

# Politics, culture, and religion in modern times: the Catholic Church and the restructuring of censorship\*

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## Resumo

Este artigo analisa a reestruturação das práticas censórias da Igreja Católica no contexto histórico de questionamento e erosão do sagrado no mundo ocidental. Defendemos que a actuação internacional do Vaticano na esfera pública e o seu potencial de moldagem dos processos culturais a nível transnacional só foram possíveis através de ramificações/mediações nacionais. Analisamos a dupla estratégia ofensiva/reactiva junto da cultura e da comunicação social, que promoveu visões do mundo e reagiu à cultura de massas adversa a essas visões, e como foi executada por uma estrutura particular, a Acção Católica. Focamo-nos na sua atividade em Portugal e no escrutínio aplicado ao cinema e

aos materiais de leitura que foram autorizados a circular. Para tanto, levantamos os “guias de leitura” católicos mais relevantes publicados nesse período e descrevemos os seus modos de recepção junto dos diversos públicos. Pretendemos mostrar como, em Portugal, uma das mais longas ditaduras da Europa no século XX plasmou o *modus operandi* do Vaticano, contribuindo para uma cultura global cristã, para um sistema censório transnacional e para a manutenção dum regime autoritário. Procuramos, assim, contribuir para a reflexão sobre a articulação das práticas de censura da Igreja e do Estado.

Palavras-chave: Circuito cultural; Censura; Ação Católica; Ditadura salazarista; Leituras; Cinema moderno.

## Abstract

This article analyses the restructuring of Catholic Church censorial practices in the historical context of questioning and erosion of the sacred in the Western world. We defend that the international action by the Vatican in the public sphere and its potential for shaping cultural processes at a transnational level were only possible through national ramifications/mediations. We analyse its dual offensive/reactive strategy within culture and the media, which promoted worldviews and reacted to mass culture adverse to those views, and how it was carried out by a particular structure, Catholic Action. We focus on its activity in Portugal and on the scrutiny

applied to cinema and the reading materials which were allowed to circulate. For that purpose, we surveyed the most relevant catholic “reading guides” published over this period and described their modes of reception across diverse public audiences. We intend to show how one of the longest dictatorships in Europe in the 20th century shaped the *modus operandi* of the Vatican, contributing to a global Christian culture, to a transnational censorship system, and to the maintenance of an authoritarian regime. We therefore seek to contribute to the reflection on the articulation of censorship practices of the Church and the State.

Keywords: Cultural circuit; Censorship; Catholic Action; Salazarist dictatorship; Readings; Modern cinema.

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## Introduction

The contexts surrounding modernity have primarily been analysed from the perspective of societies' secularisation process. Nevertheless, there is also a parallel cultural and mediatic offensive with its epicentre in the Vatican, questioning the erosion of the sacred in the western world. This international Vatican campaign, targeting the public sphere and its potential to shape cultural practices and processes, would only ever be possible through national level ramifications/mediations. In this article, we convey how Portugal, a country that endured one of the longest dictatorships in 20th century Europe, received and transformed the *modus operandi* of the Vatican, which aimed to reinforce a global Christian culture, contributing, thus, to a transnational system of censorship and the long duration of the national dictatorial regime in power.

Pioneering studies such as those by Martins (2018, v.o.1984) highlighted the centrality of an official discourse based upon a peculiar “regime of truth” (adopting a Foucauldian perspective), according to which the “eye of God” (Catholic) is omnipresent and everybody should held the duty of saving the nation from the hands of the Anti-Christ. This article traces an inverse path; it departs from the religious to outline the nexuses with the political and ideological dimensions to understand how that regime of truth is formed and practiced.

To understand how these facets interrelated in practice, conditioning the sociocultural choices and individuals' worldviews, we propose to study the censorial practices. It should be reminded how political institutional censorship has been the privileged object of study regarding the Portuguese cultural field under the “Estado Novo”.<sup>1</sup> This perspective focuses on the setting up and consolidation of state organisms designed to prohibit, mutilate and silence all expressions of values, ideas and information running counter to the ideology of the nationalist authoritarian regime. These works tend, thus, to value the weight of regulatory state censorship and circumscribe the framework to the national scope. However, recent studies have drawn attention to the need of rethinking censorship, expanding its range beyond state mechanisms.<sup>2</sup> Hence, analysing the effectiveness of regulatory censorship implies ascertaining the structural prohibitions immanent to any communicative act. If censorship is dispersed and multiform, censorship(s) analysis requires discussion in the plural. The study of regulatory censorship thereby needs to incorporate the constitutive or structural dimension of censorship. Nevertheless, what matters here is that such conceptual efforts do not level out the scope of different censorship practices, thus rendering it impossible to differentiate among distinctive exercises of power. The assertion (or the acquired fact) that “censorship is unavoidable, irrespective of the given socio-political” (Müller, 2004: 5) might then make this concept inoperable, as it would tend to merge with the notion of social norm. Thus, defining limits to the concept of censorship becomes essential, and Müller advances some conceptual prerequisites: censorship is characterized by regulation, hierarchisation, bureaucratisation, and can be isolated in a communicational process as an instrument acting between the emitter and the receiver, targeting a specific content in any given environment.

However, albeit the discussion around the regulatory and constitutive censorship, their relationship with cultural processes has not yet been approached by the censorship literature. For that purpose, the “circuit of culture” advanced by Stuart Hall (Gay *et al.*, 1997), which proposes a relational model of unbroken interdependence between regulation, production, consumption, representation, and identity, allows to include some level of articulation between constitutive and regulatory censorship practices in any of these five processes.

We also adopt the circuit of culture methodology because it enables the integration of Bourdieu's analytical propositions into the study of censorship by the Church and the Estado Novo: perceiving the

1. V.g., Azevedo, 1997; Autor, 2016; Autor, 2022.

2. Moore, 2013: 45. Falling within the scope of this new perspective are the studies by Autor (2020) and Seiça (2022).

social space as relational; and integrating “into its explicative system the representations actors make of the social world and, more specifically, the contributions they bring to the construction of a worldview and, beyond that, the actual construction of this worldview” (Bourdieu, 2000: 96). We furthermore adopt Bourdieu’s field theory, understood as a microcosm inscribed into the social macrocosm, i.e., in “a socially structured space, a field of strengths – there are the dominant and the dominated, there are constant relationships, permanently ongoing, of inequality that are exercised within the interior of this space – that is also a field of struggle taking into account the transformation or the conservation of the field of conflict” (Bourdieu, 1997: 41).

Studies of censorship under the Portuguese Estado Novo regime experience difficulties in grasping the articulation between social, political, and cultural controls exercised by the state and by the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church (Portuguese acronym ICAR hereafter). To a large extent, this problem arises because the religious field is approached as an ahistorical reality, or it is guaranteed a high level of autonomy regarding other sectors of society, especially the political field. On the contrary, we explore relevant aspects of this relationship on the assumption that it is difficult to perceive the Estado Novo consolidation and sheer permanence without interrelating this with the propaganda and censorial actions of ICAR within the national and transnational scenarios.<sup>3</sup>

Echoing and transforming the Vatican line, the institutional intervention of the Catholic Church in Portugal was characterised not only by specialisation and update regarding cultural products and exchanges, whose experiences and visions of the sacred and profane worlds were controlled to a large extent through specific institutional and programmatic devices (i.e., deploying existing media and/or their frameworks), but also by the reaction against mass culture and alternative cultural proposals. We seek to convey how the Vatican developed a complex strategy for the cultural field, simultaneously both defensive and offensive (promoting world visions while reacting against adverse mass cultural expressions), implemented at the national level by a specific structure: the Catholic Portuguese Action (Portuguese acronym ACP hereafter), which was founded in 1933, the year when the Portuguese Constitution of the authoritarian regime was ratified. Analysing the ACP is a research object that incorporates three key facets of our theme: it emerges via papal initiative, which allows to break with the approach to censorship reduced to the national level; it integrates, through its actions on mass culture, components of constitutive and regulatory censorship; and, given it was predominantly constituted by lay people, it facilitates the analysis of the resulting socio-relational processes. With the objective of making a detailed analysis of ACP innerworkings, which was as a communications offshoot of the Vatican and integrated into an international network of culture and media intervention, we here focus on a new ACP censorial structure especially dedicated to cinema.

Finally, we provide insights about ACP operations regarding positive (selective indication of doctrinal content for multiple channels of communications: books, press, cinema, theatre, other performances, radio, television, etcetera) and negative (the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, extrapolations from the encyclicals for the rejection of communism due to its atheism, the multiple “classifications” and other indices) prescriptions, through the analysis of “reading guides” supposedly only for Christians. Heirs of the traditional Vatican censorial practices (regulatory and constitutive), these “guides” enable an approximation to the circuit of Portuguese culture under the Estado Novo through the relational amplitude of the national and international practices and actors, the intermedial dimension and, above all, through integrating the production of “oppositional readings”, thereby also highlighting the dynamic nature of the cultural circuit.

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3. This transnational connection was first highlighted by Fontes (2001: 10).

