



**“The Telescola... is an immense classroom,
one the size of the Lusitanian Atlantic territory!”
(English Version)**

“A Telescola ... é uma imensa sala de aula,
do tamanho da lusitana faixa atlântica!”

“La Telescola ... una inmensa sala de aula,
de la dimension de la lusitana franja atlântica!”

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Abstract

The *Telescola*, in its quality as pedagogical subsystem of the Portuguese Estado Novo's (1926-1974) policies, emerges as a technologically advanced medium with the potential to reach a multitude of individuals. This auspicious meeting of technology and students enabled the State to curtail illiteracy levels, as well as increase the years of compulsory education. To read the representatives of the Nation's speeches concerning the legislative power allows us to perceive the regime's own current of thought at the time; however, the aforementioned discourses also shed some light on the discrepancies between Portugal and the World in that period. It also aids us in understanding arguments, the comparative data and the justifications for the investment in that field. It also enables us to comprehend the dynamics that the generation of engineers sought to instil into the regime, by favouring education as the central axis of development. The establishment of the *Telescola* and its existence beyond 1974 is further proof of the significance of its implementation.

Keywords: *Telescola*; *Ciclo Preparatório TV*; Education; Educational Television.

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Resumo

Enquanto subsistema educativo no quadro político do Estado Novo português (1926-1974), a Telescola surge-nos como um meio tecnologicamente inovador e com uma capacidade de multiplicar destinatários. Este encontro auspicioso entre tecnologia e alunos, garantia ao regime a possibilidade de encurtar os níveis de analfabetismo e aumentar os anos de escolaridade. Ouvir os representantes da Nação nos seus discursos no âmbito do poder legislativo é pressentir o pensamento do regime, da época, mas também o desencontro entre o que se passava em Portugal e no Mundo. Ajuda-nos também a ver argumentos, dados comparativos e lógicas de investimento útil. Permite-nos compreender a dinâmica que a geração dos engenheiros procurou incutir ao regime, elegendo a educação como eixo central do desenvolvimento. A instalação da Telescola e a sua permanência para além de 1974 é mais uma prova da significância da sua implementação.

Palavras chave: Telescola; Ciclo Preparatório TV; Escolaridade; Televisão Educativa.

Resumen

En cuanto subsistema educativo en el cuadro político del Estado Novo portugués (1926-1974), Telescola surge como un medio tecnológicamente innovador y con una capacidad de multiplicar destinatarios. Éste encuentro auspicioso entre tecnología y alumnos garantizaba al régimen la posibilidad de acortar los niveles de alfabetización y aumentar los años de escolaridad. Escuchar los representantes de la Nación en sus discursos en el ámbito del poder legislativo significa presentir el pensamiento del régimen, de la época, pero también el desencuentro entre lo que pasaba en Portugal y en el Mundo. Nos ayuda a ver argumentos, datos comparativos y lógicas de inversión útil. Nos permite comprender la dinámica que la generación de ingenieros ha buscado infundir al régimen, eligiendo la educación como eje central del desarrollo. La instalación de la Telescola y su permanencia allá de 1974 es una prueba más de la significancia de su implementación.

Palabras-clave: Telescola; Ciclo Preparatorio TV; Escolaridad; Televisión Educativa

Let's Begin...

On the 23rd of October 1965, the then Minister for National Education, Inocêncio Galvão Telles, sent a message to the media; a missive that contained the following passage:

An important event is close at hand, one that I feel I must bring attention to (...). I speak, of course, of the Inauguration of the *Telescola*³. (...) The *Telescola* is not a typical school, it is not an institution designed to be contained solely on one specific building (...). The *Telescola* cannot be inaugurated like traditional schools, celebrated with a visit and a more-or-less festive event; the *Telescola* cannot be circumscribed to the four walls of a building – for the four borders of mainland Portugal are its *de facto* limits. In fact, the *Telescola* is an enormous, an immense classroom, one the size of the Lusitanian Atlantic territory (TELLES, 1966, p. 348-349).

Gone was the long period of national debate which began – as we can assert with some degree of certainty – in 1956, when the Decree-Law n° 40 964 (31st of December) fixed the length of compulsory education at four years for all males; afterwards, this “boon” was granted to all females by the *Estado Novo*. When, on the 9th of July 1964, the Decree-Law n° 45 810 extended the years of compulsory education for all citizens to six years, elementary education was already fixed by law at four years for both sexes.

During that period, the State convened with various organisations, particularly with the OECD, multiple scholarships were granted by the Instituto de Alta Cultura (lit. ‘Institute of High Culture’) with the aim of supporting the expenses of training of technicians and teachers – who later integrated the Centro de Estudos de Pedagogia Audiovisual (lit. ‘Centre for the Studies of Audio-Visual Pedagogy’) – various teams had already collaborated with the Emissora Nacional de Radiodifusão e Televisão Portuguesa (lit. ‘National Broadcaster of Portuguese Radio and Television’), and a multitude of financial resources had been made available by the Plano Intercalar de Fomento (lit. ‘Intercalary Development Plan’), which began in 1965. These decisions were widely debated, particularly by the legislative power, at the Assembleia Nacional (lit. ‘National Assembly’) and the Câmara Corporativa (lit. ‘Corporative Chamber’). Because we believe that these speeches aid us in understanding the narratives and justifications created and presented, we intend, in the present paper, to travel through time (so to speak) and analyse those discussion and decision spaces, which preceded the Minister’s speech.

1. Justifying... with the “circuit of the law”

David Easton, in this theory concerning political systems, attempts to clarify various presuppositions regarding the nature and it’s the pattern of action, conceiving the political life “firstly as a system of behaviours framed by an environment exposed to (*inputs*) and which reacts to (*outputs*) influences; these actions will have a feedback effect on the *inputs*, constantly refuelling the operation of the political system” (EASTON, 1992, p. 221). Gianfranco Pasquino (2005), following Easton’s current of thought, defines “three basic components of the political systems: the political community, the regime and the authorities” and considers the regime as “a set of rules, norms, procedures that supervises the processes of the institutions and their relationship, the political activity of the community and the choice and the behaviours adopted by the authorities” (PASQUINO, 2005, p.15).

³ The term “Telescola” is a portmanteau of the Portuguese words for *Televisão* [Television] and *Escola* [School].

The various legal means referred over the course of this paper direct us to the political system where they are “produced”, to the legality of their production, to the legal and institutional contexts that legitimise them and the reactions they elicit, following their publication. We can analyse the influences referred by Easton in an internal context, where the instruction of the workforce was of utmost importance to the dynamization and fruition of the Development Plans, as we can see in international organisations – for instance, the OECD – that seek to support and incentivise improvements in education in different countries. These contexts require open-minded interlocutors with a penchant for both strategy and leadership to do away with more-or-less crystallised structures and political wills. Those who strive to have an impact will oftentimes see their proposals act as destabilising factors; nevertheless, this is an absolutely essential stage if one seeks to bring about change.

The law, as political exteriorisation, has to forcefully comply with a circuit that, beginning in the “death” of the past legal frameworks, will culminate in various outputs that its approval will determine – that is, until it is again questioned. Alberoni, in his opus entitled *Gênese*, aids us in the configuration of that path which, from an epistemological point of view, enables us to comprehend the primary sources that are created during that path, transforming them into evidences that we must ponder on and interpret further. Alberoni states that:

In our daily lives we are constantly changing. We adapt to new circumstances (...). If such an experience is not confined to a singular individual, but instead experienced by many – in all its transformative and renovative aspects – (...) the regular social change will give rise to a rupture, a discontinuity. The nascent state is a social discontinuity brought about by an experience of death and rebirth (...) (ALBERONI, 1990, pp. 36-37).

