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Tourism, gender and consumer culture in late and post-authoritarian Portugal

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Abstract

Tourism was a major player in the introduction of mass consumerism in post-war European societies. In Portugal, during the Estado Novo, it remained limited in scale and kind, being mostly targeted at a foreign and up-market consumer niche. In 1964, the number of international tourists finally reached the million mark, a figure that would rise threefold in the next six years. Bodily-centred leisure practices were on the rise, taking tourism beyond the confines of state propaganda and tourists beyond sightseeing. Drawing on archival research conducted at the Portuguese Film Museum, this article analyses how the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s saw the appearance of a renewed idea of tourism that owed as much to an expanding consumer culture as to the period's experimental filmmaking practices. The contours of this renewal can be appreciated in short tourism documentaries around the figure of the foreign woman tourist.

Keywords: Tourism; consumer culture; gender; tourism film; Portugal 1950s–1970s.

The scene cannot but cause a sense of awkwardness in the contemporary viewer: a smiling blonde woman loiters through the narrow cobbled streets of Alfama, one of Lisbon's popular quarters, known for its lines of drying laundry and *fado* taverns.

Suddenly, she squeezes her way through a group of locals, who are standing in the middle of the street staring at her (FIGURE 1).



FIGURE 1. The woman tourist as attraction, in *Lisbon Garden of Europe* (1972). Printed with permission of the *Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema*, Lisbon.

Wearing a light flowery garment and carrying a camera, she strikes us as an attractive and independent woman, in sharp contrast with her backward, quasi-medieval surroundings. The scene is part of *Lisbon Garden of Europe* (1972), a film made to promote Lisbon to North-Atlantic visitors.¹ What merits our attention is the way it straightforwardly associates tourism with liberal womanhood. In the following shots, two other female tourists, one in a slightly hippie style, look at the bits and pieces of the street market. Again, the two blondes stand out in the crowd and are made the object of the curiosity of the locals. The interconnection between tourism, gender and consumption could not have been made in a more direct and concise way.

This article surveys these issues by drawing on research conducted at the National Archive of the Moving Image (ANIM) of the Portuguese Film Museum

(*Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema*), where I have been investigating the Portuguese tourism film, a hybrid working category that covers short non-fiction films with a broadly understood travel and touristic content, ranging from early travelogues to regional and propaganda documentaries, amateur films and tourism promotional films proper (1889-1980).² I wish to address how the new consumer practices of the late 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were incorporated in these films to shape a renewed idea of tourism, one in which gender played an important role. The tourism film thus offers a privileged ‘entrance point’ (Grossberg, 2010) into the transformations that were taking place in tourism and cinema during this period. It attests to the growing importance of consumer culture, which the tourist sector came to epitomise, as well as the innovations in the audio-visual field that favoured its renewal. The depiction of women tourists in these films is the focus of my analysis, as their presence provides a point of articulation between travel, gender and visual and consumer cultures that, as I hope to demonstrate, has proved theoretically productive.

In many South European countries – not least, Spain, a context I shall be returning to throughout this article given its similarities (apparent and real) with the Portuguese case – tourism played a major role in the introduction and dissemination of mass consumerist practices.³ Spain was quick to understand and explore the economic advantages of low-cost tourism, first aimed at the international market but then rapidly made available to an increasingly affluent – and, after the spread of the SEAT 600, increasingly mobile – Spanish population (Pack, 2008: 667). In Portugal, on the other hand, the *Estado Novo*⁴ was more cautious: in 1960-61, at a time when the number of foreign tourists was rising by 22,4% in Spain and by 28% in Greece, Portugal saw a mere 6,5% rise (Cavaco, 1980: 221). Wealthy American and British visitors were the favourite targets,⁵ and as late as the Third Economic Plan (1967-1973), state policy was

committed to the development of 'luxury tourism' rather than 'mass tourism' (Cavaco, 1980: 222).

It cannot, however, be denied that new patterns of tourism-related consumption were also emerging during these years. Worthy of notice is the expansion and intensification of capital-mediated practices beyond sightseeing, which had hitherto represented modern tourism's core practice.⁶ To be sure, bodily-centered practices like sunbathing and sea bathing had thrived in the 1920s and the 1930s, both in the cosmopolitan elite resorts of Madeira and Estoril and in the state-sponsored circuits of popular tourism, such as the short excursions and seaside summer camps for workers or their children that the National Foundation for Joy at Work (FNAT) would organise (cf. Valente, 2010; Domingos, 2010). These practices, along with others like camping and hiking, straddled the social divisions that structured the regime's 'organic society'. They were also developed in marginal and oppositional travel and leisure contexts.⁷

