<td>Interviews = 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tele-shop = 9.8%</td>
<td>General debate = 1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Celebrities, Sports news, Religious news, Eucharisty.
Weekend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 17.8%</td>
<td>Economic news = 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 15.3%</td>
<td>European news = 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tele-shop = 10.9%</td>
<td>Other news = 0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General news = 9.3%</td>
<td>Other real ent. = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Satirical = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Quiz shows, Talk shows, Telenovela, Magazines, Documentaries, Regional news.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP2</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports = 25.4%</td>
<td>African news = 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European news = 10.6%</td>
<td>Economic news = 1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open University = 9.1%</td>
<td>Other fict. ent. = 2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture = 7.7%</td>
<td>Other info/div. = 2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Economic news, other news, Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIC</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 22.6%</td>
<td>Sports = 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 20.5%</td>
<td>Other real ent. = 0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live ent. = 13.1%</td>
<td>Sports news = 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General news = 9.7%</td>
<td>Other fict. ent. = 1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-existent (besides the others mentioned above): Talk shows, Tele-movies, Interviews, Sports debate, Other info/diverse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TVI</th>
<th>Top +</th>
<th>Top -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies = 26.6%</td>
<td>Religious news = 0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Series = 17.2%</td>
<td>Celebrities = 2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children = 8.1%</td>
<td>Eucharisty = 2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tele-shop = 7.9%</td>
<td>Music = 2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions about the policies according to the days of the week in what concerns the types of programmes:

- **During the whole week,**
  - All of the channels give a significant share of their time to the movies. Other type of fiction (like soap-opera, and series) is also frequently broadcasted.
  - RTP1, SIC and TVI show a clear investment on children’s programmes.
  - The other frequent programmes are the news (specially Euro news on RTP2), live entertainment, magazine, and sports.

- **During the weekdays,**
  - Live-entertainment, magazines and talk shows are the programmes most broadcasted by RTP1 and SIC.
  - The preferences of RTP2 are, once again, Euro news.
  - The preferences of TVI are, once again, the children programmes.

- **During the weekend,**
  - Children programmes, movies and series are the programmes most broadcasted by RTP1, SIC and TVI.
  - The preference of RTP2 goes to the sports.
### AP. 3.3 TOPS OF TYPES OF PROGRAMMES BY TIME

#### RTP1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Magazine (%)</th>
<th>Telenovelas (%)</th>
<th>Children (%)</th>
<th>Live entert. (%)</th>
<th>General news (%)</th>
<th>Sports (%)</th>
<th>Talk-shows (%)</th>
<th>Movies (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch-time</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Prime-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>General news (%)</th>
<th>Series (%)</th>
<th>Tele-shop (%)</th>
<th>Regional news (%)</th>
<th>Sit-com (%)</th>
<th>Movies (%)</th>
<th>Sports (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-night</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### RTP2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>European news (%)</th>
<th>Sports debates (%)</th>
<th>Open University (%)</th>
<th>Other info/div. (%)</th>
<th>Other fict. ent. (%)</th>
<th>Sports (%)</th>
<th>European news (%)</th>
<th>Movies (%)</th>
<th>General debate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch-time</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Prime-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Children (%)</th>
<th>Documentaries (%)</th>
<th>Celebrities (%)</th>
<th>Movies (%)</th>
<th>General news (%)</th>
<th>Documentaries (%)</th>
<th>Sit-com (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-night</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>General news</th>
<th>Talk-shows</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch-time</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 types</td>
<td>3 types</td>
<td>5 types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prime-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Telenovelas</th>
<th>Live-entert.</th>
<th>Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-night</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 types</td>
<td>7 types</td>
<td>10 types</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>General news</th>
<th>Telenovelas</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 types</td>
<td>5 types</td>
<td>7 types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prime-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Movies</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late-night</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 types</td>
<td>11 types</td>
<td>8 types</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Conclusions about the policies according to the time of the day in what concerns the types of programmes:**