The changes in education that ensued during the post-World War II period are inserted in an environment characterised by the overcoming of rules that restricted the initiatives within the field of education, bringing to the forefront of political discourse the transitions or ruptures in the form of conceiving education, how to successfully address the issue of illiteracy or the decisions on how to effectively promote education amongst the most marginalised groups – be it due to age or to the geographical position. But the technical revolution that wars always seem to incite brought with it new means, new possibilities to democratise the access to commodities – commodities which, up until that point, were largely experimental in character. Radio, cinema, television – i.e., the audio-visual media in general – have and deserve yet another rise to prominence and potentiate their revindication in the sphere of political decisions. For this to happen in regimes ruled by a Constitution, discussions and analyses must be proposed within the spaces of legislative power – and, in the case of the Portuguese *Estado Novo*, these spaces are the National Assembly and the Corporative Chamber. The discussion of that project will incite the intervention of all those who possess the will and knowledge to contribute to an improvement of the proposal, before it becomes law. Hence, its publication in the *Diário de Governo* (lit. ‘Journal of the Government’, the Portuguese Government Gazette of the time) and its consequent implementation and monitorisation will enable its “enactment”, until someone, motivated by a shift in circumstances, calls it into question and its consequent modification or abolishment become inexorable.

In this justificatory framework, it may, hence, be legitimate to see the analysis of the speeches of the representatives belonging to the National Union as sources that should not be undervalued – as epistemological auxiliary materials of construction (and justification) of something that is slightly unprecedented or, at the very least, less plausible in a largely conservative regime that controls the people it rules over and which views revolutions of any kind as untoward. Despite this, the legislative construction that the representatives of the National Assembly and of the Corporative Chamber aided in creating was an actual revolution in education; one that was enthusiastically supported by the Minister for National Education. Let us then delve deeper into that discussion and into the arguments employed by those representatives of the legislative power.

2. Delving into the core of the debate...

The 1933 Constitution grants power to two institutions that complement each other, and which are inseparable from one another whenever the legislative body seeks to pass a new bill. The National Assembly, “composed of ninety representatives elected by direct suffrage by the citizens, with a term of four years in office” (article 85) and the Corporative Chamber, which is “composed of individuals representing local municipalities and social interests – being these interests considered in their essential branches of administrative, moral, cultural and economic orders” (article 102). If the Assembly has the power to “draft bills, interpret, suspend and revoke laws” (article 91), “the Corporative Chamber is tasked with relating and assessing in written form all bill proposals or projects that are presented before the National Assembly” (article 103) (MIRANDA, 1976, p. 247 and 255).

It is imperative to state that the most substantive part of the information that we compiled was extracted from the National Assembly; the Corporative Chamber had but a residual number of references (see Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Number of occurrences when searching the database for the 4 keywords			
Keywords	Legislatures	Journal of the Sessions of the N. A.	Minutes of the C.C.
		Number of References	Number of References
Telescola	VIII, IX, X, XI	83	4
Televisão escolar ⁴	VIII, IX, X	15	1
Televisão educativa ⁵	VIII, IX, X	5	0
Ciclo Preparatório TV ⁶	IX, X, XI	8	2
Size of the Sample:		78	7
Source: http://debates.parlamento.pt/			

Due to these factors, there is a noticeable imbalance between sections 2.1. and 2.2. Despite this, we wanted to include these two constitutionally empowered spaces, through which passed different laws that concern our subject-matter.

2.1. National Assembly

It was during the National Assembly’s 88th Session (29th of March 1963), that the subject of *Telescola* was first debated. The man responsible for initiating this debate – perhaps the staunchest and most eloquent supporter of the establishment of the *Telescola* in Portugal – was

⁴ Lit. ‘School Television’.

⁵ Lit. ‘Educational Television’.

⁶ Lit. ‘Preparatory Education Level TV’.

António Martins da Cruz, a lawyer, with degrees in Law and in Letters, belonging to the municipality of Castelo Branco (Tavares Castilho, 2009), author of various parliamentary speeches during the VIII Legislature (1961-1965) concerning the State Accounts and the **Public Credit Union** of the year of 1961, a man who describes himself as “obsessed with education, with its promotion, without delays and at all levels, and its availability to all Portuguese citizens from all social and economic backgrounds” (*Diário das Sessões* [lit. ‘Journal of the Sessions’], n° 88, 30th of March, 1963, p. 2244). Cruz, referring to the “appalling state” (Idem, p. 2246) of education in Portugal compared to the rest of Europe and the World, concludes that “the absolute impossibility of solving the problem at hand by traditional means, for these necessitate adequate financial and professional backings; these shortcomings impede the sating the Nation’s core yearnings, therefore stunting Its social and economic growth” (Ibidem). Hence, Cruz argues that the *Telescola* “by revolutionising the system of pedagogy in its entirety, a system set in stone by the history of education and the basis for the education of us all (...) we meet the current need experienced not merely by us, but by the entirety of the civilised world” (Idem, p. 2247). Firstly, he uses the USA as an example – a country which, while possessing incomparably larger financial resources and millions of students and thousands of higher education institutions that allow for the rapid instruction of necessary teachers, has nevertheless opted for education through television – with the numbers of the *Telescola* currently exceeding the 2 000 000 mark. He further added that “because there were zones outside the normal reach of broadcasting signals, the country created for these populations a *Telescola* with «a television broadcasting apparatus carried by an airplane that maintains itself at a convenient height, in a more-or-less stationary manner, flying in circles above the centre of the zone to be serviced»” (Ibidem). Martins da Cruz then turns to Japan which, according to him, has the *Telescola* service in place since 1953, “(...) the *Telescola* of that country is one of the most developed in all the World” and “(...) there are over 28 000 schools – of various levels of education – that employ this service” (Ibidem). “The age range of these programs are 4 to 17 years of age”, and the broadcasts are “purely related to education and professional training. They cover subjects such as teaching, Japanese, English, Math, History, Geography, Technology, Sociology, Music, Art, Gymnastics, Handicrafts, etc.” (Ibidem). The representative also cites examples of European countries – such as Sweden, where “the *Telescola* reaches 6000 schools, focuses mainly of professional training and is aimed at boys from 14 to 16 years of age”; Germany, which “has 6 weekly broadcasts, directed at high schoolers and citizens undergoing professional instruction” or France, which “employs the *Telescola* in the teaching of History, Geography, Physics, the Sciences, Drawing, Economy and Languages in 5000 elementary and high schools” (Ibidem). He mentions “England, Venezuela, Mexico and Switzerland”, where “the *Telescola* is gaining momentum and is used to instruct students on teaching, History, Geography, the Sciences, Languages, Psychology, Chemistry, Biology, Math, Agronomy, Archaeology, etc.”. In fact, Portugal’s neighbouring country, “Spain, according to the information I was able to ascertain, is already studying this matter with unbridled interest, for the Spanish government believes that the *Telescola* may be the solution to the country’s own problems with education” (*Diário das Sessões* n°. 88, 1963, p. 2247). And “Italy’s case deserves special attention, due to its striking similarities with our own country in terms of conditions” (Ibidem). Cruz further elaborates on Italy’s case, discussing the reasons for the broadcasting, the number of broadcasting posts and of enrolled students, the success rate of these individuals – for instance, in “June of 1961, 80% of all the students enrolled in the *Telescola* program that sat for exams at State-approved institutions passed their examinations!” (Idem, p. 2248) –, along with other data. Martins da Cruz goes so far as to vouch for the *telescuola* by stating that “given its special characteristics, the realism of the issues it aimed at solving, to the optimal accommodation and practical efficiency of the solutions adopted, the rational and organic structure of the created

programs, the courage necessary to officialise it – with final exams and legally recognised diplomas –, the teaching methodology of this revolutionary school, the Italian example makes, in the scope of European television – and even, perhaps, on a global level –, an unique and particularly strong case for the myriad of uses that hodiern television as a whole may have in those vast fields that are education and popular culture” (Ibidem). The representative continues, by stating that if one considers that, in a manner not unlike Italy, “amongst us too (...) the issue of instructing the new generations that conclude elementary school is a particularly problematic matter due to the sheer numbers of these individuals; per year, about 100 000 eleven-year-olds, both boys and girls, find themselves forced to drop out of school after only completing their elementary education; which positions the rate of population with a 4th grade at 80%” (Ibidem).