## 2. Catholic Action: transnational Catholicism

Catholic Action was an initiative of Pope Pius XI who, in the encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* (1922), mobilised lay members to act on behalf of the “apostolate” by preaching, converting the unfaithful, and combating modern secularisation. The Pope explained the Catholic Action purpose to the Youth Association of Rome in 1923: “We wish to resolve all the problems of life, both in private life and public life, both civil and political”.<sup>4</sup> This lay associativism spanned a broad scope: “Catholic Action holds no limits either in time or in space: its motto is – ‘always and everywhere’”.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the Pope would make this appeal to lay members on various occasions, calling them to strive against an “increasingly paganised society” in which the clergy were becoming “insignificant” (*idem*: 151). This sought to recover the terrain gained by the desacralization of society, a secular society based on free thinking, through relentlessly combating liberalism and socialism.<sup>6</sup> In the immediate wake of World War I, ICAR tried to respond to the advancing liberal vision of a neutral state tending to place religion in the private domain, legislating on issues that had hitherto fallen under its own auspices, such as weddings, divorce, and education. Beyond the need to redefine the relationship with the state, Pope Pius XI was already in the 1920s expressing concerns about the new means of communication against the backdrop of his ongoing campaign to ensure the imposition of a legitimised world vision. In *Encíclica Divini Illius Magistri*, dated 31/12/1929, the Pope denounced the growing moral perversity present in books, performances, and cinematography, which were “spreading diabolically”. ICAR thus embarked on international initiatives in response to the challenges posed by this new media context, including Union Catholique de la Presse (1927), Organization Catholique Internationale du Cinema et de l’Audiovisuel (1928), Association Catholique pour la Radio et Télévision (1928), Sociedade Católica Internacional de Radiodifusão (1928) and, finally, Vatican’s own broadcaster (1931).

Catholic Action, hierarchically organised and institutionalised, was first established in Italy (1923) before expanding to Poland (1926), Spain, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia (all in 1927), and Austria (1928). Hence, ACP already had a doctrine and organisational experience prior to its launching. The Portuguese branch was formally founded by the Catholic hierarchy in 1933 through the publishing of the Catholic Action Portugal Bases of Action, accompanied by an Official Note announcing the future publication of its statutes, which occurred in 1934.

Two particularly important aspects stand out: firstly, “Catholic Action exists only by hierarchical determination, through an explicit mandate and under the supervision of the episcopate, whether at the national or diocesan level” (Fontes, 2011: 339); secondly, this was a program with a truly international scale, a “crusade for modern times”, with the clear purpose of society re-catholicisation, which displayed no hesitation in presenting itself as the “Christian reconquest”, calling for militancy, combating and uniting against modernity. This ACP terminology would subsequently undergo changes in later decades and turning into a “re-Christianisation” project, which partially reflected the growing autonomy of lay Catholics within the clerical, doctrinaire and organisational framework, with the 2nd Vatican Council (1962-65) clarifying this process. However, at the outset, in 1933, the outlook was bellicose, with frequent recourse to expressions such as “soldier”, “militia”, “crusade”, “battalions”, accompanied by symbols such as standards and emblems with triumphalist songs and hymns (*idem*: 387). In 1933, Cardinal Cerejeira himself explained to the Portuguese clergy: “An apostolic army for what? To take the offensive in the Christian reconquest”. Around the same time, Archbishop Primate António Bento

4. Cit. in Civardi, 1934: 70.

5. Speech to the Rome branch of Catholic Action, in 1931 cit. in *idem*: 109.

6. Fontes refers that the 1917 Code of Canonical Law would reinforce alongside an affirmation of Christianity and the Catholic Church as the true religion” (*op. cit.*: 285).

Martins Júnior was also explaining the need for “the renewal of the resurrection and the life of our “wicked and adulterous generation”, perhaps even more “incredulous and perverse” than those Jesus spoke to, directly”.<sup>7</sup> Aires Ferreira summarised the meaning of ACP: “the opposition of a dyke to the dissolving wave of secularism”, because “humanity is blindfolded and on the path towards the abyss”.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Portuguese Catholicism in 1933

In comparison with other European countries, following Hermínio Martins (1998: 99), Portugal displayed “an unusual level of national homogeneity”, understood as “racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural homogeneity”. The Catholic Church dominated religious life in Portugal and was no ordinary power because religion (in conjunction with art and language) wields a structural power as a symbolic system: “a power to construct reality that tends to establish a gnoseological order: the immediate meaning of the world (and, in particular the social world)” (Bourdieu, 1989: 9). The symbolic capital accumulated by the Portuguese Catholic Church meant the institution became an excellent tool for “social integration”, which was to a greater or lesser extent capable of structuring constitutive censorship through holding this “invisible power that may only be exercised with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to such influence or even by those wielding it” (*idem*: 7-8). We underline the communicational and political dimensions to the Church exercising this power: “it is as structuring and structured instruments of communications and knowledge that the ‘symbolic systems’” comply with the political function of instruments for imposing or legitimising domination” (*idem*: 11).

The powers held by the Catholic Church require a historical framework as “the schemes of perception and appreciation susceptible to application in any considered moment [...] are the product of previous symbolical struggles and express, in ways to a greater or lesser extent transformed, the state of relations of symbolical powers” (*idem*: 139-40). Hence, as a historical object, the struggles over the imposition of legitimate world visions are subject to variations both over time and the means utilised given “explicitly stating and classifying takes place uninterruptedly” (*idem*: 142).

We note that, two decades earlier, in 1910, there had been the declaration of a Republic in Portugal, driven by cross-class, anticlerical and predominantly urban supported that would implement a program of secularisation throughout society. There was correspondingly an abundance of legislation on civil registration, divorce, and family. More importantly, it was approved a law separating the Church and the State restricting the Catholic Church to its churches by withdrawing its political<sup>9</sup>, social (in the family, in teaching, in welfare) and above all its cultural influence through consecrating freedom of conscience (article 1) and respect for the plurality of religious and philosophical perspectives, i.e., freedom of thought, as well as the democratic principle of moral equality. This new legislative framework was touted as “religious war” by Catholic media outlets and with the abovementioned law not only receiving immediate condemnation from Pius X (in his encyclical *Jam dudum in Lusitania*) but also triggering the cessation of diplomatic relations (between 1912 and 1918) before later recognising the Portuguese Republic, in 1919.

Nevertheless, this new Republic ended in 1926, giving way to a military dictatorship. In 1932, when ACP was created, authoritarian nationalism had already risen to power led by a renowned Catholic militant, the President of the Council of Ministers, Oliveira Salazar. The dictatorship, in ambiguous ways, set to restore the influence and the statutes of ICAR. It rehabilitated the Church in terms of symbolism and protocol<sup>10</sup>, and withdrew clerical controversial topics and secular thinking from the public

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7. Book preface (Civardi, *op.cit.*, p. 9).

8. *Idem*: 15.

9. This rupture stemmed from article 2 of the 1911 Constitution.

10. In 1929, President of the Republic, Óscar Carmona, and Salazar visited Fátima.

space through press censorship, while also legislating on occasional issues (e.g., prohibiting gender-mixed education in 1927). The institutionalisation of the “Estado Novo” (via the 1933 Constitution) and a succession of initiatives (spanning the fields of censorship, propaganda and political mobilisation) sought to impose an authoritarian political vision, which was anti-democratic, anti-liberal and anti-communist, and legitimated by the Catholic nationalism that provided a providentialist interpretation of history.

The emerging political framework favoured the ICAR activities that, from the early 1930s onwards, included establishing new seminaries, which led to an increase in both seminarists and ordinations and to the (re-)establishing of religious orders and congregations (female and male, especially belonging to the Company of Jesus), coupled with the multiplication of lay organisms<sup>11</sup>, with the ACP leading the way. By 1944, this entity spanned a network of 3,339 sections and 70,000 associates (Fontes, 2011: 428), continuing to expand throughout the following decade. In 1959, there were almost 95,000 associates according to a Catholic source (repeatedly referenced by historians), thus accounting for 1% of the Catholic population<sup>12</sup>, despite this institution always presenting its membership numbers as falling short of expectations. While the reduced number of regular priests in the country fluctuated between four and five thousand<sup>13</sup> over this same period, this new Church openness to a (comparatively) larger number of laypeople, constituted, in the Church words, an “extended arm”. The Church would maintain almost total organisational and doctrinal control of the ACP until the 1960s. To approach the Catholic Church’s regulatory censorship activities, undertaken through ACP intermediation, we need to understand its organisational structure according to its goal: “forming a ‘*escol*’ [elite] and mobilising the Catholic ‘masses’ for intervention in society” (Fontes, 2011: 350).

#### 4. The centralised and hierarchized ACP structure: the position of laypersons

The ACP structure sought to extend its coverage throughout society with specific targets (by gender, age, social and professional background). Four different organisations were also launched, the League of Men of Catholic Action (LHAC), the League of Women of Catholic Action (LMAC), the Catholic Youth (JC) and the Catholic Female Youth (JCF), each with their own National Directorate while all hierarchically dependent on the Central Board and presided over by the most senior national figure, the Cardinal-Patriarch. These four leagues then subdivided into specialized social sectors (agriculture, education, workers, and university students), with each getting their own leagues and youth sections (e.g., the University Catholic Female Youth - JUCF), and subjected to a General Directorate. The ACP incorporated 20 national structures that then ramified into a hierarchical entity structured at the national, diocesan and parish levels. The ecclesiastic assistant was prominent throughout this structure: according to the Second Vatican Council, “this was the link in the permanent connection with the Episcopate and the guarantor of ecclesiastic discipline in each section, sector, organism or organisation to which they belong” (*idem*: 82). The ACP was proposed as “a unifying and, to a certain extent, homogenising project” in seeking to “integrate or aggregate the pre-existing organisations under its auspices” after having established “an organic and hierarchically structured body at the national, diocesan and parish or local level, resulting in a broad number of management and coordination bodies, simultaneously vertical and horizontal, within a centralised structure; finally [...] seeking not to leave aside any human dimension or field of social life” (*idem*: 350).

