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“Modes of film production in 1950s Italy”

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Abstract

The Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959 has been the subject of many studies during the last twenty years. However, the existing literature generally follows detailed examinations of big production companies, that were protagonists at the time, or concentrates on macro studies portraying the situation of the Italian film industry from its origins onwards. The presence of small and medium companies in the post-war era and particularly during the 1950s, has not been studied extensively. This lack of specific, in-depth studies around this area, guided me in undertaking a first analysis of this period.

In doing so, I combined archival, cultural, and historical analysis, as well as economical, and statistical studies. Firstly, I identified all the new 770 production companies founded between 1945 and 1959, together with all the films released and their genres. Secondly, I defined the general context and the industrial framework of the time, which saw the birth of hundreds of firms. Thirdly, through archival researches, I identified several case studies of both some decentralised companies and some firms managed by directors and actors. These case studies were used to examine more in-depth production patterns analysing them in relation to their context.

These investigations allowed to examine the evolution of the industry and to trace the structure of the field, made of small and medium, undercapitalised companies. Moreover, through them I could highlight some of the common behavioural patterns identifying certain modes of production as well as cinema boroughs outside the main centre represented by Rome.

Through all the data collected and the combination of analysis reported, this research provides production patterns of the 1950s Italian film industry, and also presents a general framework which could be the starting point of further future analysis.

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Introduction

This thesis examines the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959, years that are fundamental in the history of the Italian cinema and its industry. They represent the bridge between the ruins of the post-war era and the golden age of the 1960s, the period during which the Italian cinema reached unbelievable results. In the 1950s, film entertainment involved nearly 70% of the entertainment revenues (Treveri Gennari and Sedgwick, 2015), and Italians used to be regular cinema-goers, so much so that the number of cinema seats for inhabitants was higher than in other European countries where cinema was an important entertainment revenue – Italy 1:9; Great Britain 1:12; France 1:16 (Mosconi, 1995, cited in Treveri Gennari and Sedgwick, 2015, p. 76).

Given the importance this fifteen-year span was for cinema in Italy, it has been the subject of many studies, especially over the last twenty years. However, the majority of these analyses follow two paths. Some of them address the most famous production companies that were protagonists at the time, with in-depth analysis of specific case studies or big production companies;¹ others concentrate on the macro level only, regarding film's industrial structure from the origins of cinema onwards mentioning a considerable presence of small and medium size companies (Nicoli, 2017; Corsi, 2001; Quaglietti, 1980; Bizzarri and Solaroli, 1958).

This pattern follows the general trend of the Italian industry, which has always been characterised by small and medium sized enterprises (Ciocca, 2020; Gentiloni Silveri, 2019; Amatori and Colli, 2016), that are often family run companies (Bianco, 2010; Junko Yanagisako, 2002). Despite this, small and medium firms within the film industry in the post-war era, and specifically during the 1950s, have not been studied extensively. The fragmentary information available about these companies may be the reason why there are gaps in the present literature, possibly due to the fact they had a very short lifespan and that they often produced one or very few films.

This lack of specific, in-depth studies around this area, guided me in undertaking a first analysis of this period. Indeed, my research focuses on the new companies founded, with

¹ See for example the studies about Lux Film (Farassino, 2000; Farassino and Sanguineti, 1984; Silvana, 1982), or Titanus (Germani, Starace and Turigliatto, 2014; Di Chiara, 2013; Bernardini, 1986).

particular attention towards small and medium size firms,² by taking advantage of several of the pertinent archives I had access to,³ and the rich and extensive material that emerged throughout the data collection process.

Moreover, I consider it fundamental to investigate the structure, evolution, and films produced by all the new-born companies in order to detect a trend in the industry, both from the point of view of the firms and that of the films they released. In doing so, I aim to acknowledge the complexity of the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959, while investigating the presence of patterns of behaviour common to many of these companies.

Therefore, my research questions were the following:

1. How did the Italian film industry operate in the post-war period? What was the role of small and medium size companies in the development of one of the strongest industries in the world? And was the American model followed or an alternative model created?
2. How was the film industry in Italy structured from a geographical perspective? Can a Rome-centric approach be challenged by an in-depth investigation of smaller and independent production companies?
3. What were the key features of the Italian film industry in relation to its actors and directors being producers? Did their production companies have common models of behaviour?

This research started before the pandemic, and was partly subjected to its restrictions. Fortunately, most of the data collection had taken place when COVID-19 shut down libraries and archives. Moreover, I was very lucky to have had access to the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi just before the beginning of the pandemic (January 2020). However, the main challenges I faced was not being able to double check some information through primary sources as well as deepen some analysis and follow other lines of research that could have been useful for understanding some industrial phenomena. I tried to compensate for this impossibility

² Most of the companies studied were founded between 1945 and 1959. However, there are some cases of enterprises that were founded before, but began to release their movies starting from 1945, or relocated after 1945. This was the case for A.T.A. – Artisti Tecnici Associati s.a., which was founded in Milan in 1937 and relocated in Rome in 1948; Dora Film s.a., founded in Turin in 1941, with a second location in Milan in 1946; and S.I.L.A. – Società Italiana Lanci Artistici S.p.A., which was created in 1941 but released one film in 1951. For this reason, they have been included in the analysis.

³ They are: the Archivio Centrale dello Stato di Roma, where I found information about the films produced by the companies; the historical archive of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), where all the loan requests made by production companies are stored; The Chamber of Commerce in Rome, with information about companies' meeting minutes and statutes; the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi, with documents regarding actor and director Aldo Fabrizi's life and work.

through the consultation of secondary sources, and by concentrating on the materials I already had collected, finding there the answers I was looking for.

Methodology

This research about the modes of film production in 1950s Italy inevitably combines cultural, and historical analysis, as well as economical, and statistical studies. In a way, I acknowledge the limits of my film studies academic background and the difficulties I have encountered having to use methodologies drawn from economics.

The initial driving force of this research was finding how the industry of the time worked, if the American example was actually followed by the whole Italian film industry and to what extent. After the collection of data, which revealed to be huge and fragmentary, other questions arose: why do so many production companies founded between 1945-1959 have such a short life-span? Was this short life-span directly related to the company's corporation stock and/or the number and genre of films it produced? Did the companies of the period have common patterns of production behaviours? Were the genres of films produced aligned with the most common genres of the period?

In order to find the answers to these questions and to fully understand the actual structure of the industry, first of all I needed to identify the market, catalogue all the new companies founded between 1945 and 1959, and analyse their size, their characteristics, their ways of operating. This data collection constituted the first part of my research. The second phase of my research was to study the production history of the industry, in order to find out if there were common production behaviours among these companies, how many films were produced, and which genres were released. Combining the literature review on the production history and the analysis of the primary data on the Italian case opened many possible lines of enquiry, I decided to investigate patterns of production practices by exploring recurring names within the industry, producers that managed more than one company throughout the period, sometimes simultaneously. The investigation of producers' names also unearthed the presence of directors and actors among the managers of some firms.

Given the evident difficulties of a research on these companies and their managers, and the impossibility in obtaining detailed information on some of these companies, I proceeded examining more in depth the data available through primary and secondary sources available in several archives. This approach allowed me to combine both a general investigation and specific analyses of case studies in order to have the clearest and most complete possible depiction of the Italian industry of the post-war era and of the 1950s.

Therefore, I investigated the context in which the companies were created and worked. This was necessary because it is impossible to think about the film industry without considering the general context in which it grew. And the context is historical, social, cultural, and economical. All these aspects had to be included into the investigation to have a consistent framework that could provide as many variables as possible which could have had an influence on the industry.

This process of research allowed me to find some historical and economical events which had an impact on the history of the Italian film production system. The discoveries made during this study convinced me to follow a vertical line of examination, trying to start from the context and concentrate on specific case studies, represented by specific producers' names or companies. They were useful in understanding the ongoing of the industry influenced by the context in which it was developing.

For all these reasons, I needed first-hand archival materials combined with second-source materials, and also more general data (historical and economical insights, as well as information about the history of economics in Italy at the time). It cannot be forgotten that the film industry is an inseparable combination of art and business embedded in its context. The industry has a fundamental role in the history of a country, and the history itself has a fundamental role in the industry of that country. Combining all these aspects was a difficult procedure, but also a very important step to make in order to recreate that system of variables that allowed the Italian film industry of the time to develop, grow, and flourish.

The amount of data collected needed further attention due to its vastness and lack of intrinsic organisation. The extensive data was analysed using a statistical approach, where I studied the development of the industry and its distribution over the entire period considered. Using charts and tables, I investigated the new companies founded, their longevity, corporation stocks, and number of films produced, depicting time series and distribution of data, and comparing information.

One particularly useful method of statistical analysis was the median. Being the amount of data collected copious and disorganised, with numerical values differing consistently, I needed a tool which could represent this diversification without the results being affected

by it. The median, given a series of numbers, represents the middle value in the list of these numbers. The nature of the distribution of data collected from the Italian film industry was very unequal, and thus the mean, representing the average value, would have not been illustrative of the phenomenon. Using the median as representative of the industry outside of the big production companies seemed to be the most consistent analysis because, considering all the data, the intermediate value found differed a lot between the first and the last one. Therefore, it would have provided a deceptive depiction of the actual ongoing of the industry.

The median was also used for studying film genres and box office. Genre, the most influential factor in choosing a film” (Treveri Gennari, et al., 2020, p. 73), was a key feature of films I felt the need to concentrate on for investigating the film industry. Its analysis is a complex area due to the variable and unfixed boundaries of cataloguing. Film genre is one of the discriminating factors for analysing films as products of the industry since the film industry is strictly related to its audience and genre, and it is representative of the industry itself. Film production shapes audiences, and audiences shape film production. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the genre in order to see if the industry decided to follow the most important, widespread categories at the time, and to see which were the most common genres released. What is important to see is whether the small and medium companies decided to produce and follow the mainstream; if there was a strategy and an idea behind the production plan; and if the majority of these companies decided to produce the most popular genres or not. The idea is to investigate whether there is an interrelation between film popularity and production decision making.

It was thus necessary to first of all list genres. In the cataloguing chosen in this thesis, the starting point was the subdivision made by Marina Nicoli in her paper *Historia non facit saltus* (no date). Concentrating on the Italian film industry from the end of the WWII to the 1960s, she inserts the study of the genres within the same historical and economic background I was working on. Therefore, I consider her approach appropriate for and similar to the context of my research. As it can be seen from her text, she divides the genres into ten categories (for the complete list, see chapter 3), and distinguishes comedies from comic movies. Even though this is not a common distinction in the English industry, this difference in the Italian cinema is important and well known among the audiences. Comic films can be considered analogous to comedian comedies, term introduced by Steve Seidman (1981) and re-examined by Steve Neale (1995) meaning a film where the actor’s performance with his/her gags and jokes is pivotal (Noto, 2011). I considered important to maintain this difference in my examination of genres, thinking it worthwhile enlarging the group to include other genres

(like fantasy, horror, and sci-fi) in order to highlight some peculiarities of the Italian film industry of the time. The single films are catalogued according to the subdivision of the database available on the website cinematografo.it, modern and up-to-date website of the magazine “La Rivista del Cinematografo”, famous Catholic publication of the time aimed at a multi-level audience, with specific cultural sections. In doing this cataloguing, I tried to understand year after year the relation between the number of companies and the genres produced, to outline possible common patterns among firms on the basis of their released films.