Hence, the *Telescola* was perceived as the solution to Portugal’s education-related issues; it presented the answer for “the lack of immense funding for the construction of hundreds of buildings – for, like Italy, virtually all rooms in remote villages and hamlets could become *Telescola* classrooms – elementary schools, *Casas do Povo*⁷, in cultural or recreational associations, in rooms granted by industrial and commercial companies or by generous private citizens” (Ibidem). The “lack of tens of thousands of teachers” would no longer be impactful, for “a small group of them [teachers], smaller in numbers than that of a faculty at a high school or technical school, would be able to instruct the whole country, since the *Telescola* does not necessitate a teacher per class but a teacher per subject” (*Diário das Sessões n.º 88*, 1963, pp. 2248-2249). In this speech, Cruz also addresses those who regarded the *Telescola* program with various degrees of scepticism, the “*velhos do Restelo*”⁸, in his words, who “will themselves argue that that the ‘great’ part of the classical solution will vastly outweigh the ‘good’ that this innovative solution brings” (Idem, p. 2249), ending his speech in a cautionary note: “(...) if we were to listen to them, we shall have neither ‘great’ nor ‘good’!” and, as a final point, he stated “(...) I believe that the *Telescola* will be the panacea that will do away with what ails this aspect of the Portuguese society. Its installation will be less expensive than two technical schools, but such a scarce budget will remain unnoticed in the eyes of the State’s Treasury. My wish is for it to be approved as soon as possible” (Ibidem).

Before the year was out Martins da Cunha would have another opportunity to staunchly defend the establishment of the *Telescola* in Portugal – this time during the discussion of a bill proposal concerning the authorisation of revenues and expenses to the year of 1964. In a speech marked by the concern with sanitation and the balance of public finances, Cruz once more refers a set of the *Telescola*’s “good practices” on an international level. Considering that “the State’s Treasury has but modestly contributed to the education of the Portuguese people” (*Journal of the Sessions, n.º 105*, 12th of December of 1963, p. 2717), the representative promptly adds “it is unfortunate to see that, in the bill proposal concerning the authorisation of revenues and expenditures to 1964, education does not receive the attention that it duly deserves, it finds itself deprecated while the interests of national defence are upheld” (Idem, p. 2718). Still according to Cruz, “The biggest failings (...) of national education currently lie, in my opinion, in education on a high school and professional school levels; in the latter, these failings are noticeable in the commercial, agricultural fields and other subjects of professional education” (Idem, p. 2721).

⁷ Lit. ‘Houses of the People’ or ‘People’s Houses’. In very broad terms, these were corporative institutions that were primarily connected to agricultural or otherwise rural activities/lines of work and the protection and representation of farmers; they were endowed legal powers also performed similar functions to those of modern social centres. They were created by the *Estado Novo* regime in 1933.

⁸ The *velho do Restelo* (lit. ‘the Old Man of Restelo’) is a fictional character created by the poet Luíz Vaz de Camões. Camões employs the *velho do Restelo* in Canto IV of his 16th-century epic poem *Os Lusíadas* to voice the pessimism felt by those who allegedly did not believe in the success of the Portuguese voyages of discoveries during the Age of Discovery. Since then this character became analogous with the terms “nay-sayer” and “detractor” in the Portuguese language; it bears a similar meaning to the English expression “doubting Thomas”.

Hence, the representative desires to “to extend the duration of compulsory education”, an issue that immediately raises yet another problem: “to force the students who conclude the 4th grade of elementary education to attend school for two more years is equivalent to increasing, in that period, the number of students from 300 000. Where would we find the thousands of classrooms needed? Where would we get the necessary hundreds of teachers? From where or from whom would we receive the hundreds of thousands of *contos*⁹ needed?” (Ibidem). He then expounds on Portugal’s neighbouring country’s case to highlight that “concerning Spain, that country raised compulsory education to eight years” and simultaneously “initiatives were put in place to bring Spain’s education policy closer to European standards, such as the creation of (...) the *Bachillerato Radiofónico* (a graduation certificate achieved by learning through radio and television)”. Martins da Cruz concludes his speech in an exclamatory fashion, by stating the following: “we must take immediate action and increase the minimum mandatory school years to six years, at the very least” (Ibidem). In his long speech, the representative addresses the problems encountered in professional schools and by higher education to once more suggest the solution of the majority of these issues: “if the age we currently live in demands a higher-level education available to all, as different in its comprehension as in its extension, the technology of our age readily caters to that demand in full. And that aid to the branch of education comes in the form of a veritably revolutionary tool – I speak of education through television” (Idem, p. 2723), concluding his discourse brilliantly, in the following manner: “It does away with classrooms of 40 students and creates classrooms that hold 40 000 pupils! A single teacher will tutor an entire generation. From Lisbon to Trás-os-Montes, from the Beiras to Algarve, students share the same Math or Geography, History or Portuguese teacher” (Ibidem). He will not, however, end his speech without presenting yet another group of strong arguments in favour of the implementation of the *Telescola* in Portugal, starting with the pedagogical advantages of education through television: “it is not just a matter of offering all Portuguese students the opportunity to be tutored by the very best teachers in the country. But the medium’s own specific characteristics – sound and images – may prove to be excellent didactic auxiliary tools that further improve the learning experience” (Ibidem). And he continues with his thesis’ “defence” strategy: “In all countries where distance education through educational television is practiced – especially in the USA, Russia, Japan, Sweden, Argentina, Canada and Italy, which, I argue, are the countries at the forefront in the field of distance education – their levels of education surpasses those of other countries which still rely on traditional education methods” (*Journal of the Sessions n° 105*, p. 2724). Cruz provides further evidence to support his position by presenting a list of economic (“we need not thousands of teachers – which we, incidentally, do not have – but instead a small but highly capable team. We need not to construct hundreds of technical schools and high schools, which would amount to millions of *contos* spent, for we do not possess the means to such an enterprise”), geographical (“aside from being cost-effective, television enables us to cater to the needs of education of a large portion of the country – not at a national scale in its entirety, of course, for 40% of rural areas still lack electricity services”) (Idem). He continues on, mentioning yet again Japan, which “possesses broadcasting services geared towards teaching in elementary, secondary and tertiary *Telescolas*, of Humanist instruction and of professional training. Educational television reaches the entirety of the country in a daily ten-and-a-half-hour program”, Spain, which “is currently readying two channels entirely dedicated to educational television”, and now Argentina, where “educational television progressed so much that nowadays thousands upon thousands of Argentinian teachers are allocated to the rest of South American countries”

⁹ The *conto* (plural *contos*) is a colloquial term used to refer to the sums of one thousand *escudos*. The *escudo* (lit. “shield”) was the currency of Portugal and its history spanned nearly four centuries; it was first introduced in 1722, supplanted *rei* in 1911 and ceased to be used in 2002, being replaced by the euro. It is a more ‘formal’ colloquial term than the word *paus* (lit. ‘sticks’), an expression that was widely used by the Portuguese in day-to-day conversations.

(Ibidem). He also announces: “Even without the necessary funds, the advent of educational television is upon us”. It is not, therefore, surprising that “tomorrow, the Minister for National Education will announce to the country that educational television will be broadcasted in the near future”, ending his speech with a legitimate aspiration: “I hope that the largest part of it falls on educational television in order to, after the trial period, in next October at the beginning of the 1964-1965 school year, it can usher in a new age in the history of national educational – where compulsory education is fixed at 6 years and that all Portuguese citizens from all social and economic backgrounds are educated, regardless of where they live – be it in an urban or in a rural area, in a village or in an isolated hamlet –, or the sumptuousness – or lack thereof – of their homes” (*Journal of the Sessions n° 105*, p. 2725).