Nevertheless, it was only in the late 1950s and 1960s that these practices would be incorporated in the tourism film as part of a vaster commercial enterprise. In other words, the quantitative and qualitative turn that occurred in tourism from the 1960s onwards – when it became 'organised, technocratic and consumerist' (Pina, 1988: 163) – had a shaping influence on the way tourism was represented on film. By the late 1960s tourists had definitely become synonymous with consumers, eliciting stereotypes that depicted them as both heedless hedonists and passive 'dupes'.⁸ Furthermore, and in keeping with the links established between consumption and women in earlier periods, the shift to consumption also entailed the *feminization* of tourist images, which would now include more feminine characters and linger more liberally over the feminine body. As Mica Nava has demonstrated for the British case, consumption in turn-of-the-century Britain had been closely associated with middle-class women, the main

customers of modern urban retail outlets like department stores (Nava, 1996: 57). Shopping offered women greater mobility, contributing to the blurring of social boundaries and gender conventions and thus becoming, according to Nava, women's ticket to modernity. In Britain, the consumer culture that had been interrupted by the economic depression of the late 1920s and the war would only be fully resumed in the 'affluent' 1950s (Marwick, 1990). In Portugal, a late industrialiser with great social inequalities, it arrived later. The number of beds and tourist visitors would only recuperate their pre-war values in the late 1950s – in Spain, pre-1936 figures for foreign entries had been surpassed in 1949 (Pack, 2010: 53) – while the right to paid holidays would not become law before 1969 (Britain had had its Holidays With Pay Act in 1938). The extension of this right to all, nevertheless, had to wait for the revolutionary Constitution of 1976 (Cavaco, 1980: 245).

The development of international mass tourism, in the 1960s, relied on the low-cost holidays that the less developed and undemocratic south came to provide comparatively wealthier Northern sun-seekers, in exchange for foreign currency and international political acceptance. These inequalities found expression in gendered and sexualised relations between tourists and locals, most notably between the liberal North-European female tourist (the *sueca*, or Swedish woman, in Spain) and the local 'macho' man. Spain offers the best-researched case so far: the fact that tourism was condemned within the regime's conservative quarters, which feared its disruptive influence on traditional family values, has reinforced the view that tourism acted as a politically liberating force (Pack, 2006). Inspiring as this argument may be, it may lead us to overlook the politically demobilizing, and even reactionary, uses to which this tourist consumer culture was also put, which many contemporary critics of the Francoist regime did not fail to point out and denounce (Townson, 2010: 11; Crumbaugh, 2009).

In Portugal, the controversy that pitted supporters of ‘great’ or ‘mass’ tourism against the advocates of ‘rich’ or ‘luxury’ tourism was never settled (Brito, 2003: 749-750; 1024). What the tourism films that I have analysed suggest is that the representation of the latter prevailed and may have served as an incentive, even if unwittingly, to the former. The figure of the foreign woman tourist appears to have been crucial in this process, as it not only provided a point of identification with prospective foreign tourists – most of these films were screened in the main tourist-sender countries – but also acted, for the national audiences, as a libidinal fantasy, on which many of the aspirational goods, services and experiences depicted onscreen would converge. In any case, the kind of modern emancipation that tourism as consumption envisaged and engaged with was severely limited, as it reflected the regime’s own attempts at striking a self-serving balance between its moral conservatism, the internal and external pressures to open economically and, in general, the need to change just enough so things would remain the same.⁹ Being at once desired and feared, the figure of the foreign woman tourist encapsulated the ambiguities towards both tourism and (female) sexuality that would only be partly resolved in the post-1974 revolutionary era, when alternative visions of tourism and sexuality were finally allowed a voice in the public space.

Tourism as propaganda and the tourist as sightseer

As many authors have pointed out (Brito, 2003; Pires, 2003; Cadavez, 2012; Silva and Oliveira, 2013), during the 1930s, 1940s and most of the 1950s it was difficult to tell tourism apart from the propaganda that emanated from the Secretariat of National Propaganda (SPN, 1933-1945) and, after the war, from the National Secretariat for

Information, Popular Culture and Tourism (SNI, 1945-1968).¹⁰ The authoritarian regime was well aware of the importance of tourism and cinema for the construction and dissemination of a certain image of the nation – even if such an image was officially perceived as ‘natural’, that is, as the direct (and thus unmediated) outcome of the national *reality* and the national *culture*, considered to be one and the same. It was the regime’s firm conviction that its mission was to retrieve from a distant, buried past, preserve and disseminate the nation’s true character, in the form of a ‘revealed truth’ (Melo, 2001: 46-47).

The newsreels and short documentaries that were abundantly produced under the auspices of the SPN and the SNI, and which were screened prior to the feature film in theatres across the country, make plain this concern with the way Portugal was to be viewed at home and abroad.¹¹ In many of these films, the motif of the journey appears entangled with the regime’s ideological interpretation of the country’s national history and geography. Each region is depicted for its typicality, in a combination of monuments, folklore and ‘picturesque’ sceneries. The voice-over narrator, an established feature, takes every opportunity to acknowledge the local dignitaries and heap praise on the public works of the Estado Novo, adopting a didactic tone and an excessive, flowery rhetoric that subordinates images and sounds to the film’s discourse (cf. Sampaio, 2014).