In order to follow these two lines of research, horizontal and vertical, the thesis is divided into two main sections of analysis. The first section will focus on the examination of the socio-economic context in which the Italian film industry was developing at the time. It will include historical and economic analyses that take into consideration the historical background, as well as the national and international events that influenced Italian history and the film industry. The aim of this section is to define the general context and the industrial framework that saw the birth of hundreds of registered production companies. This outline will assist in the understanding of some industry behaviours, and possible explanations are offered as to why so many people were interested and involved into film production, why so many firms were founded, and why there were so many films released.

In the second section, through the analyses of new companies founded, and the film genres they produced, I will explore that specific Italian film industry period, highlighting behavioural patterns common to many of these firms. This background, together with all the documents collected from the various archives consulted, will be used to thoroughly examine some examples of companies founded between 1945 and 1959, their characteristics, and the films they released. Some of these companies are decentralised, and represent the geographical dissemination of the industry. Others were founded by actors and directors, and will be studied according to the trends of the industry previously analysed.

By tracing the evolution of the companies between 1945 and 1959, with a focus on the wider historical context and the discussion of several case studies, this research seeks to explore the Italian film industry in a defined period of time, that is filled with changes and creatively rich, new productive activities. It intends to examine the trend of the industry by exploring its development, looking into the numbers behind newly founded companies, how these affected the field, the amount of films released, and which genres were chosen. The implicit aim of the discussion is to explore in a new way a largely studied period in cinema history, particularly because of its function as a bridge to the 1960s, commonly known as the

golden age of Italian films. It is hoped this thesis will contribute to an evolving field of studies, of a very significant time for Italian cinema, a period full of change, both from an historical and cultural point of view, which influenced the history that Italian cinema followed.

Chapter outline

The first part of the thesis is dedicated to the investigation of the historical and economic studies through which I examine the Italian film industry. Chapter 1 focuses on the literature review surrounding the texts that have explored the field of production studies. Since it is impossible not to mention the predominance of Hollywood production studies, I define its core elements, and adjust and apply them to the context studied in this thesis. Subsequently, through secondary sources, I focus on the texts that examine the Italian context and on those studies that could help in outlining a critical analysis of the Italian film industry of the time. This part of the literature review concerns historical and socio-economic studies of the specific period analysed. They have provided the elements that helped in the critical analysis of the cinematographic industrial context carried out in the following chapters.

The second part, divided into chapters 2 and 3, are dedicated to the actual analysis of the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959. On the one hand, chapter 2 focuses on the analysis of the socio-economic context of the country during the period studied, in order to provide a general historical overview of the years during which these companies were founded. On the other hand, it specifically deals with the analysis of the production companies founded between 1945 and 1959 and discusses the type of movies they released. In this way, I highlight the companies emerging, their economic structure and lifespan, and how many films they produced. Firstly, an analysis of the socio-economic context of the country provides a general historical overview of the years examined, in which the production companies studied proliferated. Secondly, an analysis of the industrial film context is carried out to identify how many production houses were founded per year, what their geographical distribution was, their lifespan and longevity, and their overall size and share capital.

Chapter 3 centres on the examination of the genres of the films released, in order to study the strategies applied to the firm's production plan, in relation to their products. The information taken into consideration concerns: the number of films; genres released; genre frequency; annual distribution analysis; box office analysis of the most popular genres and on all films released in the period analysed. This chapter, together with chapter 2, sets essential guidelines and information, that allow a punctual analysis of decentralised companies and of the niche director and actor producers, which are developed in more specific terms in the following chapters.

The third and last part of the thesis consists of chapters 4, 5 and 6, dedicated to the examination of the decentralisation of the industry, and the presence of some key actors and directors, who were active within the production sphere. Some case studies are also investigated to detect common productive patterns among them. Chapter 4 focuses on the decentralisation of the industry, to distinguish and identify the production industry's geographic dissemination, in order to contest the false perception that the film industry was entirely based in Rome. Indeed, the data collection demonstrated that 157 companies were officially located outside of Rome, throughout Italy, with higher concentration in specific areas. For this reason, I decided to investigate not only the distribution, but also the mode of production of some of the companies not founded nor located in Rome. Having access to information on many firms founded in those years, this chapter focuses on the case studies that were considered representative of the phenomenon of decentralisation and its general trend.

Chapter 5 provides some case studies related to actors and directors who also acted as producers and founded production firms. Many of them created more than one company during this period, thus, the intention was to identify similarities among the enterprises belonging to the same managers. I investigated the number and genres of films produced, together with their production plans, and I also their structure in relation to the general context.

Finally, chapter 6 offers a thorough analysis of the production work of a single artist: Aldo Fabrizi. The discovery of his unpublished archive was fundamental in studying the production history of his companies as a case study. Indeed, the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi contained rare documents that helped to trace the relation between Fabrizi and production firms founded between 1945 and 1959. Owing to the combined research between the various archives, it was possible to analyse the figure of Aldo Fabrizi, as a producer, by identifying a pattern that was specific to him - the "Fabrizi brand" -, which defines the production method he adopted.

Analysing the overlooked field of small and medium companies, this thesis provides an attempt to fill in the gaps to the general picture of what constitutes the complexity of the structure of the Italian film industry. Being such a wide and underexplored field, with endless and numerous research paths, this thesis does not aim to be exhaustive. It contains sections relating to the historic and economic context, and acknowledges that - focusing on the cinema framework - the economical and statistical sections have obvious limitations. This was also due to the impossibility of conducting this investigation in synergy with professionals in those sectors, whose contribution would have been fundamental to enlighten all the aspects of its complex background.

Chapter 1

1.1 Literature review: introduction

Although Italian film production is the focus of my thesis, it is not possible to talk about production studies without looking at Hollywood. Therefore, before exploring the specific area relating to my research, I will briefly overview the production studies developed in the US context. Even if it is very different from the Italian one, being a milestone of the field, these studies remain nonetheless relevant. The American film industry, and the power and functioning of Hollywood, in particular during the thirties and forties (The Golden Age) has been extensively analysed.⁴ The Studio System has appeared as the reference model for all the other countries aiming to build a consistent film industry. Indeed, as Vicki Mayer states (2009, p. 15), “from the 1930s to the early 1950s, a series of international scholars, many of whom published in the United States, tried to envision how media workers experienced the growth of a cinematic industrial complex based in Hollywood, and its attempts to harness and control labor power.”

⁴ There is enormous amount of literature about the topic. See for example: Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson (1985); Maltby (1995); Schatz (1997); or even, more recently: Neale (2012); Bordwell (2017).

It is well known that Italy, and above all post war Italy, was influenced by American society, films and way of life.⁵ As a consequence, it is not only highly probable, but even factually acknowledged that the nation looked at Hollywood as a reference point and inspiration for both lifestyle and the film industry. Indeed, Italy looked at Hollywood for inspiration even before: in the 1930s Luigi Freddi (who was part of the press office of the Fascist regime during the 1920s and the first part of the 1930s, to become later chief of the General Directorate of Cinematography) put Emilio Cecchi (famous art and literature critic) at the helm of the new Cinecittà Studios, sent him to Los Angeles, and modelled Cinecittà after the studios in Hollywood. As for the post-war years, the industry was put under the US-led Film Board right after the Liberation and the first action taken was to lift the (de facto) ban on the import of American films. Until at least 1948, any decision made at government or industry level had to go through the Board.⁶ The interest Italy had on the American film industry was thus related above all on Hollywood's capability of great investments, and on the fact that it was more powerful, organised, and efficient than any other film production system. In fact, the most ambitious Italian producers were trying to follow this model in order to recreate a well-structured industry in Italy.⁷ In order to study the Italian context, and to investigate the presence of a defined industrial cinema system, it is important to examine first of all the number and nature of the production companies operating in the country. This will then make it possible to identify a productive trend of the time highlighting the industrial mechanisms of Italian cinema industry, and its relationships to Hollywood.

1.2 Production studies – the Hollywood example

Considering the studies on the Hollywood system the fundamental basis for any research on the film industry, I start analysing core texts which explore and examine the production

⁵ For a more critical and in-depth analysis, see for example: Treveri Gennari (2010); Gundle and Guani (1986, pp. 561-594); Gundle and Forgacs (2007); Woodruff (1975); Scrivano (2005, pp. 317-340).

⁶ For a comparison, see: Contaldo and Fanelli (1986, pp. 15-27).

⁷ See, for example, producers like Riccardo Gualino and his Lux Film, Gustavo Lombardo and his Titanus, and Dino De Laurentiis. They wanted to build an organised industry in Italy, which could be self-sufficient and productive. These producers had big companies, which made Italian cinema history, and allowed Italian films to reach markets all over the world.

industry. Although the Italian system is different from the American one, in terms of its structure, the dimension of the companies, and the working plans, Italy had always referred to the USA and its film industry as a reference during this period (as will be discussed in further detail below). Thus, studying the methodologies and confronting practices of production that focused on the American system, in all their various and multifaceted ways, offers insight and a comparative approach in analysing a much smaller (but by no means less complex) context such as the Italian film industry after WWII and during the 1950s. Company's dimensions, production intentions, movie genres released, connections and interactions among companies and producers are, as shown in this chapter, all crucial elements in understanding and analysing this field.

One of the main studies consulted was the book edited by Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*. This text outlines in great detail the complexities associated with the field of researching film production, and as such helped in determining which were the possible methods that could be used and applied specifically to the area of Italian film industry, first of all, boundary crossing studies and combination of methods. The book underlines the importance of balanced approaches, remembering to look at production texts as sociocultural constructions and at production activities as cultural texts. The film studies should be approached through an diversified attitude, because film production is interdisciplinary itself, and involves many other areas, economic, cultural, sociological etc. Indeed, several interesting data are considered in the book, such as “the complexity of routines and rituals, the routines of seemingly complex processes, the economic and political forces that shape roles, technologies, and the distribution of resources according to cultural and demographic differences” (Mayer, 2009, p. 4). However, it is also necessary to point out that production studies also draw from and require an interdisciplinary approach. Starting from cultural studies,⁸ in order to “look at the ways that culture both constitutes and reflects the relationship of power” (Mayer, *et al.*, 2009, p. 2), and uses media studies on cinema and cinema production. In fact, movies have always been a fundamental media product in United States society since the invention of cinema. During the development of the film industry in the classical era, they were even more valuable and influential, reaching their peak after World War II, when they landed on and pervaded almost the entire European film market,

⁸ When talking about cultural studies, I refer to the analysis of popular culture seen from an historical and social point of view. Cinema is a popular mass medium, and it is pointless to exclude from the analysis one of its most important variables, influenced by historical events, social contexts, and cultural changes. Without considering situated social aspects, cinema would be a decontextualised product, deprived of its environment, and thus the analysis would be only partial.

mainly the Western one. Hollywood films were emblematic of contextual social and economic transformations, and they reflected the industrial structure and order that were part of American society.

Two early production studies that laid the foundations for the analysis of a film industry were those by Leo Rosten (1941) and Hortense Powdermaker (1951). Underlining how workers, above all those at the top of the production pyramid, are motivated above by money and profits, Rosten and Powdermaker draw the attention of the reader to the capitalistic aspects⁹ of this particular industrial context, traits which can also be traced in the Italian cinema context. However, both scholars also concentrated on other characteristics of the studio system. For example, Sullivan has written with regards to Rosten's work *Hollywood: the Movie Colony, the Movie Maker* (1941) that the "Americans spent too much of their time idolising Hollywood films and the actors who starred in them" (Sullivan, 2009, p. 43), (as did Italians, which will be discussed in greater detail below). At the same time, nevertheless, Rosten revealed, it is important to notice "the potential power of film to shape culture", and that, according to him, needed "a careful look behind the scenes to the individuals who produced media entertainment." Hence, the role of popular culture and debate, both off and on the screen, is fundamental in order to understand the product (film) and the system (industry).