Thus, until the end of the 1950s, control over laypeople was ensured by a centralised, hierarchical, and highly bureaucratic structure based on the “nomination and ratification of members; nomination of ecclesiastic assistants; the direct presence of some prelates in the organisation’s core through the insti-

11. On the oscillations in this clerical movement, see Rezola, 1992: 222-255.

12. *Boletim de Informação Pastoral*, no. 5, 1959, p.17

13. Rezola, 1992: 223.

tutional performance of the most senior roles” (*idem*: 361). Furthermore, the national director was the most senior Vatican representative in Portugal, i.e., the Patriarch of Lisbon (Cardinal Cerejeira between 1933 and 1971) and with the positions on the Central Board and National Secretariat occupied by senior dignitaries in the ecclesiastic hierarchy. Only in the 1960s did this clerical presence come in for questioning and with greater autonomy demanded by some sectors.<sup>14</sup> As this decade finished, with the ACP restructuring already ongoing, the Central Board membership was exclusively for laypersons but with an assistant priest still in supervision. The changing role of laypersons occurred in a controlled fashion and required training and experience of the respective activity both by the ecclesiastic assistants and the associates.<sup>15</sup> This hierarchical logic was replicated in the lay structures, classified by distinct levels of belonging and responsibility (aspirants, members, militants and leaders), with section meetings due to follow a pre-defined format as displayed in the *Official Bulletin of Portuguese Catholic Action* (BOA-CP).<sup>16</sup> Ever since 1934, this stipulated precise instructions on the themes and timings for discussion were under the item “Schemas” (*idem*: 366).

From its outset, the ACP stated it would act “above and beyond all political currents”. However, the boundaries between religion and politics were always very permeable, especially because of the organisational conception of a lay apostolate. In the *Manual of Catholic Action*, written by the Italian Monseigneur Luis Civardi who, among paradoxes and euphemisms, would state that, while Catholic Action did not do politics, it did “want to teach Catholics to make better use of” politics on the grounds that it was “a duty” of “its members to do good [in] politics” and that “the politics of the Church and of Catholic Action should be called religious actions in the political field”.<sup>17</sup>

The study of censorship under the dictatorship requires serious consideration of the broad scope of this “apostolate”: “Catholic Action holds two objectives: one positive – ‘educating consciences’ and another negative – ‘defending public customs’ [...]. In this field, Catholic Action should not only collaborate with the Church but also with the authorities and institutions striving to achieve everything possible in the legislation on morality and the defence of customs always corresponds better to the purpose and be observed by everybody, throughout the entire extent” (*idem*: 58-59). This implied a pluri-institutional and intermedial mobilisation alongside with civil society, deploying “also not strictly religious channels, that may be called social, such as the press, the school, the social institutions, public congresses and assemblies, propaganda, the defence of public morality, interventions through the established powers, etcetera” (*idem*: 253).

## 5. At the crossroads between regulatory and constitutive censorship

To understand the ACP’s censorship abilities, we must recognize its dependence on both national and international hierarchies, navigate political ambiguity, and acknowledge its commitment “in a work of dissemination, with its development taking place as a series of concentric circles, of associates of the organisation outwards to their environmental surroundings; from within the ACP to the group of Catholic faithful; from the mass of Catholics to society in general” (Fontes, 2011: 376). The ACP attracts and mobilizes the faithful, spreading specific knowledge and worldview. Despite varied religious lives in Portugal, it enforces social norms through constitutive censorship. Paulo Fontes refers to parish level work and the “direct support given to the organisation and teaching of the catechesis and actions in favour of guiding persons distant to religious life” to Catholic sacramental practices. In 1943, the

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14. According to Fontes: “The very Catholic Church was gradually evolving towards a new paradigm of self-understanding of its identity and mission, characterised by the affirmation of freedom of conscience and religion, in a process that to a large extent coincided with the historical trajectory of the ACP” (*op.cit.*: 420/1).

15. For example, up until 1944, there were 35 programs run for the clergy (*idem*: 362).

16. Run by Father António Avelino Gonçalves, ACP Secretary-General (1934-47) and editor of *Novidades*.

17. Civardi, 1934, p. 235, 241 and 237, respectively.

efforts undertaken by two female organisations registered 2,687 baptisms, 878 confirmations, 17,081 confessions, 21,203 communions, 983 last sacraments and 963 Catholic weddings (*idem*: 373). The Family Campaign, ongoing over 1938-1939, included distributing 500,000 pamphlets and affixing 5,000 posters. The historian notes the ACP's role in promoting Fátima worship (its patron saint), organizing pilgrimages across national, diocesan and parish levels. The ACP expanded its outreach through various communication channels, from interpersonal parish-level relationships to professional media. In 1933, the ACP played a leading role in raising funds for the future Catholic broadcaster, Rádio Renascença (RR), promoted by Father Lopes da Cruz. The radio, as *BOACP* would state in June 1936, accounts for "one of the most powerful weapons that may serve the spirit today", while "urging, from the outset, attention be paid to the problem of television in order to not to get left worse off than the children of the darkness who seem more cunning than us" (*idem*). However, only in 1936 did Pope Pius XI deploy the AC onto the terrain occupied by cinema in his encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* (issued to the North American Catholic Episcopate). The Pope affirmed cinematography held "a place of universal importance", given the "millions of persons watching daily" their representations, recognising the strength of "speaking through pictures", deepened further by "talking" cinema "because the interpretation of the facts becomes still easier". Hence, "as cinematography is truly a lesson of things that teaches the good and the bad, more effectively [...] than abstract reasoning, then such should duly be raised to a purpose demanded by a Christian conscience and shorn of any demoralising content". Evaluating the harm caused by bad cinema ("becoming the occasion for sin, inducing young people down the path of evil", destroying families, "may create divergences between nations, social classes, between entire races") and the benefits of good cinema (to spread ideals, "knowledge of history and the beauties of the particular nation", "displaying truth and virtue"), considering the time had arrived to "survey and work"; the pope called on AC bishops and laypersons to wield their influence on productions with Catholic directors, actors and scriptwriters, leading them "to place their profession in accordance with their conscience". However, the greatest announcement came with "concrete indications"; praising the founding of the Legion of Decency by North American bishops, Pius XI ordered: "it is absolutely necessary that the bishops establish a permanent secretariat that holds the mission of promoting good films, classifying the others according to the categories mentioned and finally ensuring this classification reaches the clergy and the faithful", identifying the focus: "that all Pastors of souls strive to get the faithful, as in the example of the Catholics of the United States of America, every year to take a vow never to attend the showing of any films that offend Christian doctrine and morals".

Under the auspices of the *Vigilanti Cura* encyclical, two secretariats were established in 1938: the Secretariat of the Press, Culture and Propaganda (SICP) and the Secretariat of Cinema and Radio (SCR). Both structures reinforced Catholic identity through social representations (constitutive censorship) and regulatory censorship. Firstly, the ACP played a significant role in cultural production and distribution, primarily in print and radio until the late 1950s. The ICAR perspective viewed communication channels as tools for exerting symbolic power and enforcing social norms, strengthening constitutive censorship. SICP contained three departments, "Press", "Propaganda" and "Culture".<sup>18</sup> The first provided news and doctrinal orientation to the Catholic press, organising meetings and specific congresses, providing "articles to provincial newspapers" and cooperating with "international Catholic news agencies". "Propaganda" ran the ACP campaigns and took advantage of "every means to influence public opinion, especially the press, radio, conferences, pamphlets, flyers, illustrated newspapers, posters". The "Culture" department sought to "take Catholic thinking into every sector of Portuguese life", Publishing books, organizing events, and offering written criticism, which encompassed additional censorial practices.

To promote Catholicism, there was a strong focus on publishing original and translated books and establishing publishing houses (including Edições ACP, in 1943, and Logos, in 1957). As regards

18. All references from *Guia da Acção Católica Portuguesa*, vol I, 1954, p. 171-3.



periodicals, in 1953, ACP was publishing 22 newspapers, magazines and bulletins with a total level of circulation over one and a half million copies. Four years later, there was a total of 57 publications (Fontes, 2011: 380), many highly specialized, such as those targeting factory workers (e.g., *O Trabalhador* newspaper), rural workers (*Arado*), medical (*Acção Médica*) and institutional leaders (*Boletim de Dirigentes*, 1934-72). Among the leading magazines, there was *Lumen*, established in 1937, and aimed at the clergy. Furthermore, the ACP also instructed its associates to subscribe to the *Novidades* newspaper, the patriarch's mouthpiece, reminding them (in annual campaigns) of their "duty to subscribe, read and promote the daily newspaper".<sup>19</sup>

The ACP considered radio and cinema highly important, leading to the creation of the SCR secretariat, led by RR director Father Lopes da Cruz, with this broadcaster integrated into this structure. Radio labelled the "pulpit of ether", "preaching above the rooftops", "parachute evangelist", "multiplying machine for ideas"<sup>20</sup>, joined the press as a privileged ICAR means of communication. SCR regulations stated the radio department was responsible for developing and perfecting "stations and broadcasting posts", broadcasting "the practical orientations that the Central Board understands as its duty to provide" and supply other broadcasters, "especially the Catholic, with news about the life of the Church". In 1958, this was stated explicitly: "The radio is, in our days, one of the weapons employed with the greatest efficiency in the conquest of souls [...]. The ACP Central Board is to launch a support campaign for the apostolic broadcasting station".<sup>21</sup> This effort mobilized the entire ecclesiastical structure and introduced the 'Catholic Broadcasters Day' in 1942, aligned with the worship of Fátima. By the late 1950s, RR was in direct competition with national broadcasters (Emissora Nacional and Rádio Clube Português) in terms of technology, programming, and audience, even rebroadcasting Radio Vatican content in Portuguese after 1949.