In spite of this latter feature, which contradicts the audience’s basic scopophilic impulses, the regime’s endorsement of a certain *image* of the nation would more often than not overlap with these films’ tendency to reduce tourist practices to *seeing*.¹² Indeed, what seems to define tourists, in these films, is sightseeing. We see them emerge from automobiles or buses to appreciate the views from natural or man-built belvederes. In *A Praia da Nazaré* (1935), a silent SPN newsreel in which the wordy

intertitles outnumber the location shots, the camera lingers on the group of international writers, guests of the SPN, who stand at the top of a cliff gazing down upon the small picturesque fishing village. Even a film like *Caldas de Aregos* (1945), made to promote a popular hot spring in the interior North, shows more interest in the surrounding landscapes, said to offer plenty of opportunities for sightseeing excursions, than in the spa bathing practices, which the narrator speedily describes and, in more than one case, ridicules. The film also celebrates the automobile as a provider of views, which the camera captures through still images and slow panoramas that convey a sense of tranquility and repose.

In the 1950s, the figure of the male tourist as a driver and a photographer – in keeping with the general idea that tourists/ flâneurs are male (Jokinen and Veijola, 1997) – is recurrent, as can be seen in Fernando de Almeida's *Setúbal* (1956). Images of girls and women tourists taking pictures are, however, also common. *Caminho do Rebanho* (1959), a bucolic film supported by the local tourism commission of Lousã, shows a schoolgirl on an excursion taking the picture of a shepherd boy. The presence of Portuguese women excursionists and foreign women tourists was real enough to appear in *Imagens de Portugal*, the SNI fortnightly newsreel, where we find the excursion of the Feminine Portuguese Youth to the Algarve and the visit of Dutch Princess Beatrice to Lisbon.¹³ The two episodes depict the national excursionists and the international royal first and foremost as *sightseers*. In the latter case, the Princess's visual experience of the city is mediated by a small portable filming camera (FIGURE 2), which, in the end, she turns straight at the journalists, in a gesture that playfully reframes their 'male gaze' within the limits of a now-feminised 'tourist gaze' (cf. Mulvey, 1999; Urry, 2002).



FIGURE 2. Dutch Princess Beatrix in Lisbon, in *Imagens de Portugal*, 133 (1958). Printed with permission of the *Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema*, Lisbon.

By the end of the 1950s, most documentaries had crystallised into a formula. To a certain extent, this reflected the crisis that the Portuguese cinema was undergoing, which culminated in 1955, so-called ‘year zero’, during which no feature films were premiered in the Portuguese theatres. As Paulo Cunha has pointed out, in that year, 99 films with less than 1000 meters were nevertheless released, reflecting the boom in short documentaries that the recently implemented 1948 protection law of the national cinema had helped to bring about (Cunha, 2014a). Many of these films were of a touristic nature. The problem, then, was not one of quantity. Nor was it solely one of quality.¹⁴ The abundance of regional, landscape and travel images, in which a fledgling touristic discourse was being essayed, did not make up for the fact that most of the

recipients of these films did not possess the means to travel to the places shown, in order to experience them at first hand. In other words, for most national cinemagoers, the tourism films and images of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were more of a substitute for travelling than an incentive to travel. For filmmakers, tourism was more likely to be used as a dramaturgic device – a pretext to show other things and convey non-touristic messages (such as state propaganda) – than as a subject with a value in and for itself.

Tourism as consumption and the embodied tourist

It was against these films that a new generation of filmmakers coming of age in the late 1950s and 1960s, would seek to innovate. Their innovative impulse derived at once from the film production field, which saw the appearance of new artistic modernisms that would eventually result in the *Novo Cinema Português*, and the accelerating modernisation of Portuguese society. This last aspect must be placed in the context of the oppositional movements that had emerged or gathered momentum around such key events as the 1958 presidential candidacy of General Humberto Delgado and the 1962 spate of strikes of factory workers, peasants and students.¹⁵ Together they pressed for the political liberalisation of the regime, which would culminate in the ‘Marcellist Spring’ of 1968, when Marcello Caetano replaced Salazar as head of the government. It is also the outcome of the long-drawn process that, since the post-war years, had been taking the country’s economy in a more market-orientated and Europe-integrated direction (Corkill, 2003: 62).¹⁶