Hortense Powdermaker is another scholar, who worked in the same period as Rosten, and analysed Hollywood by addressing its social aspects and traits. In her book *Hollywood: the Dream Factory* (1951, p. 10), she analysed Hollywood from an anthropological point of view, outlining some common behaviours and typical anthropological cases and patterns, that helped in cataloguing those she considered and treated, as inhabitants of this specific environment. Through a series of investigations and interviews (never made public except for some occasional statements, without mentioning directly the speakers), Powdermaker described Hollywood and the people who worked there at the end of the 1940s. She investigated both the industrial and cultural aspects of Hollywood, and she also focused on "how well the system utilized its resources." The interesting, anthropological, premise she adopted, was inscribing the Hollywood phenomenon within the boundaries of the United States. In this way she underlined the importance of the rich and heterogeneous environments in which this industry was created, and undoubtedly influenced by it. In

⁹ Peter Bächlin (1958) analyses cinema from an industrial (and Marxist) point of view, referring to it by talking about capitalistic modes of production, and seeing the film as an economic and productive asset.

chapter 5 I will use Powdermaker's approach applying it to the Italian film industry, as it helped to investigate the context from a different perspective. However, Hollywood did not emerge as a mere mirror of a complex and multi-layered society; it constituted a society on its own, which dictated the rules about movie production and created a real hegemonizing structure, an example that the Italian film industry was unable to follow. The Studio System aimed to keep the machine of production moving and, therefore, assure a continuous flux of money, as was the case for other productive and economic models. For this reason, even the construction of a popular movie culture was ascribable to the desire to increase and assure profits and means to reach them.

The most important part of the industry investigated by Powdermaker is the movie stars. They seem to be the currency of exchange, among several of the production companies, but their currency is most notable between the production companies and the public. They represent the connection point with the people and catalyse the attention of the fans, who become more and more interested in them and in the fictional world they belong to. Stardom allowed production companies to build a relationship with the public, and drive the audience and its need for movies. This interest in actors happened also because, according to Powdermaker (1951, p. 35), the star "is not only an actor, but one of the gods or folk heroes in our society." The star embodies features that can be easily recognisable and categorised, Powdermaker affirmed, creating in this way specific standards and types. The author (1951, p. 228) also emphasises that the system benefited from stars, because it "provides a formula easy to understand and has made the production of movies seem more like just another business."

By researching the life of Hollywood people, their behaviours and even, in some cases, the amount of their earnings, Powdermaker provides important information in order to analyse and comprehend this ecosystem. If this information is combined with the categorisation of the actors and the division of professional roles and positions of the industry, such as the producer, the actor, the social climber, the "careerist", etc., it helps in understanding not only the lives of workers involved in the film industry, but also their relationships and interactions. Powdermaker, therefore, described a society based on fixed economic and productive roles, that was merely motivated by the accumulation of economic and productive power. Although this line of research has not been followed in this thesis, the traits the author outlined, and her conclusions, are a valid starting point for a future comparison among other contexts and industries in order to see if it is possible to identify

similar dynamics in another productive context, which was aiming to follow the American example.

Hollywood can be identified as a society on its own even because it proliferates across and outside the city of Los Angeles. This characteristic allowed a closed community to be created, as already stated. In addition to this, and as Sherry B. Ortner argues (2009, p. 176), this was dependent on four factors: first of all, “there is a relatively small number of insiders and, for the most part, they all know who they are”; secondly, “there is a well-known and well-trodden urban geography punctuated visually and symbolically by the various studio lots scattered across the city”; thirdly, “there are newspapers and magazines directed toward this community that insiders read compulsively to stay abreast of current developments”; and fourthly, the presence of ritual occasions, the most known one being the Academy Awards, “when the community comes together to celebrate itself”. Some of these factors can be relevant for the Italian context too, for instance the first one exemplified by the producers’ recurring names among production companies, and the second one, represented by Cinecittà studios that, even though in a more restricted way, embodied the most known and active film studio area of Italy. The strong sense of belonging felt by Hollywood workers is also fundamental to maintain the sense of confinement and separation in such a delocalised community which produces, according to Ortner, illusions. For this reason, “the boundaries around the production process, and especially around actors, are important to maintain those illusions” (Ortner, 2009, p. 176). However, they are related not only to the products, but also to the purpose of keeping stable professional relationships. The environment is extremely stressful and the level of competition exceptionally high. Thus, it can be said that not only is Hollywood a community, but it also has other smaller communities within itself. These communities are related to several production companies and depend on them; moreover their members are linked with one another and, during the years, have covered different positions in several firms. It was also the case with several Italian producers. This, in turn, determined alliances and antagonisms with the passing of time.

This aspect was analysed in depth by Thomas Schatz more than thirty years later, in his book *The Genius of the System* (1989). Here, Schatz retraces Hollywood’s Golden Age from its beginning, the 1920s, to the dawn of television in the late 1940s, when the intricate design of the system, efficient as it was, allowed the production of quality films rapidly and with precise and balanced costs. Schatz investigates the most important production companies discussing the rise and fall of individual producers’ careers, and the description of the movies’ realisation and some of the many difficult productions, through the close analysis of historical

successes. The author articulates the institutional structures in five parts, dividing them chronologically. Starting from the beginning of the Studio system, in the 1920s, Schatz presents both the major production companies (Paramount Pictures, Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Warner Brothers Pictures, 20th Century Fox and RKO) and the minors (Universal, Columbia and United Artists), as well as all their main leading figures. Among them, David O. Selznick plays a fundamental role in Hollywood as a producer working for several companies, but also as an independent economic actor. Like him, other names and figures (such as Irving Thalberg, Darryl Francis Zanuck, Joseph Schenck, Carl Leammle, the Warner brothers, and all the leading and most important names of Hollywood) are also discussed, appearing in different historical moments and working for different companies, but always in competition against one another. Even though the same articulated discussion cannot be done in the context analysed in this dissertation, the text has been used as a starting point for outlining connections among producers and production companies. These findings could lead to a deeper analysis that involves the professional life of some producers who, during their career, ran several companies.

From *The Genius of the System*, a sort of structure can be drawn, and often even a behavioural pattern common to all the production companies. For example, each one of the most important studios “developed a repertoire of contract stars and story formulas that were refined and continually recirculated through the marketplace” (Schatz, 2010, p. 7). It must not be forgotten that each studio had its own personality, with specific traits and characteristics, that mirrored its producers’ personalities (thesis strongly supported by Rosten) (Ibid.). Schatz concentrates his attention on the history of three companies that were in fact, the major studios Warner Bros., Metro Goldwyn Mayer and Universal, and also on a major independent producer, Selznick. Selznick was able to create his own company, the Selznick International Pictures before (1935), and the David O. Selznick Productions in 1940, after the liquidation of SIP to avoid heavy tax losses (Ibid., p. 322). The decision of concentrating his attention on these four segments of the Hollywood system depended on the structure of Hollywood itself. As Schatz says (Ibid., p. 9), the “studio system was [...] a “mature-oligopoly” [...] So a close look at any one company necessarily takes them all in.” This interrelation happens because intertwining the history and the stories of Warner Bros., Metro Goldwyn Mayer, Universal and the personal and professional life of Selznick, allows a study which examines the individual scenarios of every production company while at the same time not distracting from the general context of the whole industry system. This has revealed the presence of different forces and productive actors that, although separated

from one another and characterised by heterogeneous intentions and tasks, formed a sort of economic equilibrium, which allowed the industry in its totality to grow.

Schatz provides detailed analysis of the various aspects in the organisation, of the system, and its components – the production companies, so that through his findings it is possible to determine a frame of reference. Among these references are common behaviours, production strategies, types of contracts, and so on, that could also be used in other contexts outside Hollywood. Schatz' study is useful for developing a more reliable and trustworthy comparison to other production sites, such as, in this case, the production companies in Italy, which looked to Hollywood as a model (see, for example, the world of Dino De Laurentiis). Every company is described thoroughly and extensively, starting from its origins and its founders and arriving at its production methods, its victories and its defeats. All the data supplied, and the stories and anecdotes reported are functional and necessary to design the complexity of the studio system. This study allowed Thomas Schatz to define the "movie business," as "a commercial enterprise requiring enormous capital investment, in which the major corporate powers strive to optimize efficiency and minimize risk" (Ibid., 2009, p. 46). Through an analysis of the three macro-industrial tendencies of the industry, namely, oligopoly, integration and distribution control, and the vertical integration of the studio era, Schatz quickly depicts the evolution and problems of Hollywood. What is particularly striking is the big shift this industry had between the 1930s and 1940s, and after the Second World War. Although before this period Hollywood was "a self-contained culture industry despite its dynamic interaction with radio, the recording industry, publishing, and other media" (Ibid., 47); with the end of the classical era and the split between production and distribution sectors, caused by the so called Paramount Decree,¹⁰ the arrival of the post-war decline, and the rise of television, this panorama completely changed, and the movie industry was dynamically engaged with the television industry due to the possibilities of new earnings and the worry of a disastrous fall.

The most distinctive element coming out of these pages, is the capacity of this system to adapt to the surrounding environment. Depending on the social situation, the shifting tastes of the public, or the good or bad results of the movies according to their box office statistics,

¹⁰ "Subject to federal investigation of its structure and conduct since 1912, the film industry was eventually required to divorce its production-distribution sectors from its exhibition holdings. Although some firms were slow to capitulate to this decree, eventually they all agreed to divest. Paramount divorced its theatre sector in 1949; RKO, 1950; MGM and Twentieth Century-Fox, 1952; and Warners, 1953. Although there were still oligopolies in each sector (production-distribution and exhibition), the major firms were no longer fully integrated" (Bordwell, *et al.*, 1985, p. 400). For a deeper analysis of the event, see Thomas Schatz (1999).

all major companies would transform, and their work methods would change, adapting to the new needs of the market and, above all to the new demands of the community. A movie was unlikely to be seen as anything other than as an industrial product; it was not mistaken for a work of art. In this element lies the strength of the system in its Golden Age, and perhaps the reason why it was seen as a model to follow. The American production companies strictly believed in and supported the idea of the film industry as a proper economic force and movies as saleable products and consumption assets, which therefore separated movies from their artistic value. The power of the structure was in this strict distinction: for the producer, the film was an investment, and it had to be treated as an asset. If a genre or even an actor seemed to be profitable, the production company started to follow that “investment path” in order to take the best advantage of it. For instance, the production of horror pictures by Universal became its distinctive characteristic; or the Warner Bros.’ Great Depression era pictures, “fast-paced, fast-talking, socially sensitive (if not downright exploitive) treatments of contemporary stiffs and lowlifes, of society’s losers and victims” (Ibid., p. 136); or even the “quick succession of exotic Technicolor romances with Jon Hall and Maria Montez” generated by the success of *Arabian Nights* (John Rawlins, 1942) (Ibid., p. 352).