Although there is a significant weight of programmes for children in the morning, general news at lunchtime, and movies at night and late night, the channels have considerable different policy options, as it can be seen in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Lunchtime</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Prime-time</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Late-night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTP1</td>
<td>Magazine</td>
<td>Telenovelas</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Tele-shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTP2</td>
<td>European news</td>
<td>Sports debate</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>European news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIC</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Talk-shows</td>
<td>Tele-Novellas</td>
<td>Live-entertainment</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TVI</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>General news</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Series</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Movies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## AP. 3.4 PERCENTAGES OF PROGRAMMES BY ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>RTP2</th>
<th>SIC</th>
<th>TVI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-house</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ind. Market</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest Europe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest World</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusions by origin:

- Both RTP1 (50%) and SIC (42.1%) made a clear option to broadcast In-house programmes in the majority of their time of emission. The time given to information and to magazines explains this, but also the inclusion of formats spoken in Portuguese.

- All the channels have slightly more than 10% of programmes from USA, except TVI that has more than 30%. This is explained by the American movies.

- This period was relatively calm in what concerns Brazilian telenovelas, and that is visible in this table. Months later, the results would have been different, because the presence of the Brazilian production was stronger (this is visible in the schedules and in the TV Guide).

- The national Independent Market and the Rest of Europe still have a small share of time in all the channels, but RTP1 is the one that leads in both of this situations.

- RTP1 is the only channel that has products from the Rest of the World. Against what one could think, this is not because of the fulfilment of the notion of public service, not even because of the straight connection with Africa, through the ex-colonies. This happens because, at the period of the analysis, this channel was broadcasting a telenovela from Venezuela.

- All channels have a considerable amount of Mix programmes in origin. The most obvious case is RTP2, because of the Euro news. The others are mainly the children compacts (foreigner series presented by Portuguese people with Portuguese contestants and audiences) and programmes about foreign videos presented by Portuguese people.
AP. 3.5 PERCENTAGES OF PROGRAMMES BY ORIGIN AND BY DAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Weekdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-house</strong></td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ind. Market</strong></td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest Europe</strong></td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest World</strong></td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions by origin and by day on RTP1:**

- The In-house programmes diminish clearly from the weekdays to the weekends (from 58.2% to 32.8%) and the weight of the American programmes grows considerably (from 7.9% to 24.1%).
- The programmes of the Rest of the World are not broadcasted on the weekends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Weekend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-house</strong></td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ind. Market</strong></td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest Europe</strong></td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USA</strong></td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rest World</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions by origin and day on RTP2:**

- RTP2 is strongly marked by the presence of Euro news, which increases the broadcasting of programmes with Mix origin. This happens mainly on weekdays (55.3%) but it is also strong on weekends (38.2%).
- The other strong presence is the In-house programming, which is more visible on the weekends (39.2%) but also important during the weekdays (22.6%).
Conclusions by origin and by day on SIC:

- The most important not is the predominance of In-house programmes, especially on weekdays (47.3%) but also on weekends (29.2%).

- There is a considerable presence of programmes of Mix origin in both during the weekdays (22.4%) and the weekend (27.7%).

- The American programmes increase during the weekends (from 8.6% to 28.1%) and the Brazilian ones diminish (from 15.9% to 3.5%).

Conclusions by origin and by day on TVI:

- The American programmes have an important weight both during the weekdays (29.2%) and the weekends (34.9%).