The ACP held a defensive stance on cinema until the late 1950s, in line with Pius XI doctrine. For example, the *Novidades* edition of 14/7/1936 denounced the "corruptive" character of cinema, "because the films converted [...] into depictions of sin and vice", describing the unequal Catholic struggle against the powerful American cinematographic industry, run by "Jews", without "any ethic other than profits". The same newspaper conveyed an alarmist tone around these "shameless ribbons", with editorials condemning the "parents murdering the virtues of their sons and daughters!" and detailing the effects: "medicine also begins to suspect certain ganglion inflammations [...] nervous irritabilities and disturbances to sensibility" (*idem*, 19/7/1936). This depiction of cinema emerges frequently in various ACP initiatives, for example at the Congress of Catholic Primary Teachers in 1948 with its conclusions highlighting two social problems: "alcoholism [...] and the influence of 'bad cinema'" (cit. in Fontes, 2011: 573). Furthermore, at the fourth Social Week in 1952, a congress speaker stated, as regards the channels of communication: "Formerly, it was French immorality that was champion; now it's the American" (*idem*: 541). In the early 1950s, certain Catholic circles, especially in universities, started to diverge from this stance. They fostered a cinephile culture through magazines like *Brotéria* and *Rumo*, as well as cinema clubs like Centro Cultural de Cinema (established in 1955) and Cine-Clube Católico (in 1956), which gained popularity and autonomy in the following decade.

The SCR cinema regulations aimed to propagate Catholicism, acknowledging the difficulties of such project. Hence, this secretariat sought to "accompany the cinematographic technical press and information and promote articles in the press" that moralise cinema and educate the public. The entity would also undertake surveys to grasp the "extent of cinema in Portugal", the "quantity of cinemas belonging to entities that might be utilised", that "might be installed", and the "public reactions to moral and immoral films". The SCR promoted a "federation" of cinema halls favourable to exercising influ-

19. *Boletim Oficial Acção Católica Portuguesa* no. 283, 1/1958.

20. *Idem*, no. 273, 3/1957.

21. *Ibidem*, no. 284, 2/1958.

ence over producers and distributors, foreseeing “the establishing of a distribution company”. *BOACP* detailed how, in 1957, the SCR was “managing three cinemas” having already organised “a distribution company”.<sup>22</sup> These were, most probably, the cinema venues referenced by Francisco Perestrello (2001), in Avintes (Vila Nova de Gaia), Carcavelos (Vitória Cine), and Braga (Cinema Geraldo).

However, the key SCR function was regulatory censorship. As the regulation states<sup>23</sup>, “in obedience to the instructions issued by Pius XI”, the secretary should establish a permanent service, defined as a “critic” of performances, that registers, classifies and publicises films according to their moral content, with responsibility for “publishing, as soon as is possible, a regular Bulletin”. The aim involved ensuring that “all pastors of souls” annually provide “a promise that they shall abstain from attending cinemas that offend Christian truth and morality”. The films were to be classified by categories<sup>24</sup>: “Appropriate for children”, “For Adults”, “For All”, “For adults with reservations”, “For Adults with serious reservations” and “Condemnable”, with the latter including all films prohibited to Catholics.

*Novidades* had been classifying the films premiering in Lisbon cinemas since at least 1935 and thus prior to the *Vigilanti Cura* encyclical (1936). In 1936, *BOACP* invited ACP members to “promise” “not to attend impious and obscene films and abandon the cinematographic houses where such films are shown” because “on the path events are taking [...] it would be an error to convince ourselves that, to combat the evils of demoralising cinema, it’s enough to talk or write against it [...] we have long since adopted that process and the results have been zero”. In 1937, the same bulletin set out a “Schema” from the JOC meeting which read: “a) We went to the cinema? With our boys? To which cinemas? To see which movies? Do you follow the film critics in *Trabalhador*? Impressions of the Film? [...] No young Christian worker worthy of this name allows themselves not to be influenced by the *Trabalhador* cinematographic critics; b) keep the file updated; c) find out beforehand which films are showing in local cinemas; d) prepare the respective review; e) warn the masses; f) stand guard because you are complying with the instructions given. Through this approach, we will be able to decide on the fate of a film in our land. We shall even be able...to block the films that we condemn from coming to our lands!”<sup>25</sup>

With its own panel of “film critics” since 1940, SRC published its first *General catalogue of reviewed films (1935-1942)* in 1943<sup>26</sup>, an alphabetical list of films with names, years, and classifications was issued as part of the ‘holy crusade of moral cleansing,’ with instructions given through radio (1943-67) and Catholic printed media.<sup>27</sup> The bureaucratic apparatus saw improvements: in 1951, SRC began publishing its weekly *Cinematographic Bulletin (BC)*<sup>28</sup> with “files for all the films reviewed in Lisbon”, “so that the moral worth of performances, made according to the norms of ‘Vigilanti Cura’, reaches into every home and may orient parents, educators, and conscientious businessmen”.<sup>29</sup> The bulletin tracked premieres in the capital and surveyed films that had passed state censorship, as the regime aimed to refine its censorial role during this decade<sup>30</sup>, classifying, prohibiting, or cutting images, subtitles, and

22. *Boletim Oficial Acção Católica Portuguesa*, no. 271/272, Jan.-Feb. 1957, p. 161.

23. All references from *Guia da Acção Católica Portuguesa*, *op.cit.* p.177-181.

24. We here follow the categories published in *Boletim Oficial Acção Católica Portuguesa*, no. 281-282, Nov.-Dec. 1957, however, these occasionally feature somewhat different designations; e.g., in *Boletim Cinematográfico* no. 26 (28/6/1952), we encounter categories such as: “Inappropriate for children”; “Inconvenient for children”.

25. *Boletim Oficial Acção Católica Portuguesa*, no. 35-36 March-April, 1937.

26. The classification of films between 1935 and 1940 “was extracted from the Catholic daily newspaper *Novidades*”, in “Nota Prévia”, in *Catálogo Geral das Películas Criticadas (1935-1942)*, Edições ACP, 1943. An annual catalogue would be published hereafter.

27. E.g. see the newspapers *Novidades* and *A Ordem*, *Renascença* magazine and “some other outlets of the provincial Catholic press”.

28. The first bulletin was dated 11/1/1951 and survived until 1998 thus outliving the end of the ACP in 1974.

29. *Boletim Cinematográfico*, no. 50, 13/12/1951.

30. In 1944, the General Inspectorate of Performances was integrated into the National Secretariat of Information which had, one year later, established the Censorship Commission to evaluate films. In 1952, this would be renamed the Censorship and Performance Commission and, in 1957, the Commission for the Examination and Classification of Performances.

advertising. Hence, ICAR's censorial practices intertwined with the authoritarian regime's censorship, but ICAR's criteria were stricter, disregarding the quality of actors, directors, distributors, and cinema owners' interests. Among the films condemned in 1954 was the Fred Zinnemann film *From Here to Eternity* with its "moral appreciation" identifying: "adultery, insistent and gravely provocative sensual scenes" (BC18-11-54), disregarding its international success and seven Oscars. Furthermore, no genre was immune to "condemnable", even comedy as exemplified by *Le infideli*, which launched the career of Gina Lollobrigida, on the grounds of portraying an "ambient of crime, adultery and free living" (BC 8-4-54). Besides bans, the bulletin would also reclassify films, demonstrating an unusual level of thoroughness: e.g., in 1954, the comedy *L'ennemi public n° 1*, by Henri Verneuil, was classed as "For Adults" (while the official censor handed down a classification of "for the over-13s"), on the pretext of an "ambience of violence and doubtful scenes" (BC 16-12-54). Some alterations were far-reaching: the film *The Three Musketeers* (by André Hunebelle, 1953), officially classified for over-13s, was put down in the bulletin as "For Adults, with reservations", "due to the crimes of death and the provocative amorous scenes" (BC 14-10-54). The adaptation of *Othello*, by Orson Welles in 1951, received the same alteration justified for "showing that extremes may lead to love. The good and confident Othello becomes barbarous and cruel" (BC 20-11-52). In 1957, the *BOACP* explained that actually subject to disapproval: "this label primarily applies in two situations: either when the film presents a false thesis, therefore dissolving; or when this moral level is so low that this leads the moviegoer to become susceptible".<sup>31</sup> Political and ideological censorship campaigns adapted to changing national politics under the long dictatorship. As the Cold War intensified, Soviet communism became a central concern for international Catholicism, contrasting with the earlier anti-liberal stance in emerging Christian European democracies. By 1955, the SCR had reviewed 4,400 films, with its activities internationally monitored by the Office Catholique International du Cinema, a Vatican structure for "comparison of national criteria and the modes of classification in practice throughout the entire world".<sup>32</sup> Two years later, *BOACP* declared success "taking into account the rising number of requests for information arriving from Lisbon and the Province".<sup>33</sup>

This regulatory censorship didn't just ban condemned films; it also extended to production, distribution, and state regulation, aligning with the mission of lay apostolate and SRC's rules. Article 6 stated "acting in conjunction with the public powers" should "ensure the observation of the aforementioned legislation as regards the entrance of minors into cinema sessions" and "for the official censor to rigorously comply with the stipulations of the law on the morality of performances".<sup>34</sup> Classifying films was crucial for lay members' actions at parish, regional, and national levels, demonstrating the regulatory partnership between the Estado Novo and the Catholic Church.

The distinction between constitutive censorship and the regulatory censorship practices within ACP activities deserves greater scrutiny. First, the constant presence of ACP members in different organisms, such as the Portuguese Youth and Portuguese Female Youth movements, OMEN – Women's Work for National Education, the Association of Heads of Family, the Ministry of Education, the National Propaganda Secretariat, etcetera. They consistently advocated for increased political regulations on personal practices, education, and media, leading to more regulatory censorship. For example, on 11/1936, the President of the Association of Heads of Family, Abel de Andrade, appealed in *BOACP* for the "reduction to the minimum and even eliminating the factors that, through the newspaper, book, theatre, cinema and radio compete for the dissolution of Portuguese families". In addition, there were joint initiatives with other organisms, as in the case of the campaign by the Female Independent Catho-

31. *Boletim Oficial da Acção Católica Portuguesa*, no. 281-282, November-December, 1957, p. 131.