Another scholar who has directed his interest towards the American film industry is Michael Curtin. Sketching its history, Curtin (2009, p. 112) supports the “logic of accumulation”, according to which a company will “redeploy its creative resources and reshape its terrain of operations if it is to survive competition and enhance profitability.” Hollywood, indeed, closely adopted this logic, and Italy tried to do it as best as it could, as this thesis will demonstrate. The American system concentrated its labour forces (both creative and otherwise) in a centralised location (the studio), thus improving the quality of its products, reducing costs, and increasing the production output. The interest in production locations can also be seen in the book *The Film Studio* (2005), where Ben Goldsmith and Tom O’Regan study the birth of large-scale studios which could host high-budget films all over the world. They decided to concentrate on this worldwide phenomenon to highlight how film (and television) production kept evolving, thanks to technological progress. Goldsmith and O’Regan also investigate the competition among places where the studios are located to attract film productions. Among the studios and countries examined by the authors, there is also Italy.

Though the book does not directly address the Italian cinema industry and the 1950s, it shows how Hollywood influenced the growth of these massive location in Italy, by also referring to Cinecittà, the main Italian studio, (founded in 1937), and its renovation, in order

to be in line with the times, and, as they say, “to maintain a permanent production presence in a particular location” (Ibid., p. 2). Cinecittà, in fact, was trying to equip itself, as were all the other big studios over the world, for Hollywood-standard productions, with the hope to increase the industrial scale of the Italian cinema production. Using Hollywood as reference and basis for comparison, the authors explore the global contemporary production situation, underlining that several of the “large studios built in Europe before or soon after World War II [...] were “edge city” developments, situated on the outskirts of major cities (usually the national capital) where land was freely available and relatively cheap, but still accessible from the metropolitan center” (Ibid., p. 24). With regards to Cinecittà, they also describe this complex as a “full service” structure, because it has “sole or substantial control over the on-site service providers” and is “able to offer some or all of these services as a package to reduce production costs as incentive to producers” (Ibid., p. 28). The services to which they refer to are those necessary for production and post-production, which were made available on-site to optimise production costs: settings, carpenters, electricians; but also editors, composers etc.

Goldsmith and O’Regan point out that the socio-historical context in which a studio was built influenced its shape in terms of the kinds of infrastructure that were built, the impact it had on the community, the government and people of that specific economic sector. As they maintain (Ibid., pp. 34-35) “studios created in the heyday of the “national film studio” idea, roughly from the 1920s to the 1950s”, such as Cinecittà, “were designed with varying degrees of success to be national production epicentres.” Employing a large number of film workers responsible for various functions and services, these centres attracted investments and attention. The natural consequence was the great influence they exerted over production. The two authors depict the evolution of global film production through their discussions about national support for studios, the investments Hollywood made during the 1940s and 1950s in Europe, and a brief detailed study of few structures, among which Cinecittà is also included. Goldsmith and O’Regan identify different types of film studios and consider and examine the consequences their emergence had for Hollywood, international film productions, and studio locations. Moreover, they highlight how much the American studio system influenced this evolution, these changes and these productive locations. They show how Hollywood worked as a model for the development and growth of the film industry all over the world.

Studios are physical places where films are born, and that can be analysed in relation to the cinema industry. However, the cinema industry is also related to other spaces linked to

film practice and its geography, an example of which is *Film and Spatiality: Outline of a New Empiricism* by L. Roberts and J. Hallam (2014). In their text, opening essay of the edited collection *Locating the Moving Image*, the scholars define how to organise the process of locating, thus mapping the moving images. They explain how the several contributions to the text *Locating the Moving Image* help in rendering spatial methods and analyses useful tools for “exploring the social, cultural, and economic geographies surrounding different forms of film practice and consumption” (2014, p. 3). In this way, they explore not only new approaches, but even identifications of film and spatiality, providing a new and deeper exploration of the field. All the contributions are fundamental in order to give a methodology which can be applied to other subjects, such as production studies locating the geographies of production industries, their distribution and possible similarities.

Media Industries. History, Theory, and Method edited by Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren (2009) is a more useful work for approaching the analysis of the movie industry. Through a series of essays, their book covers the history of media studies, its different theories, the models and methodologies that have followed one another along the previous decades, the approaches to the Hollywood mode of production, and the arrival of production studies when applied to television and advertising. In their conclusions they also attempt to structurally hypothesise the future this field of studies could have, in terms of its analytical focus. As Michele Hilmes states in her essay *Nailing Mercury. The Problem of Media Industry Historiography* (2009, p. 22), what scholars are doing now is “taking an industrial approach to the critical study of media.” This is done in order to indicate “a perspective that is inherently contextual and interrelated,” because the interest is concentrated on those creative forces of production which hide behind texts and media products usually addressed only as objects of communication. Although the text *Media Industries. History, Theory, and Method* concentrates on media studies in general, and more specifically on the study of the television industry, it provides interesting suggestions on how to approach this broad field of study. As John Thornton Caldwell informs in his essay in the book (2009, pp. 200-201), in order to develop a more complete analysis, cultural studies of production must not be forgotten. This specific branch places “film and television studies in dialogue with several interrelated disciplines, including sociological cultural studies, the sociology of work, interpretative anthropology and performance studies, institutional theories of art, political economy, and new technology research.” Only having a more complete and complex vision of the specific reality studied, and of all the implications that in different ways could have influenced it, is it possible to analyse correctly such a dynamic phenomenon like the cinema industry.

The scholar who analysed the world of cinema as a complex business, bringing the economical discussion forward, is the economist Peter Bächlin. In his work *Il cinema come industria* (1945),¹¹ Bächlin started from one single premise: the cinema is an industry and films are capitalist commodities. For these reasons, it is fundamental to consider movies as mass productions aimed at satisfying the public. It has been one of the most important preconditions used for the analysis of the topic of this dissertation. This precondition helped by focusing on the economic side of cinema and on the separation among its main parts, namely: economic effort, invested capitals, products, and public. According to Bächlin (Ibid., p. 1), in the capitalistic economy, a film is both an intellectual creation and a commodity, because it has all the requisites for being a work of art and is the representation of all the industrial and commercial work done for its production and consumption. For this reason, he provided further details in the analytical section, describing the asset-movie through all the steps needed to create and complete it. This includes the technique of production; the different phases of the industrial process; and the standardisation of work that allowed the film to reach the mass market more easily. The author continued in calling attention to the laws that regulated the creation of films, the loans, the rules of markets, and even distribution. Within these sections, he did not forget to describe the role of the producer, the pillar of this industry. Bächlin, referring to Karl Marx's *Capital* (Ibid., pp. 90-91), depicted the figure of the producer (who has to use the capital in his possession in the most rational way possible) as taking advantage of productive innovations. His purpose was to increase his profits through technological developments, and then in turn, transforming these profits into capital. Without analysing Hollywood specifically but the industry in general, and referring to other production centres as well, the economist provided the reader with general information that could be useful in the study of other sites of production outside of Hollywood. Thus, Bächlin started identifying the foundations of the movie industry by discussing the film, which is the final outcome of this industrial process, as a monetarily quantifiable object that must be considered strictly connected to its mass consumption. In order to be considered valuable, this outcome must be a profitable commodity. Considering all these characteristics, the book precisely shows the modern view of cinema as an industry with many rigid rules, although it appears that this definition can be applied specifically to Hollywood.

¹¹ In support of the analysis of the importance of this book for the Italian film industry, the text provided a section written by L. Solaroli, in which he called attention to how the conception of cinema, even in Italy, was changing. What is most astounding is how strong and widespread the concept of cinema as industry (and not only as an artistic expression) was becoming, in spite of the fact that Italian businessmen, according to Solaroli, were unable to create a national studio system.

All the mentioned texts have been useful to approach the field of production studies, and learn how these analyses moved within the actual context, and from which point of view they decided to study the film industry. They are a valuable and strong starting point to analyse the small and medium Italian companies that my research wishes to focus on. The templates suggested by these texts offer several approach on how to study the Italian film industry and film production companies. They show from which point of view it is better to consider them and how to interpret data, in order to check how companies used to behave, the presence of patterns of production, and similar characteristics within the companies of the same size. Moreover, as all these studies are strictly related to the historical context of the subject being researched, film production, they underline the importance the environment plays in this field. The environment films are produced in represent the point of departure, the point of arrival, and a constant and continuous interaction in the middle. They highlight the extreme importance of having a global view of the topic from several angles that is influenced by many factors. Although these approaches focused on Hollywood, the most important industry of all times, they feature the aspects to which the Italian film industry tried to aspire.

1.3 The Italian context

Textual analysis has been the dominant approach in Italian film studies for a long time (Brunetta, 1979; Bernardini, 1991; Miccichè, 1996; Alovio, 2005). However, over the last twenty years several studies begun investigating more in depth both the film industrial context and the production process of films. While not all of these are directly connected to the Italian context, they do show several modes of industrial analysis.

In his text *Getting to "Going to the show"*, Robert C. Allen (2014, p. 33) wants to develop a "practice that tries to understand cinema as a set of [...] experiences [...] associated with but not reducible to films." He emphasises the importance of the context, which he defines as "a necessary and irreducible element of experience." This discourse is strictly related to the concept of filmmaking as a "specialized cultural practice," as Elisa Ravazzoli claims in her text *The Geography of Film Production in Italy: a Spatial Analysis Using GIS* (2014, p. 151). Ravazzoli concentrates on the contemporary Italian film industry. In her view, spatial analysis

is used to understand and analyse the geography of film production, in order to study the progression of the filmmaking process. For instance, all those cultural implications, as Ravazzoli refers to them, involving the locations where the film was shot must be considered. Although the geographical dimension of the film industry is a common practice regarding contemporary film production (i.e. financial support by regional film commissions), the “spatial character of the industry” (Ibid., p. 157) is a concept which can be retraced back to the 1950s Italian film industry. Thus, a kind of production scheme could be identified, which primarily captures the aspects regarding modes and spaces of production. Or to use Ravazzoli’s words (Ibid.), these manners of studying the subject will “enable an investigation of the spatial dimension of film production and the interrelations between both the network of businesses and the filming stage on location.” It will allow an analysis of what she defines as the “historical nodes of film production” (Rome, Milan, Turin, and Naples), and show how production companies used to follow the scheme related to the most important spaces of cinema in the past. Both production companies and film shoots, in fact, used to be centred in these cities (at least, the majority of them). This closeness in proximity shows once more how the Italian film industry developed after the Second World War, motivating its evolution with the emphasis on the landscape used in the films at the time, the focus on the peculiar economic conditions these locations could provide, together with attention to the cultural “perceptions of local identity” (Ibid., p. 169).

A separate section must be devoted to a series of other texts that do not refer specifically to cinema or film industry, but that have been essential for the comprehension of their development. In this group I include all the studies related to the historical and economic growths of Italy over the Fifties, with some necessary references to the periods before and after that decade. One of the most notable texts, is Guido Crainz’s *Storia del miracolo economico* (2005), in which he concentrates on the economic boom that the country enjoyed particularly during the 1960s. For a deeper understanding of that time, it is necessary to analyse the previous events, which occurred throughout the 1950, such as changes brought about by modernity, different productive geographies, and remodelled social and familial hierarchies. All this was accompanied by enormous economic transformations that completely modified the Italians’ quality of life, nurturing expectations that the Italian political and structural system could not satisfy. Crainz dedicates the first section of his analysis (the most interesting for this dissertation) to these transformations that invested Italy after the war and during the Fifties. In doing so, he also studies the role the USA had in “countering” Communism and their influence on culture and society, areas of life touched by the new dynamics and forces tied to all the historical worldwide events that occurred. Events

such as the publication of Khrushchev's secret speech, and the consequent insurrections of the working class in Poland and Hungary, violently repressed,¹² had all a knock on effect for Italy during the middle of the decade 1950s. This had consequences on the film industry as well, causing financial issues, as I will point out in more detail in chapter 2.