Finally, no less important in this modernisation process were the vaster social and cultural changes that were underway, involving not only the dissemination of consumption habits, with evident links to a renewed toolkit of lifestyles and

subjectivities, but also the reinforcement (following the second Vatican Council of 1962-65) of liberal values and sexual mores, often in a way that chimed in with the growing dissatisfaction with the regime. This was especially the case within the young, middle-class, student milieu (Bebiano, 2003), whose cycle of protests initiated in 1968 would play an important role in bringing about the 1974 events (Accornero, 2013). Despite the absence of a feminist movement, women were also experiencing the winds of change. The growing number of women working outside the home challenged the views of propaganda organisations such as the Mothers' Work for National Education (OMEN) and the Feminine Portuguese Youth, both established in the 1930s, which confined women to the household and the 'natural' roles of wife and mother (Pimentel, 2001; Cova and Pinto, 2002: 131-132). Likewise, the influence of the Catholic Church did not prevent young women from keeping up with international fashion trends, such as wearing trousers, miniskirts, short hair cuts and, increasingly, bikinis. There was a double standard regarding what men and women could do, not least as far as premarital sex was concerned. Yet, Portugal had one of the highest illegitimate birth rates in Europe (Cova and Pinto, 2002: 130), and abortion, though a taboo and a crime, was a widespread practice. The introduction of the pill in 1962, albeit restricted to therapeutic, rather than contraceptive, uses (Tavares, 2008: 186), was a sign that it was becoming difficult to avoid (and censor) the debate over sex and the woman's condition.

The 1960s relative liberalisation in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres coincided with the rising tourist demand from the affluent North-Atlantic societies. By 1964 the number of international tourists had reached the million mark, a figure that would rise threefold in the next six years (Pina, 1988). It looked like Portugal was following in the footsteps of other South European countries, though on a more modest scale than neighbouring Spain, which had seen the number of foreign visitors go

up from one million, as early as 1954, to 19 million, in 1969 (Pack, 2010: 53; 55), largely on account of the efforts and policies of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, Franco's Minister of Information and Tourism from 1962 to 1969. On this side of the border, the authoritarian regime never went so far as raise tourism to such high cabinet functions: the state propaganda organ (re-baptised, in 1968, State Secretariat for Information and Tourism, or SEIT) continued to regulate the sector, favouring the development of the 'high-quality' end of the market within a private initiative framework. Though difficult to measure, given its overlap with visiting friends and relatives, domestic tourism also thrived, mainly due to the country's exceptional economic growth (on average, 7% per year between 1960-1973) and the regime's limited, but effective, redistributive policies (Corkill, 2003). In 1965, up until 1969, and accompanying the steady expansion of driving,¹⁷ the number of nationals staying in Portuguese hotels was higher than that of foreigners (Cavaco, 1980: 237). Closely linked to the regime's ideological structures, 'social tourism' had, however, a limited reach and tourism itself remained a peripheral activity within the regime's national economic planning.¹⁸

The trust in the private sector was also felt in the relatively small niche of tourism promotional film production, which had been the preserve of the SPN/ SNI. The SNI remained one of the major sponsors of tourist images, especially through its newsreels, but the fact that it would increasingly rely on 'external' production companies¹⁹ suggests its disposition to eschew the label of propaganda. In fact, a more sophisticated, and arguably more efficient, censorship apparatus had been put in place, strengthening the SNI's competencies in this area (Brito, 2003: 698). From the 1950s onwards, censorship had intensified its action, especially in relation to Portuguese films (Cunha, 2014b: 78; 142). On the other hand, the development of film production as an autonomous field, with its own set of rules and practices, was having unanticipated

liberating effects: new commercial opportunities, such as advertising and television, were frequently synonymous with new creative opportunities.²⁰ That tourism easily falls within the category of a ‘seemingly depoliticised aesthetic terrain’, as it came to be perceived in Spain during the ‘Spanish miracle’ (Crumbaugh, 2009: 4), may also have encouraged a more relaxed attitude on the part of the censors towards tourism promotional films.

Indeed, though the question of political propaganda remains important (the regime continued to use tourism to peddle its ideas and values), new and often-dissonant positions would also seep in, reflecting the proliferation of tourist practices under the impulse of an expanding industry. Films like José Fonseca e Costa’s *A Cidade* (1968) and *E Era o Vento e Era o Mar* – conceived to promote, respectively, the city of Évora and a sea-side hotel in Sesimbra – offered ambivalent views on tourism and some of its practices, which yielded ambivalent reactions. *A Cidade* attracted the attention of the censors because of one word, while António de Macedo’s *Cenas de Caça no Baixo Alentejo* (1973), a trenchant critique of hunting by a self-described vegetarian, produced no reactions on the part of either sponsors or censors.²¹ The same must be said of *Lisbon Garden of Europe* (1972). Disagreements with the producer led to Macedo’s withdrawal from the film, but his bullfighting scene – a strange slow-motion sequence ridden with graphic violence and gore that can be read as an ironical comment on the title – was included in the final version. Most films, however, would simply revel in the trappings of the ‘new brave world’ of consumer culture that was coming along with the rising numbers of tourists. In what follows, I focus on a few different responses to tourism, all of them embedded in the 1960s consumer culture.