32. *Idem*, no. 271-272, January-February, 1957.

33. *Idem*, no. 281-282, November-December, 1957, p. 131.

34. *Guia...*, *op. cit.*, p.178.

lic Youth, demanding “official regulation over the entrance of minors into event venues”<sup>35</sup>, through a petition that gathered some 90,000 signatures alongside OMEN and MPF in the late 1940s. When the state established its own film classification grid in 1953, the ACP bulletin “served as the basis for the classification of many hundreds of films”.<sup>36</sup>

Here, Bourdieu’s concept of religious field comes into play as a methodological tool that considers that the “the boundary of the field is the boundary of its effects”, and that “an actor or an institution forms part of a field to the extent they either experience its effects or produce them within the field” (Bourdieu, 1989: 31). This contemplates how the Portuguese religious field intersected with the political field until the late 1950s. The field concept allows us to view the Portuguese branch of ICAR as a space of tension and growing conflict between actors, both dominant and dominated, particularly after the 1950s. The opening to lay members continued to generate effects, perhaps because “the religious field resembles very much the political one, which remains subject, despite its tendency to closure, to the verdict of the secularists” (*idem*: 61). The Portuguese religious field, and the ACP in particular, was never free of internal divisions and factions, dividing, for example, over the “the “social means” dynamic, in particular, for the university and factory worker worlds”, with “sectors displaying a more devotional and doctrinaire Catholic profile, more closely connected to the traditional sacramental practices and with others emphasising the need for a people-centred Catholicism with greater commitment to the temporal realities” (Fontes, 2011: 139). Fontes highlights that international Catholicism and increased member interactions through international congresses led to calls for greater autonomy and new ecclesiastical forms, particularly in universities. However, these aspirations faced resistance from a rigid and ultra-conservative hierarchy. We argue that the divisions within the ACP in its early years and its autonomy in dealing with political authorities, particularly during conflicts with state censorship, have been somewhat overemphasized.<sup>37</sup>

Examining the interplay between the Portuguese state and ICAR, ICAR’s larger structure, and the connections between regulatory processes, social representations, identity formation constituting operational censorship, consumption, and resistance, this exploratory essay highlights a broad field for future research on this subject. Furthermore, SICP also included regulatory censorship that remains highly difficult to approach. In its 1938 regulations, there is an implicit demand for internal ICAR press censorship: “control the Catholic initiatives of the same genre in order to prevent and correct failures in the unified visions of fundamental problems”. This came before, in 5/1936, *BOACP*<sup>38</sup> issued an open defence of the need for Catholic press regulatory censorship. The same regulation pointed to another form of regulatory censorship as the core function of SICP: “accompanying the publications and the doctrinal, literary, artistic and social initiatives for their criticism”. The words “accompany” and “criticism”, in the context of editorial production, sought to establish frameworks and concrete and detailed orientations. As explained in the ACP guidebook: “There are books that should never be read” and therefore “take advantage of the opportunities to acquire reading guides”.<sup>39</sup> This shall be subject to greater analysis below.

35. Fontes, 2011: 383.

36. Perestrello, 2001: 301.

37. The most serious case came with the suspension of the *O Trabalhador* newspaper in 1948.

38. This bulletin correspondingly reads: “to end once and for all with the freedom for each person to do what they want, when they want and how they want, which is pure anarchy, the Church should not and cannot allow for its press [...]. In brief, this requires the establishing of a higher body of organisation, management and orientation of the Portuguese Catholic press to bring an end to the chaos we live in”.

39. Petit, 1956: 14 and 30, respectively.

## 6. Filtered readings: from the Index to selected libraries and specialized commissions

Censorship of reading materials reveals key aspects of structural Catholic censorship drivers, both nationally and internationally, as well as their intensification under the Estado Novo regime amid the growing complexities of countering modernity. This also sheds light on the complex political-religious ecosystem surrounding the ACP. The Catholic censorship of books and reading materials during the military dictatorship and the ‘Estado Novo’ regime was primarily guided by the Vatican’s updated *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, in effect until 1966. This index replaced the earlier ‘indices’ that had influenced the Iberian and Italian inquisitions. It contained a list of authors and works forbidden for Catholic readers, with some exceptions allowed for legitimate purposes and individuals of recognized moral standing, although these exceptions were not clearly defined. This featured regularly in the Catholic press and influenced many journalists who criticized certain books and authors in prominent publications like *Brotéria*, with such articles spanning decades.<sup>40</sup> Within this scope, recourse was made to translations of foreign authors, such as Torrend (1928) and Jombart (1937). Among these Vatican index applications, in the shared territory of ICAR and the Estado Novo, regulatory and constitutive censorship practices overlapped. Many official censors, predominantly Catholic in education and belief, influenced evaluations, particularly in matters related to religious and ecclesiastical themes, essential taboos in censorial control<sup>41</sup> and the official persecuted writers, “believers” but openly dissident or anti-clerical, with Tomás da Fonseca becoming the highest profile case (on this, see Torgal, 2015).

Within this restricted acceptance, readers were guided mainly regarding religious texts, leaving the expanding world of ‘modern readings,’ including novels, cartoons, essays, and political works, without clear direction. This framework didn’t just promote ‘positive’ readings but also depicted certain materials as condemnable and dangerous, often due to concerns of immorality or subversion, as illustrated by the following examples. From the outset, there was the “religious library” proposed by Gonçalves Cerejeira, even prior to the foundation of the ACP, resulting from a conference held in an influential *locus*, the Academic Centre of Christian Democracy (CADC), when he was “Archbishop of Mitilene” and the “Bishop-Count’s” representative (until 17/5/1928), before its printing (and expansion) as a “separata” [*reprint*] to the *Estudos* magazine when Gonçalves Cerejeira was already Cardinal-Patriarch of Lisbon and symbolically leading the “*militant church*”.<sup>42</sup> These “Letters to the young” are “addressed to the body of the C.A.D.C” as a “table of law that should orient every member of this Centre” but also “of all youth”, “in every place, at all ages” (*idem*: VI), which rendered the audience potentially universal. Cerejeira described CADC as the “mother-house of the new captains of God”, who should comply with a program focused on “piety, study and action”, thus engaging “[in] this new crusade for God against the modern invasion of anti-Christian secularism” (*idem*: 11). Hence, “the first care to be taken by an informed Catholic boy [...] should be the choice of his religious library”, which “is your arsenal of war”, as “you are *soldiers of Christ*” (*idem*: 25). This choice involved only “good books”, even if few, as efficiency was essential<sup>43</sup> with this selective parsimony also responding to the sheer folly of reading: “The fever for reading is not a sign of intellectual strength; on the contrary. [...] It is not intelligence that *dominates* its subject; on the contrary, *it is dominated* by all [the subjects]” (cf. *idem*: 26/7). There follows a list of hundreds of “good” books that may be considered as the “*catalogue for the religious libraries of Catholic students*” [29], basically works spanning the Bible, catechism, the apologetics, doctrine, piety,

40. For example, Tavares, 1928; Alves, 1929; Leite, 1930a and 1930b; Leite, 1964.

41. Vd. references in Azevedo (1997: 58, 91, 104 and 219) and Autor (2022: 113-24).

42. Cerejeira, 1933: cits. V, 1 and 19, respectively.

43. Indeed, “what matter is not how many books, it’s having good books. [...] A soldier does not need many weapons and an excess may even prevent their good use” (cf. *idem*: 26).

liturgy and texts by/about the saints and Jesus Christ (*idem*: 29-32, cit.29). They were proposed as the components necessary for the “new war of Reconquest” and the re-Christianisation of Portugal, its state and society (*idem*: 101-7).

This book, rich in bellicose metaphors, served as a pioneering bibliographic-doctrinaire guide in Portugal, influencing subsequent generations of believers. It was later referenced in another guide, which praised it and established a direct lineage, as seen in an anonymous review published in *Lumen* magazine (cf. Oliveira, 1956: 221). Other groups of interest were ‘girls’ and ‘children,’ introducing gender and age-based criteria that occasionally merged (e.g., ‘girls’), making the guidelines and content more complex. These issues were addressed in *Brotéria* articles under the ‘Catholic Action and the Family’ heading, in alignment with the official guidelines for minor-appropriate reading materials.<sup>44</sup> This line of action emerged in the specialized Catholic and state institutions operating throughout the 1950s (see *infra*).

Another target included adult women, with feminism attracting the sharpest attacks that peaked with the proposition of “Catholic feminism” (Martins, 1941). In turn, this orientation reached its zenith in prejudice against Grail, a movement of Christian origins that arrived in Portugal in 1957 through activists such as Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo (a former leader of JUCF and Pax Romana, another transnational movement) that strove to reconcile a renewed spiritual search with social and civic intervention on behalf of women with its members in this same year prohibited by Cardinal Cerejeira from “engaging [in] activities, making propaganda and living in community” within the Diocese of Lisbon, an order revoked following various years of activities in other dioceses.<sup>45</sup> While the feminism of this movement remains debatable, this was the perception of many, and certain objectives clearly headed in that direction.

The reading surveillance priorities always featured condemnation of (or reaction to) “modern education” (Rocha, 1942). This becomes the *leitmotiv* and, alongside perceptions of Church shortcomings given the ongoing social, cultural and media changes in the secular world, would drive the efforts of a unique figure, Zacarias de Oliveira. A highly active priest, he would come to the fore in the 1950s as a cultural mediator within the most important ACP media outlet, the RR radio station. His innovative radio program was entitled “Books and Readings”, later resulting in a homonymous book trilogy published by Casa da Boa Imprensa between 1955 and 1958, with its name symbolising its moral intent. These books condense the most systematic Catholic bibliographic guide hitherto published in Portugal; an intricate juxtaposition of sources, criteria, and discriminatory terminology to such an extent that, following its third volume, covered practically all the most influential (or “important”) contemporary literature (at least in terms of authors). This, in summary, constitutes a panopticon<sup>46</sup> with the purpose of scrutinising, morally and ideologically labelling the entire literature.