The third session in which the issue of the *Telescola* was discussed took place at the 123rd Session of the National Assembly (30th of January 1964). This time it was Joaquim de Sousa Birne, mining engineer, representing the constituency of Viseu (Tavares Castilho, 2009), who, while taking part in the preliminary debate on national education, voiced his concern regarding the high levels of illiteracy in Portugal: “the country’s working population – considering that citizens work from 15 to 75 years of age – is about 6 100 000; 2 100 000 of whom are illiterate” (*Journal of the Sessions n° 123*, 31st of January 1964, p. 3045), and adding that “our illiteracy rate is the highest among European countries and much higher than Spain and Greece, the countries that figure behind us on that scale” (Idem). He then goes on to address the issue of elementary education, a problem which, according to Birne himself, resides in the “outdated optimal illiteracy rate (...) the four grades of mandatory education are, nowadays, mere relics from a bygone time that we – and only we, in Europe – refuse to do away with, while less developed countries outside of Europe have already casted it aside” (Ibidem). To support his assertion, the representative produces several pieces of comparative data from other European countries, which demonstrate that the majority of European countries had already raised the periods of mandatory education, which ranged from “seven years in Denmark to twelve in West Germany. (Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Finland and France opted for eight years of mandatory education)” (Ibidem). Even Spain or Greece, “which are the most similar of all European countries to ours, both in terms of economy and society, have already fixed the mandatory education period at six years”, and he further adds: “Aside from Portugal, the four-year mandatory education model is present in countries such as Ethiopia, the Philippines and Thailand and, apparently, also Brazil – and we, under normal circumstances, are always honoured to be associated with Brazil, in this particular instance, however, we do wish it were not so” (Idem, p. 3045-3046). The representative also regards the fact that “in other countries with a much higher rate of illiteracy than Portugal the years of compulsory education was raised above four-year mark” as symptomatic of Portugal’s issues in the field of education; Birne continues by providing examples “This is true for Turkey, where the policy is five years of compulsory education and for Egypt, Iran, Mexico and Venezuela, with a policy 6 years of compulsory education each” (Idem, p. 3046). This data alone supports the “imperative authority of the resolution, as an educational cornerstone of high global, social and financial repercussions”, in addition to the fact of “approximately 90 000 Portuguese city-dwelling citizens that graduate from elementary schools do not enrol in any other institution of learning of any kind and, therefore, lead their entire lives with just minimum education” (Ibidem). Moreover, in the case of technical-professional education, he even admits “the optimal incorporation of the initiation to the technical-professional sphere in the system of elementary education” (Idem, 3047), which “in its initial stage, could be taught by the *Telescola* alone; an expertly tailored syllabus, competent supervision, the employment of visual aids and footage of examples would be valuable assets to the citizens in their initial stages of learning a craft” (Ibidem). Birne seizes this opportunity to discourse on the issues of higher education, and to remind those attending the session that the Ministry for National Education – in the form of the

Minister for National Education – had already revealed “in the 12th of December of the previous year, the well-deserved interest and praise that, due to the efforts of his Ministry, the institution of *telensino*¹⁰ is worthy of; another magnificent initiative that sought to elevate the country, and that the Minister had announced that the first trial stage of the *Telescola* would begin shortly, which will include a course that aims at providing support to the courses for adults, an aid so evident and of sizeable stimulus and valorisation of the National Campaign for the Education of Adults” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 123*, 1964, p. 2050); he does not, however, forgo his final remark: “we applaud the beginning of the *Telescola* era, an applause that is all the more enthusiastic because the *Telescola* initiative was marked by the highly significant favour it showed towards elementary education, and we hope that in the near future the *Telescola* will also show the same preference to initiation courses to technical-professional subjects, within a plan of gradual coverage of the entire country, to service isolated rural centres of less financial means, where poverty, while more deeply entrenched than in other regions, must be eliminated” (Idem).

Olívio de Costa Carvalho, elected by the constituency of Porto, with a degree in Letters, a high school teacher and Vice-Dean of the Alexandre Herculano High School (Tavares Castilho, 2009) is the third representative to address the subject of the *Telescola* in parliamentary debates, specifically during 160th Session of the National Assembly, which took place on the 3rd of December, 1964, in the context of his participation in the discussion of the Intercalary Development Plan bill proposal for the years of 1965-1967. According to Carvalho, he only made “a few brief remarks regarding the «Extraordinary incentive program for pedagogical, cultural and scientific activities» from chapter VII, heading «Education and research», with a particular reference” among others, “to the audio-visual mediums brought about by radio and television broadcasting” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 160*, 4th of December, 1964, p. 3976). As a matter of fact, he states that “the new technical-pedagogical structure that is aimed at educating through audio-visual mediums, by means of radio and television broadcasts”, particularly the latter, which was “created just over a year ago”, already show signs of “being on par, quality-wise, with its foreign counterparts”, and that “the successful experiments and the positive results that have been achieved with educational television during the year have naturally paved the way for the implementation of the *Telescola* within the framework conceived by the Minister for National Education” (Idem, p. 3979). It was, of course, a matter of “through the *Telescola* broadcasting (...) provide education to not only to school-age individuals but to all who wish to take advantage of it”. Nevertheless, Carvalho also sought to calm the attending representatives, by stating: “Keep in mind that the existence of *Telescola* cannot do away with the need for the presence and action of the teacher, for doing so would distort the specific function of the audio-visual mediums” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 160*, 1964, p. 3979). In his words “Thanks to the resources of the technical sphere we can now bring image and sound to the school environment. And since the children’s exterior world is chiefly audio-visual in nature, it would be negligent on our part to underestimate an auxiliary tool of major importance, one which we can turn to and employ in an effective manne” (Idem). He ends his speech by asserting that “The *Telescola* will not be a pretext to spectacles nor auditions, let alone for recreational sessions, for it requires the active engagement of the students and excludes merely passive attitudes. Each lesson will have a duration that is compatible with its target audience’s own attention span, in order to be integrated in the activities of the classroom, through a preparation that will precede the broadcast and through the use and in-depth exploration of the subjects learned immediately after”. This will consequently demonstrate “that the teacher or monitor studied the broadcasting schedule and that he elaborated the tests and other supplementary work, which will be the natural and logical extension of the program” (Ibidem). In Carvalho’s opinion, “To go against these principles is to ignore the bases of the audio-visual mediums provided by television and to deny the advantages of a rich, alive and

¹⁰ A *portmanteau* of the Portuguese words for “Televisão” (Television) and “Ensino” (Education).

modern pedagogical method, capable of awakening the children's faculties to the revelation of new capacities for the broadening of their knowledge and culture". Only by following these rules can the *Telescola* "play a preponderant role in the dissemination and expansion of the Portuguese culture". And he ends his discourse with the following remarks: "without eschewing the instruction that teachers should receive, for they are and will always be the basis of the structure of education, we should not ignore the applications of the audio-visual mediums that radio and television" (Ibidem). For all that he mentioned, the representative gave his "vote of approval, in general, to the Intercalary Development Plan to 1965-1967, with the modifications suggested by the Corporative Chamber" (Ibidem).

José Alberto de Carvalho, an elementary school teacher and representative elected by the constituency of Porto (Tavares Castilho, 2009), took part in the discussion of the bill proposal for authorisation of revenues and expenditures to the fiscal year of 1965 (Law of Means), during the 160th Session of the National Assembly, that took place on 10th of December 1964. At a certain point during the session, he praises the policies adopted by the Ministry for National Education, to which "the intelligent and dynamic character of Minister Galvão Teles give life and activity" (*Journal of the Sessions*, n.º 165, 11th of December, 1964, p. 4105), among which, in addition to the announced modifications to the programs of universities and high schools, "are added, with the publication of the Decree-Law n.º 45 810, the extension of compulsory education to six years and the announcement to the country that the *Telescola* would be implemented shortly" (Idem, p. 4106). In his statements on the matter, he takes a peremptory stance by affirming: "if any doubts should remain regarding the execution of the Decree n.º 45 810, due to the scarcity of means observed, and, indeed, emphasised, it seems to me that the Ministry proceeded well in announcing the creation of the *Telescola*; for it will be, I am certain, a valuable asset to the concretisation of the legal measure" (Ibidem). In essence, de Carvalho appears to believe in the "benefits that will be reaped in the future sowed by the *Telescola*" (Ibidem).

At the 173rd Session of the National Assembly (13th of January 1965), Mário de Figueiredo, University professor with a PhD. in Law by the University of Coimbra (Tavares Castilho, 2009) addresses the attending representatives before the scheduled agenda to inform them that "For the purposes of the provisions of paragraph 3, concerning article 109 of the Constitution, the Government Gazettes no. 302, 303, 304 and 305, 1st series, n.º 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the previous month, which include Decrees-Law n.º (...) 46 135, which establishes the Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums in the Ministry for National Education and defines its purposes and attributions; 46 136, which creates in the Ministry for the National Education, in dependence of the Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums, a *Telescola* destined to the creation of courses of broadcasting and educational television" (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 173, 14th of January, 1965, p 4250–4251).