Estoril (1962), directed by Sousa Neves and sponsored by the regional tourism agency, offers an interesting counterpoint to the tourism-as-propaganda film of the

1940s and 1950s. Released in Portuguese and English, the film aimed to sell Estoril, an up-market tourist destination on the outskirts of Lisbon, to an international public. The film's strong touristic orientation is evident. Even if the voice-over narration has been retained, along with the tendency to subordinate images to words, the text is now typical of advertising, sparing no adjectives to convince the international tourist to come and visit Estoril and its luxurious hotels and casino. Typical of advertising is also the focus on the tourists rather than the locals. We see tourists everywhere – eating, drinking, playing golf, sailing and having fun – and not just taking pictures. The long closing Carnival sequence inside the casino confirms the tourists' embedment in commercial entertainment and conspicuous consumerism, which allows filmmakers to circumvent moral codes and rewrite some of the cinematic conventions that had dominated the representation of tourism in previous decades.

Another eloquent example of the consumer turn in tourism would be Alfredo Tropa's *Águas Vivas* (1969), a film that promotes the touristic potential of the Portuguese spas among the upper classes by way of a fictionalised account of the thermal sojourn of a tourist. The film's protagonist, a young woman, figures in a sequence of highly individualised and socially distinctive consumer experiences, ranging from shopping (for clothes and a pair of sunglasses) to eating out in classy restaurants, horse riding, target shooting, casino gambling, pool diving and night clubbing. Repeatedly uttered by the narrator, 'pleasure' rather than 'cure' is now the watchword, presupposing the tourist's permanent activity, in contrast with the emphasis on idleness that, as we saw above, had guided Armando Miranda's 1945 film on Caldas de Aregos. The final shot, an extreme close-up of the girl drinking a glass of mineral water, encapsulates the film's overall combination of consumer culture and sensuous femininity. Similarly, in Faria de Almeida's *Portugal Deconhecido* (1969), we find a

rather innovative sequence of close-ups and extreme close-ups of tourists eating in a restaurant, where direct sound is amplified to create vivid immersive effects.

Consumption, then, offers the way out of classic ocularcentric notions of tourists as sightseers, enabling the incorporation of other senses and thus contributing to the rehabilitation of tourists as embodied beings, rather than as mere extensions of an abstract and overpowering ‘tourist gaze’ (cf. Coleman and Crang, 2002).

The full acknowledgement of tourists as individuals and bodies within a gendered framework can be fully appreciated in António de Macedo’s 28-minute short, *Albufeira* (1968), which adopts a fictional structure to render the story of Carol, Jenny and Gela – respectively, a journalist, a photographer and an illustrator – who are on a business trip to Albufeira to write an article about the Algarve for an American magazine. After the aerial shot of the opening sequence, which ends with the girls arriving at the new airport of Faro, opened in 1965, we are given all the stock themes and images associated with this part of the country: its folklore, architecture and gastronomy, the typical artisanal fishing and the celebrated seascapes and landscapes, without forgetting the proverbial blossoming almond trees and orange groves. There are also scattered references to the village’s historical origins and monuments.

Nevertheless, rather than the local places, traditions and people that the girls seek to capture in film, magnetic tape and canvas, it is the tourist girls themselves who are the film’s attraction. Their modern colourful clothes and independent ways – we see them shopping, driving, attending a yé-yé concert in a nightclub – make them an object of the locals’ (and the spectators’) curiosity (FIGURE 3).



FIGURE 3 Attracting the gaze of the local men, in *Albufeira* (1968). Printed with permission of the *Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema*, Lisbon.

The questions of gender and sexuality are central to the film, yet subtly put: in their leisureliness, buoyancy, and implied licentiousness, the protagonists are made to contrast with the Portuguese women, who are either old, too composed, or busy with traditional domestic or rural chores. At one point, Carol remarks: ‘We usually go out at night, but this time we decided to go to a nightclub. 50% of the population, the masculine side, paid a lot of attention to us, as usual. What is it that the Portuguese find strange in us?’²²

A ‘lesson in strangeness’ could well be the subtitle of this film. Carol starts her field notes with the following ironical comment: ‘The Portuguese are a strange people [*um povo curioso*]. They like foreigners, they make special parties for them, they even learn their language, but they’ll only buy their cars if they are assembled in Portugal.’ Carol’s touristic account of Albufeira is thus conceived as a study into the ‘strangeness’ of the Portuguese (associated, in this quote, with economic protectionism).

Nevertheless, what the film ultimately unravels is the *strangeness of the tourists themselves*. One of the film's most memorable moments is the sequence when the girls arrive at the beach, get undressed and bathe in the sea. The camera follows, filming them underwater to the sound of the modern but mellow instrumental score. In their colorful bikinis, these women resemble tempting mermaids, inaccessible objects of desire that belong to the realm of sheer fantasy.