About Zacarias de Oliveira, there is a scarcity of bibliography. He was a Catholic priest from northern Portugal (active at least since World War II) and a publicist-author who began writing fiction in 1947.<sup>47</sup> He was also a translator and pedagogue (with works on religious education) and an essay writer accredited by PORBASE with over 20 publications through to 1977 (in addition to articles in the *Lumen*, *Estudos* and *Penafiel* magazines). He was also a teacher of Religion and Morals at the Rodrigues

44. Respectively, Pinho, 1934 and Maurício, 1941; for both perspectives, see also Barreiros, 1938.

45. Cf. Graal, 1983: 5-11, cit.11; Amaral, 2008: 29; Graal, 2016: 8/9. This highlights the Grail’s affiliation to the International League of Catholic Action since 1936, specifically to safeguard the scope for interventions in Catholic countries given the movement’s origins in a Protestant context (Graal, 2016: 170). Indeed, Pope Pius XI then sought to turn this into a Catholic Action movement for the Protestant world (*ibidem*).

46. According to the Foucault attributed meaning, 2013: 225-60.

47. Vd. *Uma torre na cidade*, Oporto, Irmandade dos Clérigos. Biographic information based on his works.

de Freitas High School between 1950/51 and 1972/73, and a RR broadcaster between 1/1952 and mid-1955, at least.<sup>48</sup> He thus falls within the profile of a cultural mediator with a trans-medial or inter-medial dimension as defined by Cronqvist and Hilgert (2017).

The first book in the series, ‘The Youth and Books,’ sketches out the project. Despite its title, it aimed to guide not only young people but also their parents, educators, teachers, and even the clergy. It featured a classification of works and authors based on educational functions and age groups, along with a moral evaluation style, condemning some materials while placing others in categories without any specific judgment, like ‘moral education’ and ‘religious culture.’”

This anathema spanned two main currents: “pink literature”<sup>49</sup>; and “sombre coloured books” (Oliveira, 1955: 81-84). The latter group integrated those modern works of supposedly defeatist inclinations: “Modern literature may make you think this or that. But it does not resolve the problems that circulate given that it strips them of truth, reality and transfers them to a world in which the solutions become impossible” (Oliveira, 1955: 82/3). This category might be applied to Catholics (as with authors such as Mauriac and G. Green “ailing from this evil, sin against Hope”, cit. Oliveira, 1955: 82) even while the main target was the realists, especially the Portuguese neo-realists – for spreading “neo-realist pessimism, such defeated pessimism that it involves an aureole of truth that it does not possess”, in “novels that do not give courage given they interweave morbid, sick, miasmatical themes: showing only the downside of things and of people” (Oliveira, 1955: 81). Despite the hostility towards ‘pink’ literature, Zacarias would later include some authors supposedly falling into this category (such as Delly, Max Du Veuzit, Joergensen, Magali) in the category labelled “books for youth [:] novels”, which will be deepened in later guides.<sup>50</sup> The guide(s) had an implicit agenda to target realist literature, particularly neo-realism, and to be rigorous or exhaustive when it came to writers and works promoting progressive values, secularism, pluralism, emancipation, dissent, or alternative attitudes and behaviors. Or a more ‘modern’ tone, such as the ‘Vampiro’ or detective collections given to the author (then a radio broadcaster and opinion article writer for *O Gaiato*), that have received the following treatment: “Yesterday was the day and this happens with frequency, in which we in-utilised [sic] all the books in the Vampiro collection. [...] I was left brooding and I have fear of the world”.<sup>51</sup>

The guide openly follows the prescriptive Vatican tradition, particularly the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, which received its last update in 1938 and remained in force until 1966.<sup>52</sup> The trilogy complemented the guide, offering a national ‘update’ meant for ‘internal consumption.’ It employed dual discrimination, favoring orthodox Catholic literature and certain pre-modern, “neutral” or nationalist works while disfavoring the rest, especially the realist, resembling practices seen in the Catholic Church in neighboring Spain during the 1940s, as studied by Pérez (2021). However, the context differed from Spain, where there was a power struggle between local church sectors and the Spanish Falange. While literary realism and essays were contentious, the relationship with modernists was more turbulent in keeping with its official instrumentalization in the Spanish case. In contrast, Portugal had a more harmonious relationship with the national regime, even benefiting from a substantial repository of nationalist literature (see Trindade, 2008). Portugal’s systematic efforts, combining classified bibliographies with moral-ideological content, came later, followed by extensive critiques focusing on aesthetics, education, and pedagogy. Hence the delay in the emergence of this dimension that drove collusion between

48. Cf., respectively, Correia, 2016: s.p. [annex 4.18.12] and Rego, 2001: 333 (also Oliveira, 1955: preface).

49. I.e., “those of Delly, of Magali, of Max Du Veuzit [...], with] romanticised story-telling, sentimental and lacking reality”, “distilling venom slow in effect but harmful: they prepare great falls”; even Júlio Dinis was not “inoffensive”, requiring “moral reservations” (Oliveira, 1955: 80).

50. Cit. Oliveira, 1955: 153-62. This highlights, however, that the last of his guides would attribute various books by these authors with condemnatory epithets even while being far from the majority.

51. Oliveira, 1955: 1.

52. Leite, 1964 and Manguel, 1998: 284-8.

the moral-ideological and educational-pedagogic-ideological models, a hypothesis that we shall explore below. In this guide and subsequent ones, Catholic doctrine and ideology held significant sway. The Vatican Index was effectively merged with the 1917 Code of Canon Law, particularly Articles (Canons) 1399 and 2318, which prohibited certain books and imposed penalties for any violations, including those by authors, publishers, and bookstores, regarding censorial rules and book bans.<sup>53</sup>

These articles, known as the ‘decrees against communism,’ were referenced in the final version of the Index following the rise of fascism and Catholic fundamentalism. They were published independently in 1949 and were only abrogated by Pope Paul VI upon abolishing the Index. However, the Code remained in effect until 1983. Canon 1399 introduced the innovation of twelve thematic doctrinal categories that were to be considered when assessing both new and existing works. This complemented the books listed in the Index, making it clear that any work (such as a book or article) not conforming to the prohibited categories outlined in ecclesiastical law would face restrictions on reading, promotion, and distribution.”

In brief, these categories were used to condemn books with communist or immoral content, editions of non-Catholic works (e.g., biblical commentaries) or those containing errors, heretical books (including those by Protestants, spiritualists, atheists, apologists or those uncritical of Masonic or similar organisations), superstitious or non-compliant works, anti-religious or anti-Catholic books, and those against good customs and habits (including dueling, suicide, and divorce). This highlights that the Vatican Index used both quantitative and qualitative criteria to evaluate books. Some extreme cases were marked with crosses, covering around 200 titles from periods of doctrinal discord. Books with asterisks had conditional condemnation until specific content was corrected (*donec corrigatur*). The Index also issued blanket bans for certain authors (*opera omnia*) who had never repented, including their entire works or specific sections, such as novels, religious, or political books. Failure to comply with these ecclesiastical laws or similar ones could result in excommunication for readers, publishers, and those in possession of these books, including bookstores (cf. canon 2318).”

Zacarias de Oliveira drew upon this legacy as his starting point and replicated it for the Portuguese context, laying the foundation for subsequent national publications. He built upon this transnational basis and strengthened it<sup>54</sup> new titles, authors, themes, and currents, both from external and internal sources, including neo-realism, while also employing interconnected qualitative and quantitative scales. This occurred in different ways so that, at the end, the three books complemented and completed each other. In quantitative terms, the trilogy contains over ten thousand references, corresponding to over seven thousand titles, a continually growing number. This total doubles the c.3,300 titles on the final National Body of Publishers and Bookstores (GNEL) list of books banned from circulating under Salazarist censorship, in early 1974, and verges on the recent estimates made by Seïça (2022) as regards the universe of books subject to reports of the same censorship, around ten thousand.<sup>55</sup>

The ideology also appears when lists of supposed “literature” (or “novels”) included “books of history” or of “ethnography” or all the works of Marcelo Caetano (the second dictator), or the compiled *Speeches of Salazar* (cf. Oliveira, 1955: 153-62).

The second guide, with its title reflecting a different focus (The Church and books), openly assumed a global mission: “There are books that an intellectual censor would do well to remove from circulation: they constitute a stain on human thinking” (Oliveira, 1956: 7). This list included books deemed “hollow, pointless” (connected to a “frivolous and restless generation, floating without meaning [...], the product of readings, cinemas, empty hobbies”), “the morally unhappy or pernicious”, “venomous” (that “are in

53. Whatever the type of condemnation, this imposed “you cannot, without a specific licence, publish it, read it, keep it, sell it, translate it into another language nor in any other way pass it on to others” (cit. canon 1399, cf. “Santa Sede”, 1938).