- Besides that, during the weekdays the stronger programmes are of Mix origin (37.8%) because of the telenovelas from Venezuela dubbed in Brazil and during the weekends the In-house production is more visible (35.8%).
AP 3.6 PERCENTAGES OF PROGRAMMES
BY ORIGIN AND BY PERIODS OF THE DAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTP1</th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Lunch-time</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Prime-time</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Late Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind. Market</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Europe</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest World</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions by origin and by periods of the day on RTP1:

- The morning period is filled with In-house production in almost 3/4 of the time (73.5%).
- The majority of the lunchtime is divided between In-house (44.2%) and Rest of the World production (44.7%).
- In the afternoon, the In-house production is still very important (52.5%) but the American programmes start to have an important share of time (24.9%).
- The national production is the most important programming during the primetime (In-house production has 52.0% of the time and Independent Market has 23.0%).
- At night, the programmes from the rest of Europe become more visible (25.8%) that at any other period of the day.
- The late night period does not have a special predominance of origin (In-house production has 31.2%; USA has 26.6%; Mix production has 34.0%).
Conclusions by origin and by periods of the day on RTP2:

- There are three periods that are dominated by the Mix programmes: Morning (68.0%), Afternoon (63.9%) and Late night (83.7%).

- All the periods (especially Lunch-time with 70.2% and Prime-time with 61.3%) have a significant presence of In-house production, except the Late night period, which has only 6.4%.

- Programmes from USA are mainly visible at the Night period (42.0%).
Conclusions by origin and by periods of the day on SIC:

- The morning period is dominated by the Mix production (57.2%), because of the children’s programmes. The In-house made programmes are also important (37.8%), because of the magazines.

- During Lunchtime, all the programmes scheduled are made in Portugal: In-house production has 58.2% of the time and the production made by the Independent Market has 41.8%.

- Brazilian programmes (‘telenovelas’) have an important weight (41.2%) on Prime-time period, followed by In-house production (news) (38.7%).

- At Night, In-house programmes are in the lead (55.0%) but there is still an important presence of Brazilian programmes (32.1%).

- At Late-night, American programmes (movies) occupy the majority of the time (45.9%).
### TVI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Lunch-time</th>
<th>Afternoon</th>
<th>Prime-time</th>
<th>Night</th>
<th>Late Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-house</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind. Market</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest Europe</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest World</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions by origin and by periods of the day on TVI:**

- The morning is dominated by the Mix production (62.5%) because of the children’s programmes.

- During the Lunchtime, the programmes are almost all made In-house (95.9%).

- In the Afternoon, the types of programmes that are more predominant are the ones with Mix origin (46.5%), again because of the children’s programmes.

- The majority of programmes scheduled during Primetime (42.0%) and Night (47.6%) are made In-house.

- The Late Night period is clearly dominated by the American programmes (85.0%).
Appendix 4: The channels seen by the critics

RTP1

For Mário Castrim, “as a channel owned by the State, RTP makes all sense”. This analysis is done in the perspective that, “if all the stations would be private, the country would risk to be in complete submission to the foreign interests, values and ideologies”. But Miguel Gaspar states a very different opinion. This critic defends that, since “RTP1 is a public service but does not rend a public service”, “it would be better to be in the hands of the privates”. Miguel Gaspar sees RTP as “a station without direction”, that “cannot adapt itself to the fact that there are other channels of television”. To sum up, he thinks that it is a channel with problems of self-esteem.

Eduardo Cintra Torres agrees, “RTP does not fulfil the public service”. In his opinion, “the State does not have to make a popular television anymore”. The problem, for this critic, is that what RTP1 does in the context of popular television is bad. Besides the fact of not being real public service and of offering bad popular programmes, RTP1 “is used by the Government when it feels is needed”. This happens in the news bulletins, no matters what is the party that is in power.

Regarding the poor quality of the programmes of RTP1, Alfredo Barroso explains that this station “has programmes of very low taste”, sit-coms that he would imagine “impossible to find in a public station”. With respect for the funding of this station, Alfredo Barroso supports the idea of financing through a television tax, as it was years ago. Also he is not completely against what happens now a days in RTP1; commercial breaks, although he thinks, “They should be more limited”.

RTP2

The critics I interviewed agree with the opinion they have about this channel. It is presented as something quite different from the others. Miguel Gaspar explains that this channel has programmes with quality, which makes it “one of the reserves where it is possible to watch good television in Portugal”. Even if he admits that this channel does not have a strategy, he accepts that it broadcasts good magazines, good documentaries and good movies. But, on the other hand, “it is sustained on football”.