And this is perhaps the major aspect in Macedo's film, and the one that most sets it apart from the popular images of shameless tourist-chasing men that pullulated in Spanish *comedias sexy celtibéricas* (Crumbaugh, 2009: 88). I am referring to the fact that, even though they constantly attract the gaze of the local men and appear to be attracted to them, actual contact never takes place. In other words, the film is fully aware of 'the libidinal dimensions of tourism' (Crumbaugh, 2009: 87), but it also shuns from ascribing a definitive meaning to these dimensions. Hence rather than giving in to the overt celebration of the *estrangeiras* as the heralds of sexual liberation and, by extension, of all the other 'liberties' (cultural, economic, political) often associated with tourism, *Albufeira* locates these libidinal energies in the realm of fantasy, rather than actual enjoyment and gratification, thus leaving open the possibility of more critical readings.

The overt disclosure and celebration of the female body, however, was here to stay, becoming ever more daring. In Fernando Matos Silva's *Estoril – Costa do Sol* (1972), which mobilises terms like 'modern', 'attractive' and 'cosmopolitan' to promote this tourist site, the camera takes every opportunity to film women. Strolling in bikinis by a swimming pool, playing tennis in mini-skirts, gambling or simply lounging in the sun with a drink, tourist women become as much the clients and consumers of Estoril and its services as objects to be consumed, along with the dancing girls, the fashion

models and the beauty queens that the casino also offers. Through close-ups and extreme close-ups, their bodies are broken down into pieces and then aesthetically reassembled as a row of bare legs, of blonde hairdos or of elegant necks (FIGURE 4).



FIGURE 4. Tourist legs in the sun, in *Estoril – Costa do Sol* (1972). Printed with permission of the *Cinemateca Portuguesa – Museu do Cinema*, Lisbon.

At the close of the Marcellist era and on the eve of the revolution, it would seem that Estoril's main attraction was not so much its natural and cultural features as the foreign women who visited it, who seemed to hold the promise of a more open and liberal lifestyle. At least for the men and women who could afford it.

Revolutionary interruptions

The revolutionary period has been described as an interruption in tourism's success story initiated in the 1960s, which has itself been portrayed as the result of tourism's

tardy recovery from another interruption: the Estado Novo. This view takes for granted the economic vocation of tourism, understanding its subordination to the regime's national propaganda as an historical deviation (e.g. Brito, 2003: 705; 725; 738; 834). The dramatic slump in foreign arrivals between 1974 and 1977 (Brito, 2003: 829-30; Cavaco, 1980: 237), together with the coming to a halt of many tourist projects in the wake of state intervention and the flight of capital and qualified staff, no doubt, justify this view. A similar argument has been proposed on the cultural and ideological plane: the 1960s, or 'long sixties', were an interruption in Portuguese cultural history, a moment of 'trance' (Bebiano, 2003: 17),²³ before life went on as usual. Despite the differences that separate these two narratives, they both rely, even if unwittingly, on a linear understanding of history that is retroactively told from the point of view of either the victors or the vanquished.

Allowing that 'interruption' may not be the most accurate term, but clinging to its heuristic qualities, I ask: were there interruptions in the touristic images that were produced during and immediately after the revolution? The break with the country's recent political past and the instability that followed also left their mark on the cinema sector. The production of short documentaries declined, as major producers like Francisco de Castro left the country and advertising went through a period of paralysis. Workers occupied companies, and filmmakers embraced new genres, such as the militant film, and new production modes, such as the controversial 'units of production' (Costa, 2002: 169).

Tourism itself came under fire for its links with the national elites, resonating with the anti-capitalist feelings of the international radical left.²⁴ What emerges in many of the films of this period is, precisely, the need to reconceptualise tourism in the light of the emerging political alternatives. For many filmmakers, this meant forging a

distance from the touristic practices, images and sounds that were associated with the regime (Sampaio, 2013). Films that documented, and intervened in, the campaigns launched throughout the country during the Revolutionary Process Underway (PREC) displayed images of collective work and political mobilization that are a far cry from the regime's bucolic and folklorist tableaux of the nation or, later on, of the leisurely pleasures of the individualistic tourist. In *Avante com a Reforma Agrária* (1977), a film about a group of factory workers and intellectuals who travel from Lisbon to Alentejo to lend a hand to the local cooperative and support the agrarian reform, the narrator stresses that these sojourns 'do not feature in tourist guidebooks' and do not aim 'at recreational folklore'. A later film, *Parque Natural da Serra da Estrela* (1980), also draws on the negative image of frivolous skiers who care little about the place they are visiting (a National Park), to prescribe a type of tourism that is respectful of both the local population and the landscape. The mission of the park is clear: to raise people's awareness of their culture, so as to preserve the 'purity' and 'hidden beauty' of the mountain for the coming generations.