Another scholar who concentrated on the history of Italy is Umberto Gentiloni Silveri. In his book *Storia dell'Italia contemporanea 1943-2019* (2019), Silveri describes the history of Italy starting in the years before the end of the Second World War. Starting from the premise that the past is necessary for the comprehension of the present if properly questioned, Gentiloni Silveri investigates the transformations that led to modern mass society and those that have modified relations between people and communities, and between rights and powers. Silveri further questions the influences that controlled the country in the period from the end of the war to the following decade, and presents a nation divided between the two big powers of the time: Washington and Moscow. During the restoration (1948-1953), Italy was building a new society while trying to look at both its inner necessities and the international context. The political framework was marked by discontinuity, a condition that can also be identified in the fragmentation of the film industry, which was also due to the lack of concrete and long-term interventions in favour of film production. All the historical events and political evolutions that happened in the period analysed and reported by Gentiloni Silveri are necessary to consider in order to understand the development of the nation, the actions that had a direct influence on the film industry, and which of them indirectly affected it.

Crainz and Gentiloni Silveri's researches did not specifically focus on the financial aspects of Italian economy, but they were studied in more depth by other scholars. One of them is Pierluigi Ciocca, who in his book *Ricchi per sempre? Una storia economica d'Italia (1796-2020)* (2020) retraces the development of the economic growth of Italy. Linking "qualitative elements and numerical data" while trying to untie "controversial interpretative cruxes" (ibid., p. 7), Ciocca attempts to explain the economic development of the nation through a double criterion. This analysis indeed intends to be a history of the Italian economy and an economic history of Italians as they lived it. It is therefore an important text as it provides readers with the knowledge of how much and in which way the nation grew, as well as offering information on where this growth was concentrated. This therefore allows for more

¹² These events all happened in 1956 and had a worldwide impact. In his speech to the Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev accused Joseph Stalin of copious crimes. It affected the communist movement all over the world changing the course of history, causing revolutions and insurrections in anti-Soviet countries like Poland and Hungary.

of an understanding with regards to the progress and development of Italy throughout the decades, useful for analysing the context of the film industry. In fact, it is not possible to separate the industrial from the historical aspects when studying such a complex area as the film industry, as it will be discussed in chapter 2. Although this text covers quite a lengthy period of time, Ciocca is thorough in his analyses and dedicates an important section to the economic miracle accentuating its premises and showing its results, without forgetting to address its limitations. In this way, Ciocca provides a clear framework of the period by connecting all the variables that determined that fast development.

A similar approach is used by Emanuele Felice, in *Ascesa e declino. Storia economica d'Italia* (2015), where he describes with broader brushstrokes, the economic history of Italy. In order to comprehend the progress of the country and the ways in which it arrived at the economic boom, it is necessary to have an understanding of the general economic history of Italy. Only in this way is it possible to understand the dynamics of power that depict the 1950s and the 1960s. National and international historical and economic events contributed to the delineation of Italian growth, especially in the period under analysis in this dissertation. Felice also points out these same factors when discussing the 1950s industrial scenery of the nation, as a period full of changes that were so rapid they were difficult to understand. Although Felice has a more historical approach than Ciocca, *Ascesa e declino* is necessary for a broader comprehension of the Italian economic and industrial scene, of how it evolved and why the 1950s have been crucial years in relation to both past and present industrial behaviours in Italy.

One last study that does not refer to the film industry, but is necessary for the industrial aspects of Italy at the time, is Franco Amatori and Andrea Colli's *Impresa e industria in Italia* (2016). Seeing as industrialization is a central condition for the development and modernisation of a country, companies are the basis for production and expansion, and as such they must also be included in the analysis of the film industry. This is what Amatori and Colli do, starting from the Unification of Italy to contemporary days. The history of the development of national enterprises helped in outlining a general mode of production. This was made of small and medium companies which were often family run businesses that were concentrated in specific areas of the country. Some features of this model can be identified also in the film industry, which presents similar characteristics to the more general and broader context of industrial production. The interesting approach Amatori and Colli use combines both economic and historical methodologies, and provides a range of options for the understanding of the phenomenon of Italian companies which can be adopted for the

analysis of film industry too. Considering cinema from an industrial and productive perspective, the dimension of its primary “actors” (companies) is a main part of the research. Amatori and Colli provide a remarkable point of departure for the background and behaviour of Italian companies. Thanks to them, it is possible to discover important points of contact between the industrial scene of the time and the film industry.

This area has been the direct focus of some other texts, which have been very useful in the study of small and medium companies. One of them is Bizzarri and Solaroli’s analysis. *L’Industria Cinematografica Italiana* (1958) constitutes a detailed overview of the Italian film industry from the beginnings to the second half of 1950s. The text is useful in presenting the background that led to the proliferation of hundreds of film production companies from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Fifties. Bizzarri and Solaroli could not provide an extremely detailed analysis of particular productive dynamics and crises since they were writing about their current industrial context. They analysed the laws and advanced hypotheses regarding the crisis of the field, and underline the devastating effects of the import of foreign films, particularly American productions, and the risky behaviours of the producers, who started to fund production companies without adequate economic means, and, in some cases, took advantage of State benefits and funding.¹³

However, one of the most important aspects is the attention Bizzarri and Solaroli dedicate to the role the Italian government played in the financing and producing of movies, and to its intention not to stop the circulation of foreign films.¹⁴ The intervention of the government was and still is necessary for the development of the Italian film industry, but it is also something that particularly distinguishes it from the Hollywood Studio System, which was far less dependent from the support of the US government. Moreover, thanks to the government’s interventions and the money American films introduced within the Italian industry, according to Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958, pp. 193-197) and the data given by ANICA for the years from 1950 to 1956, the Italian government were able to finance national production, which gained many advantages from this situation as a result. They conclude by sustaining that this is the reason why this intervention never effectively contrasted the invasion of films from other countries, above all from the U.S. film market.

Before the 2000s, literature around the Italian film industry was very limited. Other interesting texts which deeply analyse the social and economic situation of Italy and its film

¹³ For a detailed study, see also Libero Bizzarri (1979, pp. 37-48).

¹⁴ For a brief analysis of the laws the government promulgated, and their comparison, see Libero Bizzarri (1986, pp. 289-291).

productions were Lorenzo Quaglietti's book *Storia economico – politica del cinema italiano 1945-1980* (1980) and his article *Il cinema italiano del dopoguerra, Leggi produzione distribuzione esercizio* (1974). In these texts, Quaglietti discussed the most important events that happened in the Italian cinema industry from 1930 to 1980, without overlooking the objectives that the government tried to pursue through its legislative and administrative interventions. Quaglietti reported in chronological order the political, structural, and economic events that affected the production of films. In these texts we can appreciate his critical analysis of the data collected, with particular interest on the years from 1944 to 1959. In fact, this period can be considered symptomatic because of the government's actions, which were often ineffective and partial,¹⁵ and intended to control the cinematographic activity, thus preventing any sign of transformation and renovation that could have helped Italian cinema industry to develop. It was true also for the most important law promulgated in the period, the Andreotti Law (1949), which included four means of support: 10% contribution for each film, 8% more to quality films, 3% to documentaries, 2% to quality documentaries; a 20-day programming obligation period; 2,5 million deposit tax for every imported film; 20% cashback to cinema owners who programmed Italian movies. However, despite this law, the compulsory programming was not observed, the dubbing tax was paltry, and the collaboration between ANICA and the American majors increasingly became more frequent and regular (Bizzarri, 1986). Quaglietti also stresses the mistakes and the approximation of the political and cultural forces, which should have acted with stronger dedication in helping a limping industry. These aspects will be investigated in more depth later on in respect to some important laws that deeply influenced the cinema industry.

Contemporary to Quaglietti's texts is Otello Angeli's *Strutture produttive, contratti, organizzazione sindacale* (1979). Through an overview of the evolution of production structures, contracts and an analysis of union organisation, along with struggles and disagreements between employers and unions, Angeli describes the fragmentation of the industry, and provides relevant moments of change within the context. Indeed, he

¹⁵ From 1931 to 1949, there have been several laws and changes in cinema regulation. As reported by Libero Bizzarri, in 1931 the law n. 918 that established a 10% contribution on the gross proceeds of the film was promulgated (increased to 12% in 1938); in 1933 the law n. 1414 confirmed the 10% contribution, and decreed upon a 25,000 lire dubbing tax (that increased to 50,000 lire in 1937) on those films referred to as important. During the following year, the State monopoly allowed the Fascist regime to contrast the invasion of American film that flooded the Italian film market. In 1940, due to the law n. 404 (April 4th, 1940), the dubbing tax increased to 75,000 lire, and the number of U.S. films considerably decreased. In 1945 the monopoly was abrogated, and a new law confirmed the contribution on the proceeds, without talking about any programming obligation for the Italian films in cinemas, which arrived two years later: a period of 20 days as programming obligation was established for each three-month period.

emphasises that Neorealism called into question, and was a rejection of the previous culture and productive methods. This was a moment of autonomous experimentation against existing economic powers that “suggested new dimensions compatible with the structures of the Italian cinema, with its artisanal character” (Ibid., p. 50). The appearance of American capital in the Italian market caused another separation, this time not from Fascism and the white telephone cinema, but from Neorealism. Even though it was not the only cause of Neorealism’s disappearance, American capital did have an influence on it. The Italian film production was deeply influenced by this new historical and economic situation, and changed its quality to average, while it forgot more artistic forms of films. The entire organisational structure changed, with the foundation of several studios, development and printing establishments, and dubbing and synchronisation companies,¹⁶ in order to cope with the industrial exigencies of the time.

A very recent analysis of the Italian film industry has been undertaken by Marina Nicoli in her work *The Rise and Fall of the Italian Film Industry* (2017). She starts from the early appearance of the cinema industry, and describes how, since then, Italian cinema has been divided between art and business. Moreover, she presents the Italian film industry as something fragmented and unable to establish cohesive unity, a topic this thesis is also primarily interested in exploring. She then concentrates on how the cinema industry changed under the Fascist regime and, above all, how it was almost completely absorbed by the government. Indeed, during the Fascist era the film industry began to be considered a possible instrument of power in the hands of the regime, which wanted to transform it and to make it as influential and pervasive as Hollywood for the US society.¹⁷ Moreover, the regime believed so strongly in the innate opportunities of the cinematographic medium, and in its prospect to compete with Hollywood, that built in 1935 the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (the main cinema school in Italy) and its the Scuola Nazionale di Cinema (National Cinema School) and, in 1937, Cinecittà. Making also some references to other European countries – such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom or Spain, for example, Nicoli depicts in broad strokes the events of the film industry at the time, and discusses the

¹⁶ According to Angeli (1979), by the end of 1955 in Italy there were 12 production establishments with 46 studios, 10 development and printing establishments, and 8 dubbing and synchronisation companies.

¹⁷ Mussolini had a strong interest in cinema. As Zagarrío reports (2004, pp. 43-51), he considered cinema an amazing instrument of propaganda, for the development, and the spread of culture and, above all, of the ideas of the regime. Zagarrío says that cinema had a central relevance in the cultural politics of the regime, and he mentions Luigi Freddi’s journey to Hollywood during the first half of the 1930s, during which time he became a visiting student, interested in the American modes of production and the studio system.

extent to which each national industry influenced one another. Nicoli (Ibid., 3%) wishes to “examine which forces, political, economic, cultural and technological, were most important in shaping the development of the Italian cinema industry over the past 120 years”, and demonstrates its journey in terms of success or failure. In doing so, she does not forget to analyse the role of all the professional figures that surround a movie, including film directors, producers, spectators, and the critics, as well as the most classical variables, such as the influence of the government and the system of funding. According to Nicoli, this is what allowed the Italian film industry to survive, but, at the same time, it is also what almost suffocated its development, as it was tied to a series of restrictions, rules and obligations that did not allow the industry to breathe.