During the 193rd Session of the National Assembly, that took place on the 24th of March, 1965, José Fernando Nunes Barata, a lawyer, the representative elected by the constituency of Coimbra (Tavares Castilho, 2009), before the scheduled discussion, referred to the implementation of the *Telescola* in Portugal, created by the Decree-Law n.º 46 136 (31st of December, 1964), emphasising what the most recent international publications had previously stated: "the audio-visual mediums of education «which are urged to play an important role, and, indeed, already do play it in several countries, as auxiliary tools in education», are also being considered to be employed in Portugal (cf for instance, the publication of ONU's *L'enseignement et la Formation Professionnelle*, 1964)" (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 193, 25th of March, 1965, p. 4613).

Miguel Augusto Pinto de Meneses, the representative elected by the constituency of Lisbon (Tavares Castilho, 2009), one of the speakers in Session n.º 4 (IX Legislature) of the National Assembly, in the 9th of December, 1965, during his speech in the discussion of the bill proposal concerning the authorisation of revenues and expenditures for the year of 1966, states the following:

“Following the conclusion of the campaign against illiteracy – a campaign that had a resounding success –, the implementation of the *Telescola* and the scheduled extension of the years of compulsory education, we now have the foundations for an en masse education of the country. But the road is long and impassable” (*Diário das Sessões*, n.º 4, 10th of December, 1965, p. 34).

Manuel José de Almeida Braamcamp Sobral, the representative of the constituency of Santarém (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while speaking, at the 52nd Session of the National Assembly (16th of December, 1966), about the education of the younger generation, he states that even though he is “forced to conclude that (...) schools in general are far too removed from their noble role of providing education to the younger generation”, he nevertheless refers to the *Telescola* in the following terms: “Something very positive has been done or prepared to aid in the development and the improvement of education, and, to only refer more recent events, I mention the Project of the Mediterranean as example and its regionalisation, the *Telescola* and the elaboration of the country’s education program, initiatives and works that bring honour to their authors and that had and will have not only recognition on a national scale but also international visibility” (*Diário das Sessões*, n.º 52, 17th of December, 1966, p. 938).

At the 54th session of the National Assembly (11th of January 1967), during the continuation of the debate on Braamcamp Sobral’s prior warning regarding the education of younger generations, José Alberto de Carvalho, taking once again the floor, stated that “it cannot be said that the Ministry for National Education has not sought in recent years to take actions worthy of praise. The extension of compulsory education was decreed, the Institute for High Culture was reformed, school and educational television was instated, the Institute of Audio-Visual Teaching Mediums and the *Telescola* were created” (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 54, 12th of January, 1967, pp. 983).

Henrique Veiga de Macedo, a representative elected by the constituency of Aveiro (Tavares Castilho, 2009), in the (Extraordinary) 91st Session of the National Assembly (9th of November, 1967) referred in a straightforward manner the following “This explosion in education – to use the word that is now en vogue – has been faced by those responsible with a decision-making spirit that is worthy of praise. The Government has arranged a multitude of providences to that end. The extension by two years of compulsory education, the merging of the first level of high school and the preparatory level of technical education and the implementation of the *Telescola* are instances that deserve special recognition” (*Diário das Sessões* n. 91, 10th of December, 1967, p. 1697).

Following the debate on the bill proposal regarding the elaboration and execution of the Third Development Plan, at the (Extraordinary) 93rd Session of the National Assembly (15th of November 1967), Joaquim José Nunes de Oliveira, a university professor elected by the constituency of Braga (Tavares Castilho, 2009), reminded the those attending that “It was announced that the new phase of compulsory schooling will start operating in the next school year of 1968-1969, which will take place through the complementary level of elementary education and of the preparatory cycle of secondary education, for which we work intensely to fulfil this plan. In addition, the more than 1100 rooms in the complementary level already created and the preparatory level taught through the *Telescola*, along with 425 reception posts, confirm the provisions inscribed in the documents that were published for this purpose (Decree-Law nº 45 810, 9th of July, 1964, article 4, and Decree-Law nº 47 480, 2nd of January 1967, article 26)” (*Journal of the Sessions* n. 93, 16th of November, 1967, p. 1733).

André da Silva Campos Neves, also a university professor and the elected representative by the constituency Coimbra (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while attending the 105th Session of the National Assembly (5th of December 1967), during the debate concerning the bill proposal regarding the elaboration and execution of the Third Development Plan, intervened by stating that, aside from elementary education, the “remaining branches of education, lacking a provisional study that, in time, would allow for the preparation of everything which conditions education – be they buildings, didactic materials and teachers – in its different pedagogical, administrative, financial and functional aspects. The problem has now attained a higher degree of acuity because of the creation of the fifth and sixth years of elementary education, because of the unification of the 1^o secondary and the preparatory levels of technical education and because of the needs stemming from the expansion of the *Telescola*” (*Journal of the Sessions n. 105*, 6th of December 1967, p. 1990).

José Henriques Mouta, a clergyman and teacher, elected by the constituency of Viseu (Tavares Castilho, 2009), another staunch proponent of the *Telescola* – particularly in rural areas – while attending the debate concerning the bill proposal regarding revenues and expenditures during 112th Session of the National Assembly (14th of December, 1967), is quick to inform the attendees that his speech would centre itself on “a recent initiative, but one that possesses an invariably broad perspective and is of wide social reach, so long as it remains firm, expands itself and is improved upon. It owes its existence to the Ministry for National Education and concerns the use of modern and powerful audio-visual mediums to aid education”. And the representative adds the following: “In a time marked by the generalisation of culture and by veritable droves of people turning to education, for they are hungry for «being», for «knowing» and for «valuing» - a phenomenon that has been dubbed as «explosion in education» - the *Telescola* provides the answer to the necessities and aspirations of our time and our people” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 112*, 15th of December 1967, p.2122). Then the representative supported his views by bringing forth an example of the *Telescola*'s success in the district of Viseu where, despite having only “three reception posts of the *Telescola* in the first two years – two in the first one and one in the second – the one that services Torredeita enabled its fourteen students to progress to the next year, without any kind of favouritism and with good marks. The reception post at Santa Cruz de Trapa, attended by twelve students in their first year of education, enabled ten of them to take the elementary level exam. All passed, with marks over 12 out of 20, and two achieved the high mark of 17 out of 20. And the one at Serrazes, attended by nineteen students in their first year of education – of whom three were forced to drop out, for various reasons –, (...) fourteen passed the exam: three with 11, one with 12, two with 13, three with 14, three with 15 and two with 17 out of 20 marks” (Idem). The representative concluded – and rightly so – that “with the *Telescola*, of those twenty-eight students that attended the post at Santa Cruz during these two years, only six had the economic means to carry on with their education in a technical school or a high school. One of these pupils was a 25-year-old carpenter and he achieved a score of 17 out of 20 marks in his exam (...). Two of these students were seamstresses, a 19-year-old and a 34-year old! And both passed their exams with 15 out of 20 marks! And one of the students was a 17-year-old housemaid. She worked in the morning and in the afternoon, due to the good graces of her employers (the National Foundation for Happiness at Work), attended the *Telescola*, oftentimes going to bed at 2 a.m. And she passed her exam, achieving 15 out of 20 marks!” (*Journal of the Sessions n. 112*, 1967, pp. 2122-2123). And his description of the socioeconomic background of the students that attended school in the limits of his parish did not cease to amaze: “In the school year of 1966/1967, were enrolled at the *Telescola* post at Serrazes ten more students in the first