Even if RTP2 has a considerable quantity of football, it also has space for the “poor sports”, as Mário Castrim underlines. Besides, this critic is happy to recognise that this is not the only
type of programme for minorities that has a special treatment in the second channel of the public station: “The second channel breaks that claustrophobia, by giving a product that is better thought but also more limitative – opera, theatre, “poor sports”, etc”. According to this critic, this channel also has an important role in what concerns programmes that interest publics with different creeds: “Without it, the different religions would not have that small voice”.

In Alfredo Barroso’s perspective, “it is always possible – in my case and in the case of people like me – to watch RTP2, because it is always broadcasting something with a minimum of interest”. And, according to the director of information of the public channel, this is the concretisation of the public service: to make it in such a way that everybody has, at least, one programme that would like to watch. In the case of RTP2, this theory should, perhaps, be rephrased: every person of a different minority will find a programme that wants to watch. And this is applied to sports’ fans, religious’ people, intellectuals, music lovers, art admirers, people who want to know more about the nature, the world and the people in general. Resuming, in Eduardo Cintra Torres’ opinion, this channel “finally settled on the concept of being a channel for the minorities”. This does not automatically means that it is well done, as Cintra Torres argues. But he summarises what, generally, the Portuguese viewers think. And he concludes: “If RTP2 was like BBC2, people would be happy”.

**SIC**

In contrast to RTP2, SIC has attracted a lot of criticisms. Mário Castrim sums up the activity of this private station in this way: “It gives bad quality to the less demanding publics”. To this critic, the success of SIC and its good results in terms of shares (at the time of the interview, Summer 2000, this station was still clearly the leader) were attributable to the partnership it has with Globo, a strong Brazilian producer of television programmes, including ‘telenovelas’ (a sub-genre of soap-operas). Castrim sees this as a “phenomenon of dragging”. He explains, by saying that “now a days, SIC, between 18 and 00 hours, broadcasts five big productions from Globo”. Alfredo Barroso also establishes by evidence that “SIC sustains itself with Brazilian ‘telenovelas’”. Even if this is not visible in the analysis of the programmes I presented before, it happens in many other weeks of the year.

Going a little bit back in time, Eduardo Cintra Torres explains that “SIC occupied a free space”. The beginning was not easy, once it was the first private and commercial station of television in Portugal. Cintra Torres reminds “it was banging on the walls for a while but
as soon as it had the products from Globo, the shares went up very fast”. In this critic’s opinion, the use of the products from the Brazilian giant is not necessarily bad. According to him, the success based on these products “made them stop, think and produce Portuguese popular programmes with lot of success”. Now, what happens is that SIC “has a popular programming”. Questioned by me about his reaction to this phenomenon, Cintra Torres is categorical: “It does not shock me because I do not want a television only for me!”

Miguel Gaspar agrees that SIC had “a very aggressive strategy in the beginning, managed to grow and today is a station of reference in Portugal” The result of this is that, nowadays, everything that it introduced by this channel “the others want to copy”. He presents one example of success of this channel: SIC-films. Gaspar explains that this is “an interesting case, although there are some obscure things in relation to the financing”. In any case, SIC is the station that produces more in this area (films).

The other aspect that everybody seems to agree is the strong news and general affairs sector that this station has. At least, it started associated with this image SIC started to be the best in the information sector. If the initial option of being a reference in terms of news did not change with the course of the time, Alfredo Barroso thinks that in other aspects associated with the programming policy “SIC understood that quality is expensive and gave up of the initial projects that it had and that had good quality”. In his opinion, it happened because of the war of audiences. In any case, and besides the programmes of low taste, this critic recognises that “SIC is very good after 2 or 3 in the morning”. Once again because of the shares, in this period of the day, this channel broadcasts “wonderful movies and fabulous documentaries”. Barroso also identifies another positive aspect on SIC’s strategy: “The production of films is interesting”.