54. As only for internal consumption, to the best of our knowledge, the trilogy was never subject to translation.

55. For the GNEL list, see Portugal. PCM. Comissão do Livro Negro sobre o Regime Fascista.



the dozens, hundreds, thousands”), and books prohibited by “natural law”.<sup>56</sup> Besides drawing on the Index for the afore mentioned national and international works and authors, he also advanced with various thematic-ideological considerations (e.g., “The Index and scientific books”, “The Index and literary works”) and publishing an appreciation of works and authors contained in 124 book collections released by Portuguese publishers. This evaluation spanned two dimensions, thematic (61 collections of “literature”, 16 of “education and religion”, 16 of “culture” and 31 “with no special classification”), by age groups and/or by educational-moral capacity. These books were labelled according to a complex system (“\*For all; \*\*For adults; \*\*\*For educated and morally established adults; \*\*\*\*Condemnable in the absolute”), which might be complemented by notes or with a simple collection designation (e.g., “Libraries for Girls”). Out of almost two thousand titles, the large majority were “literature” (c.72%), followed by “culture” (c.20%) and “education and religion” (c.8%), thus reflecting the profile of the national book market, the concerns of authors and tastes, including a survey of young people made by Zacarias and then released by himself (see Table 1 and Oliveira, 1955: 72-74). Of these books, around half (c.47%) were not suitable for young persons and almost two out of ten works were either for a subjectively prepared elite (educated and morally upstanding) or never for reading.

Table 1: Classification of age and adjudicative groups in *The Church and books* guide by Zacarias de Oliveira (1956)

Thematic area	Overall total	For all	For adults	For the educated and morally sound	Condemnable in the absolute
Literature	1424 (71.88%)	643	435	274	72
Education and religion	162 (8.18%)	148	13	0	1
Culture	395 (19.94%)	268	74	31	22
Total	1981 (100%)	1059 (53.46%)	522 (26.35%)	305 (15.40%)	95 (4.80%)

Source: *A Igreja e os livros*, Oporto, Casa da Boa Imprensa, 1956.

The last guide, titled ‘Choosing Books,’ is even more extensive, covering 7,000 titles and employing a wider range of classifications, some of which are damaging to authors and their works. Hence, books in the asterisk categories (excluding the positives, the first two lines in the table below, symptomatically containing only a fraction of these works 95 or 1.38%), correspond to almost 30% of the discriminated total (or 2013 of 6,895 works). The term damaging for the authors in question applies because of the strong semantic weighting (“inconvenient books”, “inconvenient books due to the doctrine or ideas exposed”, “greater reservations and caution”) and interpretation in the cases of the various works labelled with one or more of these markers (or even mentioning a particular label applies to all or part of works, e.g., novels by a particular author), inducing a sense of *ad hominem* censorship, a practice applied by regulatory censorship (both ecclesiastic and state) to various authors more closely linked to anti-Salazarist resistance. The guide also rewrote categories from the Vatican Index and added another for “Books

56. Oliveira, 1956: 8-13.

of no value / with no justification for their reading”, accounting for approximately 3% of the titles.<sup>57</sup> This furthermore highlights how, if we withdraw the category “books with inconveniences of a sensual or nervous order” (therefore, supposedly not totally condemnable), we get close to 21% (1,424 titles), particularly expressive and also including books by authors who made up (and who continue to do so) a broadly consensual literary canon, including Eça, Camilo and Thomas Mann as initial examples.

Table 2: Positive and negative classification categories in the *Escolha de livros* guide by Zacarias de Oliveira (1958)

Category classification	Total of works discriminated and %
Universe of all discriminated titles	6895; 100%
Books classified as “special literary value” (*L)	77; 1.12%
Books classified as of “special value for their subject” (*A)	18; 0.26%
“Books with inconveniences of a sensual or nervous order” (*)	589; 8.54%
“Inconvenient books due to the doctrine or ideas expressed” (**)	472; 6.85%
“Inconvenient books due to the two motives above” (***)	482; 6.99%
“Books in the same category as those above but that deserve greater reservations and caution – adults with solid moral and intellectual backgrounds” (C***)	470; 6.82%
“Books whose reading requires justification by a serious motive” (S)	75; 1.09%
“Books covered by the general determinations of can. 1399 of Canonic Law and that are, by their nature, prohibited” (DC)	53; 0.77%
“Books of no value / without justification for reading” (N)	77; 1.12%

Source: *Escolha de livros*, Oporto, Casa da Boa Imprensa, 1958.

The Zacarias trilogy had significant impacts that extended beyond its bibliography depth, including its circulation, intermedial influence, alignment with constitutive censorship within the ACP, legitimization and influence on official censorship, adoption by the “opposition”, and broad pluri-institutional reach. As for the communicational circuit, the creation of a *sui generis* circuit underlies this project-guide: this started with a weekly RR radio program, before later dissemination in the fortnightly *O Gaiato*<sup>58</sup>, which encouraged its systematisation in a book format, with praise coming from various periodicals (*Novidades*, *A Voz*, *Lumen*, etc.), including some from ACP press apparatus. Simultaneously, the pluri-institutional dimension persisted, with religious institutions involved in diverse cultural and socio-cultural fields while supporting ideological-doctrinal approaches in the printed press, radio, charity, and ‘Catholic action. From those already mentioned, there still lacks the trilogy’s publisher, Casa da Boa Imprensa, an Oporto based printing house that also ran a homonymous bookstore, later renamed Livraria Telos (also a bookstore-publisher) in c.1971 and is currently owned by the Diocese

57. We opted not to add these categories to the previous totals due to the overlap existing between some asterisked categories.

58. Publication of Casa do Gaiato since 1944, a Christian charity that attained a print-run of 50,000 copies in 1955 (cf. Anónimo, 1955: 4).

of Oporto Voz Portucalense Foundation.<sup>59</sup> There was also another range of support sources: the other bibliographic proposals (or exceptions) incorporated (by Cerejeira and by Lecarme in 1965, a work that Zacarias himself translated), and the “consultations” of a panoply of mostly Catholic printed sources.<sup>60</sup>

Fontes (2002: 205) previously noted the ‘Manichean diagnosis’ implicit in the first volume of this trilogy (which we believe extends to the next two volumes). However, its implications reach far beyond this, impacting the extensive universe of works, authors, trends, and various religious and secular elites in civil society, from bookstores to informed readers, censors, and situationist frameworks and actors. Additionally, in the late 1950s, other controls endured, including the monitoring of library reading choices. In addition to stringent selection criteria applied in various official institutions (from schools to corporatist organizations), the legislation specifically targeted the reading material of the working and middle classes, seeking to restrict access to works viewed as subversive.<sup>61</sup> While especially targeting public libraries, this warning commonly appeared far more generically in the initiatives of other actors, such as members of the clergy, librarians, households and families (in the case of “youth”) and writers. In this last group, there included figures such as Lima (1958), who called for the censorship of children’s libraries in *Brotéria* while others continued to campaign for a framework for youth cinema (e.g., Pina, 1958).

Symptomatically, another initiative appeared within the ACP structure in parallel with that above and with similar and partially overlapping objectives: the ACP Reading Commission (CLACP). This specialized ACP organism was set up to establish a framework for child-youth reading in 1953 and lasted into the 1970s. In 1954-56, the organism produced its first 58 “book and newspaper review” files (subtitle of the corresponding collection of ‘separata’ that lasted at least until 1971), applying similar categories to Zacarias in semantic terms (e.g., “recommendable”, “tolerable”, “not recommendable” and “condemnable”), with works by Emília de Sousa Costa (a renowned writer and editorial director of children’s collections at Livraria Clássica Editora) placed in the third and fourth categories (in the latter fell her *O alfaiatinho valente*, an adaptation of a story by the Grimm brothers).<sup>62</sup> Also “not recommendable” were works by Isaura Correia Santos, António Botto, Lídia Correia Serras Pereira and Ilse Losa, all writers for the prestigious magazine *Os Nossos Filhos*, connected to the cultural resistance (ibidem). There was the particularity of frequently summarising the contents and providing additional information about the publisher, genre, price and age range (subgroups within the child and youth phases) and “surroundings” (broken down into “school”, “bourgeois”, “urban”, “all” environments), with this category existing only until 1959. With a relevant proportion of the sample coming from well-liked publishers<sup>63</sup>, CLACP sought to construct a sociological and thematic framework for their work through extensively surveying around 1,500 students in c.1960 and then to issue new reading guidelines.<sup>64</sup> This was another attempt by religious and other institutions to adapt to changing times, fostering dialogue, solutions, and reflections. The preferences reflected popular trends, with novels and novellas for both

59. Cf. <http://netsearch.pt/livriaportocristadeus/>.

60. Specifically: “national and international magazines” (*Brotéria*, *Lumen*, *Horizonte*, *Magnificat*, *Mensageiro do Sagrado Coração de Jesus*, *Estudos*, *Livres et Lectures*) and “books and publication with this meaning” (*[Críticas de] literatura infantil*, *Juventude Católica Feminina*], *Lecturas buenas y malas*, de A. Germandía de Otaola, *Segnalatore librario*, de 1957, *Je chois... mes auteurs*, dir. Fathers Du Mesnil and Chartier, 1951, *Répertoire alphabétique de 15.000 auteurs avec 50.000 de leurs ouvrages*, by Sagehomme and Dubois, *Através dos romances*, de Frei Pedro Sinzig, *Selección de libros*, ed. by “Biblioteca y Documentación” in 8 vols, *Problemas da gente nova*, by António Freire, ed. da Livraria Apostolado da Imprensa; cf. Oliveira, 1958: 5/6).

61. *Apud* decree 19952, dated 1931: “Both to the Central Popular Library of Lisbon as all other public institutional and moving libraries, it is absolute forbidden to provide books, magazines and pamphlets that contain offenses to morals and religion or doctrines contrary to state security”.