grade, three of whom were over 18 years of age – aside from those attending the second grade. A 14-year-old female student, whose parents, while assailed by poor health and deprived of the most basic living necessities, have a daughter that is a treasure endowed with that precious commodity that is intelligence, achieved last year a mark of 17 out of 20 in her examination!” (Idem, p. 2123). To this representative the “results yielded by the first *Telescola* posts and the underlying sociological issues – something that various Portuguese provinces share –, bring to mind that saying, filled to the brim with social philosophy: «I saw some men going up and others going down the road. Those ascending were using wooden clogs while those that descended had in their feet patent leather shoes...»”, which leads us to therefore conclude that “the wide range possibilities presented by the *Telescola* as a tool to social movement in rural areas and the realisation of their right to knowledge are evident” (Ibidem). Still according to this representative, “To the poorer rural populations the *Telescola* can act as the auxiliary tool to achieve social justice and prevent the younger generations from abandoning their hometowns; providing them with the tools to make the most of the local resources and equipping them with the necessary know-how to embark on endeavours of personal and collective interest”. Moreover, “even if it did not contribute in a meaningful manner to stop this rural exodus, the *Telescola* would nevertheless provide the invaluable service of better preparing the younger generations, of transforming many Portuguese citizens into individuals who could better serve and bring prestige to the fatherland, be they within the country or abroad” (Ibidem). And Henriques Mouta does not cease to praise and recognise the value of the *Telescola*: “The *Telescola* can and will be a decisive factor that propels the promotion of rural areas and the development of the Nation”, so much so that “the investments in it, made within the scope of the Third Development Plan, will have a profound impact in the sense of justice and humanity and a clear effect on socioeconomical productivity” (Idem, p. 2124). All the arguments that he presented up until this point leads him to naturally conclude that “The *Telescola* must have the understanding and support of private citizens and State entities alike, it must be allowed to multiply its initiatives, its partnerships and its resources”. Thus, it is not surprising that “The rate of its success is leading to an increase in posts throughout the country, in an environment of optimism and even of enthusiasm”. The representative concludes his speech by “agreeing with the present bill proposal being discussed, requesting that the expressions «to intensify cultural investment efforts» and «to redouble the funds available» be effectively put into practice and that a larger financial backing be used to improve the *Telescola* posts, therefore transforming them into tools of social justice and of cultural enrichment of rural areas” (Ibidem).

António Augusto Ferreira da Cruz, a university teacher and the representative elected by the constituency of Porto (Tavares Castilho, 2009), during the debate on the previous warning made by the representative Vaz Pires concerning secondary education (131st Session of the National Assembly, 6th of February, 1968), highlights the “course that aims at instructing and updating the knowledge of future elementary school teachers and that is integrated in the *Telescola*’s syllabus, which will begin next month” (*Journal of the Sessions*, n.º 131, 7th of February, 1968, p. 2384).

José Gonçalves de Araújo Novo, a servant of the corporative organisation and elected to represent the constituency of Viana do Castelo (Tavares Castilho, 2009), during 135th Session of the National Assembly (13th of February, 1968), concerning the continuation of the debate on the previous warning regarding State-sponsored secondary education, directs the attention of the attendees to the fact that “radio and television, while being admirable mediums for the dissemination of information, culture and entertainment, contain within themselves potential

virtues and vices that should not be ignored. If they instruct, educate, entertain, distract – in essence, aid humans in coping with life's darkest facets –, they also rob them of their time and greatly reduce their attention span and their faculties” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 135*, 14th of February, 1968, p. 2433). In fact, according to Araújo Novo, “television specifically, while being a splendid medium of culture and learning, as is the case of *Telescola*, is not entirely blameless in the lowering of education standards nowadays” (Idem).

Custódia Lopes, a secondary school teacher born in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) and a representative elected by the constituency of Mozambique (Tavares Castilho), during 136th Session of the National Assembly (14th of February, 1968), resorting to the data provided by the Provincial Education Inspection Bureau of Mozambique, states that “is extremely advantageous that the unified or preparatory level encompasses a vast portion of the school population” and insists that “this level of education becomes free in overseas territories or, at the very least, affordable to all, regardless of how diverse their social and economic backgrounds are. It would be a fair measure, in social terms, and highly relevant in the social and economic movement of the poorer portion of the overall population”. For this reason, and because the representative does not know how will the syllabuses of the unified cycle will be structured nor is she aware of “what type of preparation is required of the teachers lecturing these courses”, she recognises the importance of “an intensive training course for these teachers in the metropolis through the *Telescola*, from March onwards” (*Journal of the Sessions, n.º 136*, 15th of February, 1968, p. 2440). She also mentions not knowing “when will these teachers, that will begin teaching in overseas territories, begin their training, but it is said that the unified level will be put into effect in the forthcoming school year. Since the school year in Mozambique usually starts in the 10th of September, I believe that there is not much time left to the necessary and special preparation, and this is even more disheartening because the *Telescola* – a fast and efficient manner of teaching – is not yet available in overseas territories” (Idem). And she concludes her discourse on the topic of the *Telescola* by voicing her concern on the situation of education in overseas territories in the following manner: “In my opinion, since the training course is going to be broadcasted on the *Telescola*, it would be wise to make copies of the broadcasts in 16mm tapes and send them to elementary technical schools in Portuguese overseas territories where, I believe, the unified or preparatory level will be implemented” (Ibidem).

In this very session, José Manuel da Costa, a respected university professor at Sorbonne and at the University of Madrid and a representative elected by the constituency of Portalegre (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while addressing the issues concerning the training of teachers, states that “There is now a current trend regarding pedagogical and educational activities, which doubtlessly has its merits and useful effects: teaching by audio-visual mediums, of which the *Telescola* is the prime example and the *Radiotelevisão Portuguesa*¹¹ its vehicle” (*Diário das Sessões n.º 136*, 1968, p. 2447). In his second noteworthy discourse for our study, on the day where the State's Accounts (metropolis and overseas territories), and the Public Credit Union to the year of 1966 (146th Session 146 of the National Assembly, 8th of March, 1968) were being discussed, the clergyman and representative Henriques Mouta, this time discoursing on higher education, again defending the right to equal opportunities of access to it by both city-dwellers and citizens living in rural areas – and in a speech that, it seems to us, was among the first proposals to extend the use of the *Telescola* to University-level education – affirms: “now seems pertinent to ponder on a plan to the relative decentralisation of higher education. The citizens living in rural areas are also entitled to a higher

¹¹ The *Radiotelevisão Portuguesa* (lit. “Portuguese Radio and Television”) or *R.T.P.*, as is referred to elsewhere in this paper, is the public service broadcasting organisation of Portugal.

education. There are plenty of brilliant and willing minds in rural areas but, alas, they stand deprived of the necessary means to attend universities. For that reason, these institutions should go to them, so to speak, as secondary education did before it, through private schools and the *Telescola*” (*Diário das Sessões n.º146*, 9th of March, 1968, p. 2695).

Gustavo Neto de Miranda, a *Juiz Desembargador*¹² on indefinite leave and representative of the constituency of Angola (Tavares Castilho, 2009), during his participation on the debate concerning the diffusion of the Portuguese Language brought to the floor by the representative Manuel Nazaré (164th Session of the National Assembly, 17th of January, 1969), reminds the attendees that “three years ago, while addressing the Assembly, I had the opportunity to remind my peers (...) that television would be the more adequate medium to use within highly populated centres, such as Luanda, to begin broadcasting programs. I also pointed out the immense advantages of the *Telescola* system, considering its multiple action and the social environment that could benefit from it” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 164*, 18th of January, p. 2970). And he goes on, providing an answer to his own question: “Can we really question the important – perhaps «indispensable» would be the more appropriate term – role that television will play in the diffusion and learning of the Portuguese language? No, I think not” (Idem).

During the ending portion debate concerning the previous warning regarding the defence of the Portuguese Language (175th Session of the National Assembly, 7th of February 1969) Custódia Lopes once again emphasises the importance and relevance of the *Telescola* by stating that: “the modern audio-visual resources will – when correctly employed – aid teachers in education and the defence of the Portuguese language. We already have a successful experiment in Portugal – I speak, for course, of educational radio and *Telescola*. It has come to our attention that a plan crafted by the Institute for Audio-Visual Mediums is currently being employed in the teaching of soldiers stationed at Northern Mozambique. It would be wise to extend this plan to the entirety of the province by using radio, for televisions are not yet available there, and we hope that – for the sake of the diffusion and the defence of the Portuguese language, particularly in Mozambique –, it will reach the province sooner rather than later. The teaching of the Portuguese language must be undertaken in an up-to-date fashion, with teaching methodologies that are modern and suitable to the teaching of living languages”. (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 175*, 8th of February, 1969, p. 3133).

Rafael Valadão dos Santos, a high school teacher and representative elected by the constituency of Angra do Heroísmo (Tavares Castilho, 2009), even before the scheduled debate of the 190th Session of the National Assembly (11th of March, 1969), alludes to the activity of the *Radiotelevisão Portuguesa*, on its twelfth birthday, and to various aspects of its broadcasts in Azores, lauding the “role that the *Telescola* has been playing in the diffusion of culture and in the education of the younger generations – an aspect of such paramount importance that it alone justifies the existence of the *Radiotelevisão Portuguesa*” and recognising that “All have at an arm’s length away that exceptional tool, one of the most modern means for the expansion of culture. All citizens, be they wealthy or poor, and especially those who reside far away from the large urban centres, have thus an excellent opportunity to not only better themselves and improve their knowledge but also, to continue on with their own education, something that, up until that point, was impossible to them – and all this merely and almost solely thanks to the *Telescola*” (*Diário das Sessões n.º190*, 12th of March, 1969, p. 3434).