Furthermore, Nicoli discusses the decline of Italian cinema during the decades following the 1960s,¹⁸ and demonstrates how the industry survived and succeeded when the system of funding, the influence of the government and the roles of the various stakeholders were aligned. On the contrary, negative results were obtained when each of these were unaligned and tried to pursue different purposes. Nicoli’s analysis is directed towards the idea of cinema as an institution, an area including art, business and politics on both a national and international level. Thus, the author makes a concrete and lucid examination of the Italian situation throughout the 120 years considered, making clear connections among the successes and failures of the national film industry. Given these considerations and her broad analysis of the context, Nicoli’s work is a pillar text for my dissertation.

Another scholar who focussed on the European context and was thus useful for a comparison among European countries, is Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1996). In his text *After the War*, Nowell-Smith combined the historical background and changes in the cinema and media fields after the Second World War. He also highlighted how several national cinemas differentiated their industries from one country to another. This allowed them to display heterogeneous ideas and cultural products, and to reflect diverse political moods and contextual dynamics. Nowell-Smith’s attention focused in particular on Italy and its cinema, which he defined as being more original in comparison to other national film cultures, due largely to Neorealism. However, he did not forget to mention the American market and productions, which influenced all the European countries and industries. Indeed, they found themselves in a position of importing not only American products (films) because national

¹⁸ Even though this type of work has also been carried out by other scholars (among others: Russo, 2016; Noto, Di Chiara, 2016; Bisoni, 2014; Manzoli, 2014), Nicoli dedicates her volume only to the Italian industrial system and its evolution, trying to build a complete history of the Italian cinema industry, from its beginning to the contemporary time.

production was not sufficient for the market, but also American stars to increase the appeal of national films at the box office.

Using a different approach in a more circumscribed context, Mirco Melanco also studied the Italian context. In his article *Italian Cinema, Since 1945: the Social Costs of Industrialization* (1995), he claimed that cinema is the witness of the changes that happen in society, rendering the film a real chronicle of historical events. Taking as examples several films and key industrial figures, Melanco described the changes that affected the country after 1945, while also mentioning how much American films and actors influenced Italians' daily lives. He also analyses an interesting aspect regarding the city of Naples, the second city in terms of the number of its depictions on screen after Rome. Naples is also one of the cities that hosted production companies, as will be later demonstrated by the data presented, and is often contextualised through a romantic vein by focusing on its beautiful landscapes. In a certain sense, this discourse confirms Elisa Ravazzoli's idea (2014) of the historical nodes of film production, underlining the importance of this city at the time, for the Italian film industry. However, Melanco also noticed how Italian cinema evolved from the 1950s onward, and highlighted the attention script writers and directors used to give to suburbs and provinces. To illustrate this concept, the author emphasised Pasolini and Fellini's desire to mix the description of poverty and ignorance with the analysis of social hopes and illusions. The impact this shift in representation of themes had, at both production and industry levels, cannot be undervalued. Investments changed because of stories, and locations, themes and protagonists, and producers had to be aware of these changes in order to survive.

Cinema as witness to the changing society is an area Daniela Treveri Gennari and David Forgacs focus on as well. In her book *Post-war Italian cinema: American intervention, Vatican interests* (2010), Treveri Gennari deals with the cinema industry from a different perspective: within the context of American presence on Italian territory and in the film industry, and the role of the Vatican. She describes the role America played in Italy after the war, how it helped with reconstruction and how it entered the country, influencing many aspects of Italian politics and culture. One of the most important impacts of the American intervention was on the Italian film industry, as it will be discussed more in depth later, in chapter 2. Treveri Gennari's analysis of cinema legislation and the role of Andreotti and the Catholic Church in films depict an interesting perspective that suggests all important decisions were at the mercy of Americans. Moreover, the focus on Andreotti and his interventions in the legislative sphere allows a good understanding into the dynamics in power, the problems the Italian cinema industry faced at the time, and the several muddled attempts made by the Government to restore a (simulated) order.

On the other hand, David Forgacs (2001, pp. 30-33) shows how the 1950s films registered “important social and cultural shifts” (Ibid., p. 30). Mass motorisation, secularisation in sexual mores, changes in transportation and mobility, were all filmed and recorded, giving an idea of a transforming Italy. However, Forgacs goes further than Melancon and concentrates on film production and production companies. Listing all the studios in Rome, he draws attention to the centralisation of the city as a cinema capital, showing also its different status and practices compared to Hollywood. Although Forgacs outlines a general overview of 1950s Italy and the Italian film industry, it also mentions another main feature of the period, co-productions. It does it without forgetting to also refer to Catholic censorship and the money spent by moviegoers, which further confirms the role cinema had as the main recreation for Italians.

Oriented more towards an investigation of Italian cinema as an industry is Barbara Corsi’s *Con qualche dollaro in meno: storia economica del cinema italiano* (2001). She analyses Italian cinema as an economic reality, with its rules, laws and markets, and Corsi studies its history with constant references to the broader context of the European and global cinema production. Corsi is very keen on emphasising the correlations between the productive events and preferences of the public, while not forgetting the more general background of production in other countries. Analysing the Italian film industry from its beginnings, Barbara Corsi depicts the entire cinematographic landscape, with its attempts to reach success in foreign markets and its identifications as an industry, its artistic status and its power hierarchies. With all its data and knowledge, the book commands a necessary reading in order to approach the study and understanding of the Italian cinema production.

Moreover, Corsi gives a detailed account of the number of films screened in Italy from 1930 to 1949 and divides them according to their nationality, and the percentage of different national markets from 1937 to 1949, such as the number of spectators and the theatres over the years. When analysing the second half of the century, she concentrates on the American films imported to Italy and on box office data. Attention is also given to transnational co-productions, which is a very common aspect of the Italian cinema industry of the time. Comparing the audience attendance in theatres across Italy, France, Great Britain and USA, the number of screens, the average attendance, money spent on the film for this industry from governments, and the average amount of money spent over the 1950s, the author delineates an interesting and useful picture of the Italian situation during the decade. All the data provided is important in depicting the Italian cinema industry and understanding its development during the second half of the 1940s and throughout the following decade. *Con qualche dollaro in meno: storia economica del cinema italiano* represents one of the most

important texts in this field of study. The collection of data, the information given, and the analyses presented are fundamental in order to start addressing the topic of Italian film production. In fact, the book is very helpful in outlining a careful study of the subject without disregarding the more general context represented by Europe and, above all, USA, a market and a productive reality which had an enormous influence on Italy and its cinema industry.

A further notable text of Corsi's is *Produzione e produttori* (2012). In this book, which is divided into two parts, the author depicts firstly the historical and social figure of the Italian producer, addressing their transformation in time, in relation to their role in a national cinema industry that lacked a strong studio system. Making a comparison with the American system, Corsi (2012, p. 10) highlights how industrialisation in Italian cinema was “spurious and limited to specific periods, and it paid for a long time the gap derived from some strategically wrong choices of the origins.” Covering the history of the Italian cinema industry, the author illuminates how this economic sector attempted to obtain cultural legitimacy, and how this prevented it from a proper development, particularly in comparison to the American industry. Marking out all the phases the Italian film industry went through, in spite of the fact these are made in summative terms, this source is helpful in depicting the circumstances and some of the problems faced by the Italian film industry. However, the central focus of the analysis remains on the historical figure of the producer, around which rotate failures, triumphs, and all the evolutions and transformations of the film industry. Corsi mentions and also discusses film distribution, one of the sectors that is not so often investigated when talking about film production. As she points out (2012, p. 13), the “fragmentation of distribution is another weak link of the Italian industry”, and it “makes producers’ and distributors’ interests diverge dramatically during periods of crisis.”¹⁹ She draws attention to how the circumstances were repeated both in the Twenties and after WWII, when American products were more attractive than Italian movies. Corsi describes the Italian model by referring to the role of the *divi*, and how they influenced the industry to a very large extent, through the laws and regulations during Fascism and after the war, and which genres and films were released. Corsi further points out that the growth of the industry was closely related to the film producer's ability to foresee and grasp talents, or in Corsi's words (Ibid., 39), “to find economic resources within the narrow possibilities, to draw a net with other people, and to be forward-looking towards the markets outside the national borders.”

The second part of the book concentrates on specific case studies and includes relevant movies from the origins (like *Cabiria*, Pastrone, 1914) to the contemporary era (like *Gomorra*,

¹⁹ For an analysis of the distribution of the period, see Garofalo, Minuz, and Morreale, (2021).

Garrone, 2008). These films present the opportunity to tackle in detail the modes and models of production, and are an opportunity to examine several production companies and their work for the realisation of the movie. Being so heterogeneous, albeit concise, *Produzione e produttori* quickly facilitates in charting the complex structure of the Italian cinema industry. It provides the reader with many important starting points that can be further developed. The book is helpful in its focus on the main aspects of the huge area identified as film industry, showing how even the analysis of some of its specific products can be used in order to present and discuss in details the nature and work of film companies and producers.

An analysis that concentrates more on another important aspect of the film industry is John Sedgwick, Peter Miskell and Marina Nicoli's *The Market for Films in Post-war Italy: Evidence for both National and Regional Patterns of Taste* (2008). In studying film genres in relation to the industrial context, the article examines two aspects of the film market: the popularity of films according to their regional locations, and the possibility that different types of films were aimed at and released for specific regional audiences. Through a study of the context and of the characteristics of the box office, the scholars develop a comparative approach that leads to the identification of separate communities of cinema-goers in Italy. Examining the market in "a period when the economy was growing at an unprecedented rate but the north-south divide was still pronounced" (Ibid., p. 26) they identified the existence of various tastes through the country which allowed the study of the "product" film from another perspective. Local audiences often responded differently from region to region, thus the industry saw the need of diversifying its products, incrementing regional discrepancies. However, they also identified a body of films that seemed to be targeted at specific audiences, local or regional (for example, Totò's movies), suggesting the idea that some "differences in tastes were more predictable than others" (Ibid., p. 27). These fragmentations can also be found in the structure of the industry, and further emphasise how the entire system was complex, and how challenging it was to render it homogeneous in any way.

Several points of view were provided by Stephen Gundle's analyses. The scholar is the principal investigator in an AHRC-funded project that examines the way Italian producers shaped global film production and distribution between the late 1940s and the mid-1970s. Some of his works within the projects include a study of director Alessandro Blasetti (2020, pp. 6-28), and an analysis of film production, product placement and consumer culture between 1945 and 1965 (2020, pp. 55-83). In the article *Art, entertainment and politics: Alessandro Blasetti and the rise of the Italian film industry, 1929-1959* (Gundle and Zegna, 2020), Gundle explores the role the director had before and after WWII in the development

of the Italian film industry, showing his interest in collaborating with producers due to his consideration of cinema as both an industry and a collective art. On the contrary, in the article *'We have everything to learn from the Americans': film promotion, product placement and consumer culture in Italy, 1945-1965* (2020), the scholar analyses the relationship between film promotion and economy in Italy, showing some production behaviours adopted by the Italian film industry. His multidisciplinary approach and his thorough study of the framework provide a basic mode of analysis for the study of modes of production.