62. Cf. Pessoa, 2016: 112/3.

63. MP, MPF, Edições Salesianas, Editorial Verbo, Edições Paulistas, Livr.ª Sampedro Editora, etc.

64. Comissão de Literatura Infantil e Juvenil da Acção Católica Portuguesa, 1961.

genders, including adventure stories favored by boys. This contained matches and mismatches: for example, among the recommendations was the newspaper *Alvorada* (the mouthpiece of the “pre-JECF”, renamed *Girassol*) and the book *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, evaluated by CLACP as “condemnable” as “clearly for adults” and lacking “the minimum educational concerns”, among other reasons.<sup>65</sup> This highlights the importance attributed to biographies (c.1/4 of books for boys and girls) and “religious issues” (28.8% for girls) in the “literary genre”, a category for books to buy when given money, with the latter percentage potentially not only due to the weighting of religious schools in the overall survey sample.<sup>66</sup> In general, young persons seemed to have read greatly given the “highly extensive list of books indicated”, but “the literary and moral quality of works” was “negative in general terms” (idem: 29). Still worse, the survey revealed “an almost absolute absence of orientation in reading materials” with the choice “almost exclusively” determined by the “economic factor”, with the solutions identified including establishing a “well oriented” publisher, a network of public children’s libraries and more translations “in the absence of Portuguese originals and even despite them” (idem: 37). This survey received official support from MEN and established new transnational connections through contact with the Bureau International Catholique de l’Enfance (from 1948), for which ACP would organise a congress in Lisbon in 1959 (idem: 7). Based on this (or complementarily), there was consolidation of the bibliographic list for this age group defined in accordance with an enormous plethora of evaluations, deposited in hundreds of these “files” covering at least 701 books.<sup>67</sup> In the specific edition in circulation until 1961, CLACP (Commission of Children’s and Youth Literature) evaluated 207 works of which 72 were classed as “recommendable” as regards their literary, graphic and moral “aspect”, with 78 “tolerable”, 43 “non-recommendable” and 14 “condemnable”.<sup>68</sup> Hence, there was praise for only one-third of this small sample (34.78%), with the rest either “tolerated” (37.68%) or depreciated (27.54%).

During the Vatican II era (1962-65), the ACP responded differently, enhancing the sophistication of its guidelines and bibliographic directions. The ACP’s specialist groups worked on these new classification models for ‘youth’ literature, focusing on reviews that emphasized the literary and educational aspects of works, rather than their moral, religious, or ideological dimensions. However, in some cases, it was challenging to establish clear boundaries, both for the reviewers, authors, and the works being reviewed. The most significant facet involved cancelling the qualitative classification formerly applied to the “criticism of books and newspapers” category, accompanied by its suspension for a two-year period.<sup>69</sup> This also saw the attribution of value to some neo-realist works (even while restricted to children’s literature), such as the short-story trilogy “Flor” by Redol, published by Publicações Europa-América.<sup>70</sup> The “team responsible” for this evaluation was only made public in 1967 and had mostly female members.<sup>71</sup>

The structures of the Portuguese Church not only underwent transformations but also lacked homogeneity and, thus, even a papal encyclical, *Pacem in terris* (1963), got censored in its Portuguese

65. Respectively *idem*: 26-28 and Comissão de Leituras da ACP, 1957: file A115 (signed by M.L.C.).

66. Comissão de Literatura Infantil e Juvenil da Acção Católica Portuguesa, 1961: 26/7.

67. Through to no. 11, there was sequential collection numbering for three series (entitled “A”, “C” and “F”, without any additional explanation of the numbers existing in the BNP), before taking on a single numbering system following on from series A for subsequent editions, probably not considering the other series, which ended in 1963 with a total of 10 files in C and 12 in F (cf. Comissão de Leituras da ACP, 1954-71).

68. Cf. Comissão de Literatura Infantil e Juvenil da Acção Católica Portuguesa, 1961: 7.

69. Only the suspension was referenced in the opening text (“Aos Educadores”) of no. 5 (Comissão de Leituras da ACP, 1962-63: s.p.).

70. Comissão de Leituras da ACP, 1970: file 615 (ass. By M.I.S. [Maria Isabel de Mendonça Soares]).

71. In detail: Maria do Carmo Oom, Maria da Conceição Dias, Maria da Graça Rebelo Pinto, Maria Isabel de Mendonça Soares, Maria Luísa Caldas de Almeida, Maria das Mercês de Mendonça Soares, Maria Sofia Maia Santos, Ivone Leal, Jaime Rebelo Pinto and Maria Teresa Morais Cardoso (Comissão de Leituras da ACP, 1967-71: s.p.).

language edition by União Gráfica (an ICAR publisher), withdrawing the “independent” in the section advocating for the self-determination of peoples: “Thus, people from any part of the world are today citizens of an autonomous state or are going to be” (Fontes, 2002: 343).

The official counterbalance advanced in the shadows, the Special Commission for Child and Youth Literature / Commission for the Literature and Arts for Minors (original acronym CLEM hereafter) which, following the Lisbon launch of its activities in 1950, went on to establish branches in the colonies of Angola and Mozambique in the 1960s. This commission supervised and structured “activities” with “influence” on the “moral and civic education of the youth”, including “a prior favourable opinion” for national and international publications “purposefully aimed at” child-youth audiences, especially books and specialized magazines (Decree Law no. 38964, cit. arts. 18 and 19). The commission went beyond censoring specific literary works, seeking to nationalize perspectives within the literary field. It recommended omitting allusions to social jealousy, encouragement of social conflict, or adult concerns in works, including translations and adaptations. The commission featured a Catholic Church representative (Article 17), illustrating the synergies at play in this domain. Additionally, various members were devout Catholics. In effect, the spirit of Catholic mission and service was central to figures sitting on this commission, such as João Serras e Silva and Fr. Moreira das Neves, with the latter wielding widespread influence, with Cardinal Cerejeira, extending to the management posts held at Catholic newspapers, magazines, and radio stations.<sup>72</sup>

Examining the interactions among censorial structures for reading materials and books, along with participation in transnational networks, highlights the dynamic nature of this cultural circuit. Some alternative channels even used lists of condemned books as predictions for future ‘orders’. As regards such outlets, we here refer to certain influential bookstores (such as “Martinho dos livros”<sup>73</sup>) and certain readers influenced by them, as witnessed by Sebastião Baldaque, client and ‘reader follower’.<sup>74</sup> Thus, this and other lists (produced by GNEL based on the censorship service circulars distributed regularly to media outlets<sup>75</sup>) were appropriated by members of the political and cultural opponents in an inverse intervention in accordance with the “oppositional reading” as defined by Hall (Gay et al., 1997).

## Conclusions

We have demonstrated the necessity of interpreting the interplay between religious and political dimensions and their transnational contexts in understanding the Portuguese cultural field under the Estado Novo. We assert that amidst the questioning of the Church and the erosion of the sacred in the Western world, a cultural and media offensive emerged, primarily centered in the Vatican, the heart of the global Catholic empire. Beginning in the late 19th century, Catholic Church institutional interventions became increasingly specialized and actualised (aggiornamento) in terms of cultural exchange, experiences, and perspectives on the sacred and profane realms.

To a great extent, this involved using institutional resources to implement carefully designed programs (including existing and incorporated media) in response to mass culture and emerging alterna-

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72. On this matter, see Autor, 2016 and 2020.

73. Or Eduardo Antunes Martinho, with a second-hand bookstore on Lisbon’s R. Voz do Operário (Rebello, 1996: 12).

74. In his words: “Whatever it was”, added Martinho, “the book by Father Zacarias, I take my hat off to him, it was for many people, myself included, highly valuable advice. Based on this, I drafted my list of what should be read – which was, simply, *A Escolha de Livros* the other way round: at the top of the list, whatever he declared prohibited became the priority readings; followed by, the obligatory readings, those that he classified with three stars, loaded with reservations. Already adult, despite everything, I also included on my menu some of the works that the Jesuit, due to the criteria of their cultural and religious value, considered worthy readings. That’s how it was”, concluded Martinho, “that the reader was educated and the bookstore emerged.” Like Martinho, many other did the same. A relevant service paid to culture by the little book of Father Zacarias de Oliveira. After all, wasn’t this just what he wanted?” (Baldaque, 2016).

75. On this matter, see Portugal. PCM. Comissão do Livro Negro sobre o Regime Fascista (1981).

tive cultural movements. We emphasized the significance of the ACP within the Vatican's framework, guided by encyclicals that outlined its actions and political-ideological objectives. These objectives represented a counteroffensive by the Catholic Church against progressive ideological influences, including atheism, secularism, liberalism, communism, and others. In broader terms, it aimed to monitor and exert control over "modern life".

We highlight the ACP's constitutive and regulatory censorship and its collaboration with the state apparatus in areas like education and youth organizations, as well as in both traditional and new media and across organized civil society. We argue that the interaction of means, goals, and cultural practices between the state and the Portuguese Church influenced the production, consumption, construction of representations and identities, and regulation. On this point, we break not only with the traditional limitation of censorship to the national scope but also with the tendency to separate the areas of censorial action through demonstrating how the surveillance of public shows and events (especially cinema) and reading materials were the priorities for institutional actions, and commonly jointly, taken by both the Church and the state.

We would posit it is simply not possible to grasp the survival of dictatorships and their corresponding censorial regimes (official and religious) without highlighting the roles of structures such as Catholic Action that simultaneously functioned as both political-religious and national-international mediators. Hence, while striving to keep their own room for manoeuvre, there is widespread evidence of the great complicity in terms of the major ideological and religious questions shared by the Portuguese state and the Catholic Church, with ACP actions making a crucial contribution.

We also emphasize the layperson as a crucial mediator within this framework, a figure that straddles the intersection between institutional regulatory censorship and social and structural prohibitions. We may also state, following our approach to the "reading guides", that the surviving dynamism in the Portuguese cultural circuit stands out in the producers, distributors and consumers of alternative representations and identities which interrelated (for the negative) with the regulatory censorship whether of the state or the Church. Further research needs to consider the growing, post-World War II affirmation of the American cultural industry and the transnational campaign this industry embarked on. With some likelihood, its future study would return insights into the disarticulation of the Portuguese authoritarian cultural system in its later decades.

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