At the 6th Session of the National Assembly’s X Legislature (11th of December, 1969), that had as order of the day the discussion of the bill proposal regarding the authorisation of revenues and expenditures to 1970, Eleutério Gomes de Aguiar, an elementary school teacher and representative elected by the constituency of Funchal (Tavares Castilho, 2009), on

¹² A title that is similar, both in rank and in functions, to the Lord Justice of Appeal in Great Britain.

addressing the floor, states the following: “It would be an injustice to forget the measures regarding education implemented by the State during these last years, (...) And, more recently, there is much of positive and laudatory to say about the Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums and the *Telescola*, which have worked tirelessly and are working still to revolutionise education in Portugal” (*Journal of the Sessions*, n.º 6, 12th of December, 1969, p. 75).

Agostinho Gabriel de Jesus Cardoso, a physician and specialist in Phthysiology, elected by that very same constituency, while addressing the National Assembly (30th Session, 7th of April, 1970) also took the opportunity to mention one of greatest desires: “Because it is predicted that television broadcasting services will reach Madeira during the next year, the Ministry for National Education must now direct its efforts towards bringing the *Telescola* to the archipelago, for the *Telescola* may yet prove to be one of television's greatest benefits to it” (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 30, 8th of April, 1970, pp. 578-579).

During the discussion of the bill proposal concerning the authorisation of revenues and expenditures to 1971 (56th Session of the National Assembly, 15th of December, 1970) Eleutério Gomes de Aguiar, while considering that the “population of Madeira and Porto Santo needs more intensive programs of educational nature and that the employment of all means to achieve that goal is not in the least an excessive effort”, he invariably affirms that “the analysis of other aspects in my district (Music and the Fine Arts, Nursing, Hotels, Agriculture, etc.) can be discussed at a later date, as well as the issues regarding permanent education and television broadcasting – particularly, the *Telescola* program” – but not without adding “the field of education in the archipelago will receive a large boon in the near future, since television broadcasting is planned to start shortly in Madeira” (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 56, 16th of December, 1970, 1174).

Before the order of the day, during the 74th Session of the National Assembly (28th of January, 1971), Francisco Manuel de Meneses Falcão, a representative elected by the constituency of Leiria, a man whose qualifications are not known (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while addressing the floor to elaborate on the issues regarding electricity in his district, took that opportunity to emphasise what has been said by referring the following particularity: “While the *Telescola* is praised for bringing the compulsory school age to fourteen years of age and for bringing education to modest families, with an auspicious and daring teaching methodology in place, of the two hundred and twenty six classrooms to be used in elementary education that exist outside of the municipality’s centre to serve the poorer and dispersed populations, only fifty four can actually host the *Telescola* program due to the lack of electricity services in the remaining one hundred and sixty-two classrooms!” (*Journal of the Sessions* n. 74, 29th of January, 1971, p. 1516).

Likewise, before the order of the day, during the 80th Session of the National Assembly (9th of February, 1971), Agostinho Cardoso, while addressing Madeira’s issues, informs the Assembly that television is expected to reach “during the current year, Madeira and, with it, the *Telescola*” (*Journal of the Sessions* n.º 80, 10th of February, 1971, p. 1617).

Once again, before the scheduled debate, during the 98th Session of the National Assembly (28th of April, 1971), the representative Filipe Barreto de Lara, a lawyer and notary, elected by the constituency Angola (Tavares Castilho, 2009), presented a request to the Ministry for Overseas Territories to obtain the copies of the studies conducted to proceed with the implementation of broadcasting services in Angola by stating the following: “By invoking my constitutional and regimental rights, I request that, through the Ministry of Overseas Territories, I am provided with

copies of all documents concerning the installation of broadcasting services in Angola, as soon as possible – especially those documents pertaining to: a) the estimated costs of installation; b) the objective of the valorisation of the territory's population in order to accelerate its social movement, especially through the *Telescola* and through desirable level of programs” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 98*, 29th of April, 1971, p. 1944).

Yet again, before the order of the day, during the 201st Session of the National Assembly (28th of November, 1972), the representative Eleutério de Aguiar addressed the floor to allude to the visit of the Head of State to the island of Madeira in the following fashion: “In addition to the inaugurations, the President of the Republic made three visits that, by themselves, more than amply justify his travels to the island”; the one that concerns the subject matter of the present paper is the one he made to “the *R.T.P.*'s regional broadcasting station, a vehicle for information and culture, which may play a relevant role in the promotion of our people, if and when the programs to that effect are conceived and with the previously requested creation of the web of *Telescola* posts” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 2001*, 29th of November, 1972, p. 3963).

Also during the 212th Session of the National Assembly (16th of January, 1973), before the order of the day, Artur Augusto de Oliveira Pimentel, a lawyer and representative elected by the constituency of Bragança (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while making several considerations concerning the creation of new institutions for education in his district, states the following: “we can see that, in our country, the majority of the municipalities' centres already possess institutions for education, in which the primary basic education is given continuity, while in other less important municipalities education is granted through official *Telescola* posts – although indirectly –, with similar education methods and free of charge” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 212*, 17th of January, 1973, p. 4210). And he, referring to his district directly, adds the following: “until a few years ago, aside from primary education (...) there were only a high school, three technical schools, a high school section and a school for elementary school teachers and, a few years later, in addition to official *Telescola* posts, it now has twelve preparatory secondary schools – as many as the district's municipalities – two national high schools, three technical schools, three high school sections, a section of technical education and a school for agricultural education, along with the aforementioned school for elementary school teachers” (Idem).

Maria Raquel Ribeiro, a social worker and top State official, representing the constituency of Lisbon (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while addressing the attendees during the 218th Session of the National Assembly (30th of January, 1973), states that: “we cannot turn a blind eye to what has been accomplished in the field of the audio-visual mediums” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 218*, 31st of January, 1973, p. 4466), especially because “in 1965, 82 *Telescola* reception posts began their activity, in the current school year we have 1072 reception units: 639 official posts, with 13 870 students, established in the last school year, and 433 private posts servicing 7887 students. Hence, about 22000 students complete their preparatory education through a technical and pedagogical syllabus rigorously prepared and supervised by the Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums, which, due to recent reforms, will be known in the future as Institute of Educational Technology” (Idem). Before concluding her speech, the representative also mentions several recommendations, amongst which “2. That the processes of the *Telescola* and of educational television can guarantee the access to education, to teaching and to culture, something that the Ministry for National Education volunteered to do, giving particular attention to the areas that are most in need (I remind my peers of the cases of Madeira and Azores and the overseas territories – when will the necessary structures for television broadcasting will be built in these territories? Why not employ a closed circuit – something that has been so successful in S. Tomé e Príncipe during these last three years?)”; “3. That these processes can not only ensure the

functioning of the preparatory level of education but also be organised to meet the needs of pre-primary education”; or “4. That the Ministry for National Education is supplied with the indispensable means of circuits or television channels that allow it to bring its personal mission of teaching, of bringing culture and entertainment to our people to fruition in tandem with the remainder of the State's various departments” (Ibidem, pp. 4466 – 4467).

Once again, during the 233rd Session of the National Assembly (1st of March, 1973), before the order of the day, Mota Amaral, a lawyer and the elected representative of the constituency Ponta Delgada (Tavares Castilho), spoke at some length about the expansion of education in his autonomous district, voicing his concerns in the following manner: “because time runs short and we cannot tolerate a serious discrimination against children of more remote, smaller and impoverished populational centres, where the direct preparatory level of educations will only be instated at a later date, we must extend, as soon as possible, the *Telescola* to the autonomous district of Ponta Delgada – and, perhaps, to the whole Azores archipelago – and broadcast it in closed circuit to televisions in preparatory education classes” (*Diário das Sessões n.º 233*, 2th of March, 1973, p. 4701).