Gundle's many studies of the aspects of Italian life after WWII have been important in the investigation of the film industry. In his book *Between Hollywood and Moscow* (2000), he depicts and describes the cultural life of the country through its political history. Specifically, Gundle focuses on the history of Communism in Italy: how it evolved; changed; and influenced the nation and the population from its rise after WWII until its decline, in the 1990s. What Gundle stresses from the beginning of his book, is how Italy underwent a huge process of development, from the end of the war, that profoundly changed the country, both geographically and socially. Through his explanation of the changes in the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its transformations into a mass political party, the evolution of the entire country is addressed, making this a pivotal text for the study of the film industry. As Gundle recalls (Ibid., p. 22-23), "Fascism had undoubtedly been a parasitic and deeply regressive phenomenon, a block in many ways to national development," but it was also the supporter of "a phase of capitalistic reorganisation in Italy that lay the basis for the assumption of new interventionist functions in the economy and in society on the part of the state." Gundle further refers to the construction of new institutions "that controlled a state voluntary sector, administered welfare, organised recreation, and produced and diffused news and entertainment by electronic means." This subsequently meant a more powerful and organised state, that tried to reorganise a country still characterised by pre-modern forms of production and labour.

The political, cultural, and social restoration Italy went through after the Second World War saw the development of cinema as the main entertainment activity. This happened also thanks to Hollywood and the new laws in Italy that allowed US products to massively pervade the national market. As Gundle points out (Ibid., 33), "Hollywood did not only educate and amuse. [...] it paved the way for the future incorporation of ever wider strata into a pattern of consensus in which entertainment and material life were closely related aspects of a new model of society that had the consumption of goods as its primary rule of social conduct." And it did this through the transmission of the American way of life, ideas, fashion and more

modern models of personal interaction. The strong impact the US had on Italian popular culture was evident in the growth of new forms of communication, such as film magazines. Through the development, diffusion and reception of the PCI, Stephen Gundle underlines the ways in which Italian society changed during the post-war era, and how political life was intertwined and influenced by social life. He provided a strong basis for the comprehension of the context in which the Italian film industry of the analysed time operated.

The party had always been divided into two contrasting opposites: an extreme preference towards the film produced by communist directors, versus the “indulgence shown toward popular tastes” (Ibid., p. 67). This desire to reach the population and its tastes culminated in the beauty contests of the 1950s. The most famous was the one organised by “Vie Nuove”, the magazine tied to the PCI and founded in the second half of the 1940s. As Gundle points out (Ibid.), these contests “constituted a striking example of how the rituals and aspirations engendered by Hollywood were absorbed by the Communist subculture”, and served both for attracting young people to the party and providing a way for involving intellectuals (who generally officiated the panel of judges). This is clearly demonstrated by the presence of film stars on the front cover, instead of Communist leaders, and advertisements for beauty products inside the magazine. With regards to the changes that invaded the country, and how they mirrored the transformation of the media and the spread of images associated with North America, the scholar focuses on the years following WWII from several points of view. Gundle addresses the political aspects, the complexity of the social and cultural landscape, and the division between labour time and leisure time in Italian life. It is necessary for Gundle to approach these different interlayers of Italian society, in order to examine as thoroughly as possible, the enormous variations the country underwent after the end of the war.

From a different perspective, in his *Sophia Loren, Italian Icon* (2004), Gundle describes Italian society under a different light. Referring to Hollywood as a basis for comparison, Gundle presents an argument of how Italy was changing due in large part to American films on the screens, and also the presence of American troops in the cities after Liberation. As a result of this combined influence, beauty contests began to spread and become commonplace competitions, that allowed participants the hope of being noticed and discovered by producers and directors. Only few women succeeded, like Gina Lollobrigida, Lucia Bosè, or Eleonora Rossi Drago; but “these rare cases further fuelled the aspirations of those who saw in cinema one of the few means of escape from poverty and drudgery” (Ibid., p. 80). Gundle examines this argument in depth in his article *Feminine Beauty, National Identity and Political Conflict in Post-war Italy, 1945-1954* (1999). He discusses conceptions

of beauty and how they changed over time, while also taking into account the role these contests had in presenting an eroticised body that was more popular and appealing to the working classes.

It is thanks to one of these contests that Sophia Loren was noticed and became famous. Through the illustration of the actress' career, the author chronicles the circumstances of the Italian film industry and of the film market. It is not a coincidence that Sophia Loren, and, like her, many other actresses, like Gina Lollobrigida, Anna Magnani, Silvana Mangano, for example, went to work in Hollywood for a while. This demonstrates two specific elements: the American market and film industry were widely considered the arrival point for a successful career, a destination necessary for worldwide recognition; Hollywood was the only real authority in dictating global popular taste. Furthermore, due to its pervasive presence, and the influence it had all over the world, the American film industry was an authentic aspiration. However, Gundle (Ibid., p. 84) notices that "Americans liked to think of Italian actresses as the main natural resource of a hopelessly backward country", but what they did not realise was that in the 1950s the Italian cinema industry was not the same as the one they knew after the war. They began to understand the power of this industry at their own expense. Indeed, domestic demand was expanding, resulting in a rapid growth that started to challenge even Hollywood in the international market. As Gundle points out (Ibid., p. 94), Sophia Loren's career perfectly symbolises the evolution of the film industry in Italy, and could help in showing some important shifts, wishes and aspirations of Italian cinema. She is "the star who most successfully embodies the desire for a break with the past, for economic progress and social mobility." However, during the 1950s the golden age of American cinema began to stall, as many people started to spend their free time engaging in activities other than film-going, causing a decrease in theatrical turnouts. In Italy the opposite was found to be true. Hence, it is not a coincidence that "for Italians Hollywood remained the unrivalled dream factory. Home-produced films might often be more popular, but America continued to be viewed as the centre of true cinema for which all else was but a substitute."

When discussing cinema as an industry, it is necessary to take into account that one of its main parts, and sources of profit, is the star system. Although Cristina Jandelli's book concentrates more on American stars and the Hollywood star system,²⁰ *Breve Storia del Divismo Cinematografico* (2007) traces a history of the actor and how this role developed over the course of time in Italy as well. The notions surrounding the concept of what an actor

²⁰ For a study of the star system, see Powdermaker (1951), Gomery (1985), Anderson (1994), Camerino (2000), McDonald (2000).

was changed considerably in Italy before, during and after Neorealism. The scholar draws attention to the importance for an actress/actor to respect their film role in their life as well, thus stressing the correlation needed between off screen and on-screen life.

Although it is essentially a long list of all the production companies in Italy from 1930 to 1995, one of the most interesting and useful texts found, in the existing literature, is *Cinema Italiano 1930-1995. Le imprese di produzione* (Bernardini, 2000). It provides necessary information, such as date and places of foundation, corporation stocks, the years of the first and the last films released, as well as the number of films produced. All these data have been useful in creating a specific list of all the production companies that were established between 1945 and 1959. This has been a crucial resource in terms of knowing how many companies were founded, and the duration of their working history. Through reading this text edited by Aldo Bernardini it was discovered that, more than half of the production companies in Italy lasted for only one year and produced no more than one film. All these facts point to a typical trend at the time: many production companies were founded in order to make only one film. Moreover, it is not unusual to find recurring names when looking at producers. This shows that many producers used to differentiate their investments in more than one company. It is not clear, yet, if that depended on fiscal pressures or, on the contrary, on the benefits the State used to give to new productions.

Being a producer himself, Valentino Brosio's manual has proven to be a very useful source, with regards to forming a better understanding of producers, and their work, in the 1950s. In his 1956 *Manuale del Produttore di Film*, Brosio accurately describes the cinematographic industry of the time and its organisation, illustrating the peculiarities of the Italian film industry and all the elements necessary to the realisation of a film. His extensive details cover everything from the technical to the artistic films, and from the people to the studios needed. The second part of the book concentrates on production, and covers details concerning estimated expenses of the shooting indoors and outdoors. All the professional figures involved in a film are described, as well as tips given on how to treat each of them in order to allow production to continue smoothly until the end. In this manual, Brosio also includes facsimiles of documents relevant to a producer's needs, such as examples of schedules. Moreover, he gives information on how the *minimo garantito* (i.e., guaranteed minimum) worked, how to obtain it, and also the rules on hiring people or filling in the production documents. Although it is a manual with practical information and advice on how to conduct oneself during a film production, the *Manuale del Produttore di Film* outlines a very detailed idea of how the Italian film industry used to work, and the work that was undertaken by the producer. Thus, it is possible to identify some of the paths followed by producers during their

career, paths that are able to be followed backwards in order to discover information about films in comparative studies. Despite the lack of film production analysis in 1950s Italy, books such as the autobiographies and the *Manuale* listed above, can indeed all be added to the research, as the lesser known and more isolated information they provide, enlighten the literature and offer glimpses into the more hidden aspects of a producer's life and work.

1.4 Specific case studies

Finally, there are some books and articles which offer specific case studies, and others that do not relate directly to the industrial aspects of Italian cinema, regardless of this, it is still possible to find out interesting and useful information. By presenting specific examples and analysing them in depth, these texts help in providing new approaches and points of view, for the analysis of both the general context and future case studies of newly founded companies. The first of these texts is *Titanus: Cronaca Familiare del Cinema Italiano*, by Sergio M. Germani, Simone Starace and Roberto Turigliatto (2014). Here the authors present and discuss the history of one of the most famous and enduring production companies: Titanus. Having survived for more than a century, Titanus is an essential part of Italian cinema history. Founded during the first years of the Twentieth century, and with its two studios, the period of most intense activity can be set “between 1945 and 1964, when Titanus almost produced one hundred films” (Ibid., 19). The company also had a distribution branch. The scholars retrace the activities of the company and use its history as a sort of memory of all the Italian cinema industry's evolutions and facets. Their account of Titanus's transformations and changes throughout the entire century, and the involvement of important personalities of the time in its activities, are, indeed, necessary to represent and describe the modifications Italian cinema underwent in the company's history. The scholars also discuss the successes and failures of the company and address its attempts at modernising production policy after the failures of previously outdated economic strategies. The Lombardo family, who owned Titanus, understood the necessity to re-align a productive strategy that focussed on three main directions during the 1950s: “First, on the internal level, to safeguard the most closely-protected traditions of cinema; [...] Second, on the European level [...] since still today, it is the films created through coproduction that obtain the greatest moral and economic success;

[...] and third, direction is one that leads into the difficult world of American cinema” (Ibid., p. 68). They see the importance and necessity of offering the public European films, while at the same time, providing more spectacular products that appealed to the American market.