TVI

At the time of the interviews I made with the critics, TVI was a channel in change. So, the critics could only analyse the past and speculate about the future. Miguel Gaspar gives the most complete interpretation of the phenomenon that happened with this station: TVI started as relatively unimportant some years ago, “when it only broadcasted series and “canned” programmes. Now it is a station that has a very aggressive strategy”. This critic underlines the “good financial conditions” that this station started to have at that time that allowed it to buy the ‘Big Brother’ format. Gaspar also reminds that TVI “has a good structure of production” and was, at that time, “a station in development”.

Eduardo Cintra Torres recognises that “life, for TVI, has been difficult”. After being seven
years in the war for audiences without success, only in the year 2000 it reached the leadership of audiences, thanks to ‘Big Brother’. In Alfredo Barroso’s opinion, “TVI, with ‘Big Brother’, went to the lowest of the scale”. And Mário Castrim has one explanation for this: “TVI could only compete (with SIC) by lowering still more the quality” to publics even less interested in quality programmes.

**The best and the worst of the Portuguese television**

**Mário Castrim:**

“The best:
RTP1 – The social diversity, “Praça da Alegria” (daily live-entertainment)
RTP2 – Some programmes dedicated to the young ones, the information of “Sinais do Tempo” (general documentaries), the cinema programming, the entertainment without being disgusting by “A outra face da lua” (interviews with live music)
SIC – The reportages of the programme “Esta semana” (interviews and reportages), some ‘telenovelas’.

The worst:
It is more complicated, because the boundary between the bad and the very bad is so tenuous”.

**Alfredo Barroso:**

“I do not watch much. I watch the news. I watch the good movies. I watch football. I watch RTP2. Now a days, I do not have doubts to say that the worst is the ‘Big Brother’. In RTP1 there is something extraordinary (for the bad reasons), which has a main character, called ‘Bacalhau’. I have a big constraint in watching programmes where people earn money, because the important element became the money instead of the questions.
RTP2 has good things. The José Hermano Saraiva’s programme (series about Portuguese History) is excellent. I also like ‘Sinais do Tempo’ (general documentaries). I also like a series that unfortunately RTP2 moved to two in the morning, which is ‘Brigada de Homicídos’, one of the best that I have seen in the field of series about policies for television.
In SIC, I do not know, I have to think. I like to see José Alberto Carvalho presenting (the evening news) because he is a very talented guy who does that in a serious way. He is, perhaps, the best news presenter.
In RTP1 I like, although not always, the interviews that Judite de Sousa conducts. I hate
Margarida Marante (another interviewer).”

**Eduardo Cintra Torres:**

“RTP1 – The best is ER.
RTP2 – The best is the Simpsons and the news. They also have good documentaries, such as ‘Lugar da História’ (documentaries about Portuguese History) and ‘Sinais do Tempo’ (general documentaries).
RTP1 – The worst is the information that is what justifies billions of escudos. And the popular programmes are horrible.
RTP2 – The worst is being ‘careta’ (a mix of something that is old fashioned, not dynamic and not creative).
SIC – The worst is the counter-programming and too much Brazilian programmes.
SIC – The best is the information. Also, some Portuguese fiction. It is a good product, with good image.
TVI – The best, a good selection of programmes.
TVI – The worst, the timetables and a programming very disjointed. Also, the movies with the little ball”.

**Miguel Gaspar:**

“SIC – The best is the information. The worst is being a station that is very dependent of a model that is the Globo model, and this means having two Brazilian ‘telenovelas’ before the before the evening news, the news and another Brazilian ‘telenovela’.
RTP – It has a good programming for children, that nobody talks about. It has a good second channel. The bad thing is that it does not have a direction, neither an orientation.
TVI – It has a strategy that has no limits: it is determined to touch the lowest. But it is a strategy prepared and thought, that allowed a channel that had a little share and that had little importance some time ago to grow and to enter the dispute of the first league. This is good. This is a media that is going to grow. In the middle of all the commercial stuff that is going to broadcast, it will have to improve its programming spoken in Portuguese.