Yet again, before the scheduled debate, during the 244th Session of the National Assembly (4th of April, 1973), Valadão dos Santos praises the fact that the extension of television to the Azores archipelago was being regarded by the *Radiotelevisão Portuguesa* as top priority enterprise, stating “I want (...) to underline just how this attitude by RTP to reach those islands – which are so utterly destitute, in terms of telecommunications – greatly pleases me. The National Broadcaster’s signal, as my peers are aware, is terrible there; aside from local radio stations and a number of exceptions, radio stations have poor reception”, concluding later that, “A good RTP signal coverage is a must-have in that territory – or, at the very least, one that allows for a good reception of the *Telescola* –, for the Azoreans are Portuguese citizens too, and – needless to say –, stand among the best” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 244*, 5th of April, 1973, p. 4919).

Over the course of the discussion of the bill proposal n^o25/X regarding the reforms to the education system (Session n.º 250 of the National Assembly, 12th of April, 1973), Custódia Lopes addressed the floor to state the following: “According to what we know, the Government intends to increase the number of preparatory schools per municipality, increasing compulsory schooling through the direct preparatory level of education. Hence, we went from 136 such schools in 1968 to 316 in 1972. In addition to these institutions, we have yet another preparatory education level serviced by the *Telescola* posts, which have increased to 280 in number over the course of the last two years” (*Journal of the Sessions n. 250*, 13th of April, 1973, p. 5042).

Before the discussion of the bill proposal regarding the reforms to the education system could resume, Eleutério de Aguiar mentioned for the third time the *Telescola* (253rd Session of the National Assembly, 24th of April, 1973) in the following manner: “it is truly remarkable the work program for short-term execution, encompassing all levels of education, including the creation of new preparatory and secondary schools, the implementation of the *Telescola*, the establishment of the *Escola Normal Superior* (lit. “Normal School for Higher Education”, a school designed to train teachers) and the incentive to the Polytechnic Institute, the revision of the workings of the Academy of Music and Fine Arts, in accordance with the reforms to education and the officialization of its courses, and the creation of a school bus service” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 253*, 25th of April, 1973, p. 5149).

At the second part of the 8th Session n^o 8 of the XI Legislature of the National Assembly (5th of December, 1973), in which the discussion of the bill proposal of the Fourth Development Plan was resumed, the representative José Alberto de Carvalho stated: “The project demonstrates the Ministry for National Education’s apprehensions towards the great

effort that the extension of compulsory education to eight years demands, especially the matters of recruiting teachers and the broadening of the education network, with the added issue of how will the acquisition of land to support this will be made. The construction of 10 680 new classrooms and the repairing and refurbishing of 10 300 classrooms to be used in primary education, is planned, while the preparatory level will be granted about 10 100 new classrooms, part of which will be *Telescola* posts” (*Journal of the Sessions n.º 8*, 6th of December, 1973, p. 96).

Finally, prior to the scheduled debate of the 49th Session of the National Assembly, (5th of April, 1974), the representative Alberto Eduardo Nogueira Lobo de Alarcão e Silva, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Agrarian Economy of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, elected by the constituency of Lisbon (Tavares Castilho, 2009), while evaluating the land planning policy and the rural improvements in the scope of the discussion of the bill proposal on the Fourth Development Plan for 1974–1979, remarked the following: “In rural areas, installation of the *Telescola* can be a precious auxiliary tool, and, likewise, we must not forget the need for housing for teachers, school canteens, the establishment of libraries, etc.” (*Diário das Sessões n.º 49*, 6th of April, 1974, p. 958).

2.2. Corporative Chamber

The results obtained in the virtual archive by searching the keyword “*Telescola*” only revealed 4 pages in 3 distinct minutes: the first reference dates from 30/06/1967 and the last reference dates from 15/07/1971. The first of these is the assessment of the project of the bill proposal n.º 4/IX (Third Development Plan to 1968-1973), published in the *Actas da Câmara Corporativa* (lit. ‘Minutes of the Corporative Chamber’) n.º 56, of 30th of June, 1967, that, when referring to Infrastructures, in Section I, of Education and investigation regarding teaching, contains some of the reforms have been put in effect by the Ministry for National Education: “The Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums was founded (Decree-Law n.º 46 135, 31st of December, 1964), an organisation with the mission of promoting the use of audio-visual mediums as educational and teaching tools. The *Telescola* was simultaneously created (Decree-Law n.º 46136, of the same date), as a branch program of the aforementioned institution, a program that has been playing a pivotal role, and one that has a tendency to expand itself, bringing certain types of education to many of those who, without it, could not have access to education. And by the influence of the abovementioned document (Decree-Law n.º 45 418, 9th of December, 1963), the Centre for the Studies of Audio-Visual Pedagogy was created, with the aim of acting as an entity that provides scientific support to the aforementioned activities and, in particular, to promote the instruction of the teaching staff in the respective methodologies” (p. 825).

Also in the *Minutes of the Corporative Chamber n.º 115*, from 18th of December, 1968, figures the assessment of the project of the bill proposal n.º 4/IX (the reorganisation of the *Casas do Povo* and rural welfare) where the following passage can be read: “A clear notion of the development of the activities of sociocultural promotion also provides us the specifications of the different modalities in effect, through the supervision of the Central Board of the *Casas do Povo*, of the Board of Social Action and of the National Foundation for Happiness at Work and also in collaboration with the Institute of Audio-Visual Education Mediums (...). In the previous year, 47 *Telescola* reception posts were installed in *casas do povo*, as well as about 200 centres of supervised reading” (p. 1997).

Lastly, in a chart with the data regarding attendance in metropolitan schools (1968 – 1969), published in the *Minutes of the Corporative Chamber n.º 74*, 15th of July, 1971, it is possible to comprehend the importance of the *Telescola* posts and their respective attendance rate in the scope of compulsory preparatory education (p. 905). In paragraph 30 of the assessment by the representatives of the project of the bill proposal nº 5/X it is stated that “In the so-called permanent education, not only the *Telescola* but the study by correspondence may yet become pivotal programs” (Idem, p. 921).

Indeed, we are before very sparse references, far less rich in content and useful to a researcher, mere references to the legal framework. Nevertheless, these references are not, by and large, uncomplimentary to the role that the *Telescola* had been playing and could play in the future.

Permanence and findings

To a researcher that comprehends the meaning and the importance of these debates in the scope of the legalisation and implementation of the *Telescola*, the contents points him/her to several evidences that we will now systematise:

- 1- It is clear that the representatives that **addressed the floor**, especially those at the National Assembly, demonstrated the knowledge they had regarding what were the “cutting-edge” technologies of the 1960s. By reiterating their role in advancing education, they recurrently spoke in laudatory tones of the benefits that these technologies could bring to a country that was outdated in terms of education.
- 2- Their knowledge concerning the reality of the *Telescola* or the use of television in multiple countries is equally evident; they presented arguments supported by extremely precise data of regions that range from Mexico, Argentina or Venezuela to Japan, Egypt and Iran, while also mentioning the experiences of other European countries with this medium (Switzerland, Denmark, Spain, among others).
- 3- The *Telescola* also emerges as a mean that is cost-effective (as always, these issues always seem to be invariably connected to economy) to rapidly achieve significant goals (numbers) in the field of education, allowing the Portuguese to rise in the rank of education and literacy.
- 4- We can see that **these representatives placed their hopes on** an investment that would quickly produce the desired effects, while, at the same time, directing our attention towards a more significant literacy plan and to an extended compulsory **education span** (six years, at least), meeting in this manner the need for the **instruction** of the **workforce** that would support the demands of the expected **economic** growth outlined by the Development Plans.
- 5- Finally, we can see that the **cessation** of investment in the *Telescola*, in the construction of schools and in education in general, was caused by the Portuguese **Colonial War** (1961-1974) which, in diverting necessary funds and the attention of the representatives, was, in the end, at the mercy of private initiatives and of more **concerned and engaged** Portuguese citizens, whom attempted to do what the State did not – but should have –, and this becomes especially clear after reading the eloquent speeches of its representatives at the National Assembly and at the Corporative Chamber.

A final remark: despite these hurdles, the *Telescola* during the final stage of the *Estado Novo* will maintain its role as an influent educational subsystem until the turn of the 20th century. Indeed, there are initiatives that go well beyond systems and political changes.

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