In the late 1970s the association between tourism and the Salazar regime was still very vivid in the visual and aural memory of filmmakers and spectators. One of the most accomplished attempts to renovate, and even subvert, the limited tourist repertoire tied up to this legacy was *Sounds and Colours of Portugal* (1977), a short film produced by the Centro Português de Cinema, where fragments of rural and urban Portugal parade to the sound of an original piano piece composed and performed by Maestro António Victorino de Almeida. The music is mixed with various direct sounds, such as human voices in a market, chanting in a religious procession, birds chirping, waves washing ashore, a pig squealing in a traditional slaughter, all of which contribute to the creation of evocative soundscapes. More surprisingly, the 1974 revolution also finds its

way into this celebration of ‘Portugueseness’: the date appears painted on a mural, side by side with iconic revolutionary figures like a child holding a red carnation, a worker shouting, the bars of a prison cell, and the watchword *venceremos* (‘we shall overcome’).

Dissociating themselves from both commercial tourism and the regime’s tourist propaganda, these films epitomise new ways of conceiving and engaging with travel in the post-revolutionary period, as part and parcel of a national project that, notwithstanding its internal contradictions and setbacks, was also a class project. Greatly benefitting from it, women were also actors in this project. Their visibility was no longer limited to being sexualised bodies, even if the full expression of their sexuality, in private as well as in public, remained conditioned by long-held prejudices and resilient power structures.

By way of conclusion

The links between the regime and the tourist images produced in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s have been well established. In spite of the fact that other understandings and practices were also in place, there is little doubt that, during this period, the Estado Novo approached tourism first and foremost as an instrument of propaganda. From the 1960s onwards, it becomes more difficult to understand tourism exclusively from this angle. The films I have been researching confirm the growing entwinement of tourism and consumer culture, which gender, as we have seen, often came to articulate and stand for. Indeed, between the late 1950s and the early 1970s, Portugal went through a process of relative modernisation and political-economic liberalisation. Among the changes that ensued was the growing access of the Portuguese to leisure and mobility

within a developing consumer culture, but also the arrival of growing numbers of foreigners, at once coveted and feared. Filmmakers were eager to engage with these changes. Given the complexity of the contexts involved (of which I have only offered an outline), it is hardly surprising that the representation of tourism should have taken on a variety of shapes and meanings. Through innovations at the level of form and content, some of these films not only managed to build alternatives to the staid, formulaic films of the 1940s and 1950s, but also to develop more nuanced perspectives (often ambiguous ones) on tourism and many of its practices.

As far as gender is concerned, the consumer turn in tourism saw the consecration of women as individualised (and individualistic) pleasure-seeking consumers, offering unprecedented opportunities to display and explore their bodies. In keeping with the reorganised post-war tourism and hospitality industry, which sought to capitalise on all aspects of travel, from transport to accommodation, catering, leisure and entertainment, tourists were now regarded and depicted as physical entities that required eating, drinking, bathing and doing sports, rather than just gazing upon beautiful, picturesque landscapes. Hotels and restaurants, whose interiors had been filmed in previous decades as tidy empty spaces, would now exhibit their laid-back guests and *gourmand* customers. Images of crowded markets, restaurants and nightclubs, where female tourists took centre stage, attracting close-ups and extreme close-ups, zoom-ins and zoom-outs, also became mandatory. Such images had the merit of taking the representation of women beyond the traditional roles ascribed to them by the Catholic Church and the regime's propaganda organisations, which tacitly and overtly relegated women's travel to family and community occasions like honeymoons, religious festivities and visits to friends and relatives. Nevertheless, it is imprudent to straightforwardly associate the growing visibility of the female body – on the screen and

on the beach – with sexual revolution (cf. Bebiano, 2003: 42), let alone with women's liberation. In a country where anti-feminism had been part of the official catechism for 48 years (Tavares, 2008: 110), and where gender roles and identities had been powerful social forces (Almeida, 1996), the exposure of the female body continued to reinforce gender stereotypes and convey traditional power imbalances between the sexes.

Finally, it is difficult to be conclusive about the political meanings that this powerful cluster – made up of tourism, consumer culture and gender – drew upon, built and finally mobilised, and for what purposes. In the Spanish case, in which considerable research has already been conducted on tourism, gender, popular culture and consumer culture, scholars have been divided between describing mass consumer tourism as a threat to the regime (eventually undermining it from within) or seeing in it 'a paradigm shift in the regime's modes of governance,' (Crumbaugh, 2009: 16), i.e. the linchpin of Franco's reinvention in the 1960s. In Portugal, despite important advances over the last decade, these topics have only just begun being addressed. The role that the Catholic Church played (namely, through the Progressive Catholics) in the openness of habits and mores remains under-researched. Furthermore, the relationship between the new subcultures and the popular mass media, on the one hand, and the ideologies and institutions of the *status quo*, on the other, is less than clear, as Marcos Cardão's work on the Miss Portugal beauty pageants of the 1970s and the national competition of yé-yé bands in 1966-67 has demonstrated (Cardão, 2013a; 2013b). This article hopes to boost the interest in these themes and become an incentive to further research.

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Notes

¹ I thank Gonçalo Mota for bringing this film to my attention.

² For a working definition of this category see Sampaio (2015).

³ I am relying on ideal-typical constructs, such as ‘mass consumerism’, which have attracted criticism, especially from historical perspectives (cf. Trentmann, 2004). By using ‘mass consumerism’ I wish to acknowledge the qualitative changes that took place in Portugal sometime between the late 1950s and the 1970s, when an increase in disposable income among growing sections of the middle-class resulted in their access to a vast range of goods and services, such as cars, clothes, TV sets, restaurants and travel. To my knowledge, a history of consumption in Portugal during these years is yet to be written.

⁴ The Portuguese Estado Novo (or ‘New State’) ran from 1933 – following the military coup of 1926 – to 1974, when it was overthrown by another, yet very different, military coup. António de Oliveira Salazar was President of the Council of Ministers and the longest in office European dictator between 1933 and 1968. His successor, Marcello Caetano (1968-1974), would confirm the dictator’s misgivings regarding tourism (Pina, 1988: 161).

⁵ Not least, the ‘Marshall tourists’ of the post-war years, who nevertheless proved a disappointment (Pina, 1988: 159). Note that the term ‘tourist’ applied only to foreigners (Cunha, 2010: 142).

⁶ According to Judith Adler (1989), this was part of a long historical process, which saw the center of tourism move away from the ear and the tongue (1500s-1700s) towards the eye (after the 1800s).

⁷ On beach going see Martins (2011) and on camping see Pina (1988). See also Neves (2011) for alternative outdoors and travel practices endorsed by the Portuguese Communist Party in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁸ These stereotypes had deeper roots in the anti-touristic discourse of the late 19th century. See Buzard (1993) and Sampaio (2012). For more recent associations between tourists and spectators, see Davin (2005).

⁹ *Renovation in Continuity* was the title of Marcello Caetano's book published in 1971.

¹⁰ After 1939, the SPN assumed responsibilities in tourism that had previously been assigned to the Ministry of the Interior. In 1940 it incorporated the National Council of Tourism, founded in 1929, but with deeper roots in the monarchy and the First Republic (Cunha, 2010). The SNI would further concentrate a range of dispersed tourism-related services, eventually integrating the Houses of Portugal (*Casas de Portugal*), hitherto under the wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tendency, then, seems to have been towards the subordination of tourism to the regime's propaganda.

¹¹ The SPN/ SNI newsreels and documentaries were produced first and foremost for the national public (including the colonies). Nevertheless, international companies like Fox Movietone News, the Eclair-Journal, the France-Actualités, the Paramount News, and the German Ufa would often purchase them (Rodríguez, 2000: 141). Whenever possible, the dictatorship tried to monitor and control how Portugal was portrayed abroad (Costa, 2013).

¹² Scholars have rightly noted the conflation between this period's official images of the nation and tourism brochures (e.g. Paulo, 1994; Melo, 2001: 42).

¹³ Respectively, *Imagens de Portugal* 15 (1953) and 133 (1958).

¹⁴ These films tended to rely on stock themes like *fado*, bullfighting, Fátima and football. They were made by the generation of 'the assistants' or 'the new old directors', who cared little about aesthetic innovation. See Cunha (2014a) and Baptista (2009: 312-313).

¹⁵ Loff, 'Marcelismo e Ruptura Democrática no Contexto da Transformação Social Portuguesa dos Anos 1960 e 1970', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie IV, Historia Contemporánea* 19(5) (2007).

¹⁶ Unlike Spain (Pack, 2010: 51), Portugal benefited from the Marshall Plan. It was also a founding member of NATO (1949), joining the United Nations in 1955.

¹⁷ The number of registered automobiles increased threefold between 1960 and 1970 (Brito, 2003: 756).

¹⁸ The four economic plans launched between 1953 and 1973 were mostly concerned with primary-sector industry (Pina, 1988: 161; Brito, 2003: 791; 793).

¹⁹ Such as the Portuguese Society of Film Activities (SPAC), the Associated Producers and, after 1958, the Perdigão Queiroga Film Productions. The term 'external' is hardly the right one, given the small dimension of the film production sector and its financial dependence on an authoritarian, censor state. Similarly, 'independent' pertains not so much to the producers' relationship with the State as to their embrace of commercial values and practices that offered an alternative to sheer propaganda.

²⁰ Unpublished interview with film director António de Macedo, conducted by Sofia Sampaio, Gonçalo Mota and Sérgio Bordalo e Sá (Lisbon, March 2015).

²¹ Unpublished interviews with film director José Fonseca e Costa (Lisbon, February 2015) and António de Macedo (Lisbon, March 2015), both conducted by Sofia Sampaio, Gonçalo Mota and Sérgio Bordalo e Sá.

²² All translations mine.

²³ The expression is borrowed from José Medeiros Ferreira's famous study about the revolutionary period (1993).

²⁴ In May 1968, French revolutionary students had attacked the headquarters of the Club Méditerranée in Paris (Furlough, 1993: 67). See also the arguments of an extreme-left activist against tourism in Francoist Spain, in Alain Resnais' film *La Guerre est Finie* (1966).

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