Another text that critically discusses the role and work of Titanus in detail is Francesco Di Chiara’s *Generi e industria cinematografica in Italia. Il caso Titanus (1949-1964)* (2013). Francesco Di Chiara’s book is a very useful model of a more in-depth analysis of the company’s marketing and production strategies, which allowed the Lombardo family to operate successfully for as long as they did. Providing information about the structure of the company, as well as its creations, the author depicts a segment of the Italian cinema industry, and offers a template into how to approach such a specific subject without extrapolating it from its context. The author concentrates on the golden age of the company, from the years of the first big success following the war, *Catene* (Matarazzo, 1949), to the closure of the company’s production branch. Di Chiara focuses above all the industrial dynamics and the systems that were applied by the company, on the genres produced and on the popular movies that allowed Titanus to grow up and expand. Through a clear subdivision in two parts (the first is dedicated to the history of the company and the second on the genres produced that allowed the company to create a ‘house style’ based on melodrama and comedy), the scholar not only presents Titanus and its creations, but also relates them to contextual socio-historical dynamics. Moreover, he points out (Ibid., p. 11) how the company tried to adapt its productions to the necessities of the public by dividing it into three sectors. Titanus identified three types of works, differentiating them by budget and target audiences: “the most ambitious works for the circuits of big cities; the medium level movies with a discrete spectacular impact; and the low budget products for second and third run cinemas.” In doing so, the author first of all represents the influence Hollywood majors had on one of the most important firms in Italy. For example, prestigious movies with high budgets, titles that can be identified with the company style of production, and B-movies. He then offers a thorough investigation of the relationship the company had with a series of phenomena that deeply influenced the cultural life of the time; for instance neorealist cinema, music and song festivals, variety shows, and the popular genre *commedia all’italiana*.

The historical excursus of the production company lends to the discussion of some of Titanus’ collaborations and collaborators, and, also of some of its competitors, the most important of which was Lux Film. Titanus’ management considered Lux film as the most important model to follow within the Italian production scenario so much so that they would “imitate some of its strategies, to pinch part of its aesthetics, and, above all, to bait part of

its artistic and managerial personnel" (Ibid., p. 47). In this way, Di Chiara shows a portion of the industrial landscape related to cinema business, and gives prevalence to the changes the company underwent in order to survive, and the innovations it introduced for genres and models produced throughout the 1950s and part of the 1960s. It is important to remember, as Di Chiara indirectly shows, that having some knowledge of the industry's background is fundamental in understanding the conduct of production companies particularly with regards to the several difficulties that are common to most companies. By balancing these aspects, the author gives a complete overview of the context in which Titanus operated, whilst also offering insights into the company's profile, and production efforts.

Returning to the genres produced by Titanus, the most prolific by far was melodrama. However, melodrama cannot be related only to this production company. Melodramas, in fact, were the most popular products of the 1950s, as Pierre Sorlin claims (1995), and, although not all of the movies were successful, it can be said that "none were a flop" (Ibid., p. 350). It is interesting to notice, as Sorlin does, that in these movies "actors, directors, producers, and technicians were generally the same, the titles were comparable, the producers themselves did not differ". This is a key statement. With it, he underlines one important feature of the industry (the presence of recurring names within the industry) which will be examined below through specific case studies.²¹ The presence of recurring names not only among producers, but also among actors, members of the crew and other collaborators, is an interesting observation, and one which will be given further consideration with the case of Aldo Fabrizi and all the people who worked with him in the movies he produced. Sorlin states that the melodrama genre had such great success due to its representation of family stories and everyday life. Through an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the melodrama, its protagonists, and its stories, Sorlin (Ibid., p. 352) also illustrates 1950s Italy, and the roles women and men had within society. It is not by chance, though, that the author writes: "melodrama is not merely a sentimental pleasure, it is also a pretext for role-playing." This is the genre that made Italian cinema's fortune during the middle of the century, the category that enabled the companies to compete with their American competitors.

A text which is not directly related to the analysis of film production, but is also worthy of consideration, is Francesco Alliata's autobiography (2015). In this book, Francesco Alliata offers a detailed account of his experience as a producer. He founded a film production

²¹ This important feature does not belong to the melodrama genre only, in fact the case studies investigated mostly belong to genres such as comic films and comedies.

company, called Panaria Film in Sicily, and his experience is important in the history of film production, as it represents one of the small, independent companies active during the 1950s. The most interesting aspects is represented by the fact that Panaria Film, Francesco Alliata and Pietro Moncada's production company, were based in Palermo, a city located far from the centre of the Italian cinema world, such as Rome, and other important cities like Milan, Turin or Naples. Panaria Film is an example of a small company that for several years produced some documentaries and a film with Anna Magnani: *Volcano* (*Vulcano*, Dieterle, 1950). Through his reports, insights are given into how the film industry worked in a different area of the country, and how much it was bound to the "central" Rome. The focal point of the industry, in fact, was always Rome and its studios, so it is difficult to find many other companies outside the "historical nodes of film production", to use Ravazzoli's words (2014, p. 151).

Another biographical book which assists in retracing parts of the events and practices of producers and production companies of the 1950s, is Tullio Kezich and Alessandra Levantesi's *Dino De Laurentiis, la vita e i film* (2001). Although it covers Dino De Laurentiis' entire life, through the analysis of some of his life experiences and works, it is possible to trace the labour and activities of some Italian film production companies and their involvement within the film industry. It is also thanks to his reports that it is possible to find links between one of the most important Italian companies, Lux Film, and those who used to work there as independent producers within the company. Despite the fact that Dino De Laurentiis was a free-lance economic agent, he soon became one of the most important representatives of Lux Film and of the field in general. His history, and his stories are revealing and well informed, providing a broad understanding into several aspects of the lives of producers. His first collaborations with Lux show how he, and many others, learned to be producers on-the-job and to manage a film production on their own. Many producers, in fact, came from the Lux 'managerial school', had started to work on Lux productions, and then decided to move on and establish their own companies. Dino De Laurentiis, Carlo Ponti, Giovanni d'Amico, Luigi Rovere, Valentino Brosio and Antonio Mambretti are just a few names that Lux Film includes among its independent producers. This demonstrates that many of the big names of the time underwent their training and gained much experience at Gualino's Lux Film before establishing their own companies and productions.

Undeniably, the role of the producer deserves its space, too, as she/he is one of the most important persons of the productive chain. A text that offers a perspective of the life of producers in Italy is Stefano Della Casa's *Capitani Coraggiosi. Produttori Italiani 1945-1975*

(2003). As the former Director of the Venice International Film Festival, Moritz de Hadeln (Ibid., p. 9), says in the introduction, the book was based on one single question: “If Italian cinema of the 50s and 60s was second only to American cinema, why is this no longer the case today?” Although this starting question is not what this research is interested in, the book offers some very stimulating thoughts and elements that are worthy of consideration. Through a series of interviews with producers, directors, and actors, Stefano Della Casa retraces the working lives of many protagonists of the time, such as Carlo Ponti, Dino De Laurentiis, and Luigi Rovere. Moreover, he includes in-depth explanations and analysis of the Corona Law²² and the *minimo garantito*,²³ two very important aspects to discuss when conducting research on cinema production in Italy during the 1950s and the 1960s.

Another section worthy of note, is the analysis of the figure of the producer. Here the producer is described as being represented between what they really were and how they appeared in newspapers and the words of others, such as screenwriters, directors, and directors of photography. The book is also enriched by anecdotes and personal memories from producers discussing in first-hand important events and life experiences first-hand. The text is useful primarily because of these previously unpublished personal interviews, of famous and prolific producers, who worked from the end of the Second World War to the mid-1970s. Secondly, as previously mentioned, it has a critical approach that attempts to investigate the reasons why Italian cinema was so famous and prolific. It is a valid supporting text of the time, and also a starting point for finding new paths of research.

All the texts assist above will help in defining, contextualising, and researching the Italian film industry after the Second World War, and during the Fifties. This was a period dense with enormous transformations from not just historical, but also economic, and anthropological points of view. Italy emerged as a completely new country with changes observable in every sphere of existence, as can also be appreciated through the visual representations in the cinema of the time. The specific case studies, the textual analyses, the general historical texts, and the books and papers chosen, have all been included in spite of the fact that not all of them directly address the analyse the production system, however, they are helpful in providing a focus on the general context and in highlighting the many

²² It was the new cinema law made in 1965. It established a new set of legal measures on behalf of cinematography.

²³ “The minimum guarantee system meant that the distributors took part in film production by investing capital in the form of cheques or bills of exchange, which they would recoup with box-office earnings. The minimum guarantee was, broadly speaking, an estimate of takings, at least in the Italian market. The producer’s, distributor’s and exhibitor’s percentages were estimated on net takings—equal to gross takings minus government taxes and VAT. The distributor took a percentage of the net takings from the cinema, and then had to deduct the share that the producer had agreed to give him to cover the cost of distribution and risk” (Nicoli 2017, 70%).

details that contribute to a complete historical investigation. Obviously, the most useful texts are the ones in which the Italian film industry is studied more extensively, however, they are rare and related to specific case studies or much broader contexts. Nonetheless, they are all helpful in providing an invaluable general historical knowledge, and in setting relevant guidelines of how to proceed with the research. Even so, what is missing is a detailed study of defined periods from a productive point of view that tackles the infrastructure and methods for the realisation of films. It is what this dissertation aims to do, by creating a bridge between two fundamental and widely discussed moments: the second half of the 1940s and the advent of Neorealism, and the golden age of the Italian cinema.

Chapter 2

Film industry analysis: methodology

All the texts and studies mentioned in chapter 1 are necessary for a contextual analysis of the complex circumstances that characterise the post-war Italian film industry. What happened in the second half of the 1940s had important repercussions on the cinema of the 1950s, which at the same time strongly influenced the decade of the golden age of Italian cinema. It is obviously a chain reaction that started with the first Italian production companies founded at the beginning of the last century, such as the Itala Film or the Ambrosio Film for example. Their establishment, their movies, their way of producing paved the way for the entire industry, laying the foundations for what came after. The first Italian production companies and the ones founded in the 1940s and 1950s have more common traits than one might think. In fact, the film industry I am going to analyse, only slightly differs from the industry of the cinema of the origins, as will be demonstrated later. A great number of companies founded between 1945 and 1959 recall the fragmented system of the past, and the collection of information (for both periods) is still today difficult and piecemeal. There are no unitary anthologies nor comprehensive archives that provide thorough data. The research, as the entire film industry environment, is uneven and provides small and brief information. Thus, in order to find paths and fields of action, several sources and multiple connections must be comprehended, and sometimes even though something may seem far from the actual research, it provides crucial results for the comprehension and explanation of the film industry.

Thus, in order to analyse the context of Italian cinema and its productions after the Second World War, I have begun by analysing production studies and cultural studies regarding Hollywood. In this way, I have identified the most common and useful methods of analysis to apply to the Italian film industry. Secondly, I studied the general framework of 1940s and 1950s Italy (with constant references to the past), both from an historical and an industrial perspective, thus following Powdermaker's teaching of inscribing the Italian phenomenon (in this case) within the boundaries of Italy. It helped in outlining the difficult condition in which Italians were living, and the problematic economic situation of the nation, sketching a country which was suffering and trying to survive. This environment is what gave the country strength to grow, and the ground upon which the industry developed. Therefore, not only is an influence undeniable, but it must be also considered as a major issue for the Italian film industry. Moreover, these studies have been useful in identifying behavioural patterns followed by the general industry that could be traced in the film industry, such as the predominant presence of small and medium companies, located in specific areas of the country. The intent was to find threads that could insert Italian cinema within the framework of an industrial system that had rules to follow. The Italian film industry attempted to follow Hollywood's steps, above all the most solid firms, which tried to create a local star system based on actresses, organised high-profile promotional campaigns for their most important movies, and paid attention to the audience's tastes (Di Chiara, 2013, p. 25). However, except for these few examples, the Italian film industry also had other guidelines settled by the many small and medium companies with a limited life that crowded the field.

In order to analyse this group of small and medium production companies, I have begun by considering four main sources: Aldo Bernardini (2000), the list of films collected by the journalist and screenwriter Vinicio Marinucci (1959),²⁴ the Bolaffi catalogue (Rondolino, 1967),²⁵ and the database of cinematografo.it. Bernardini's book is the first source consulted, very exhaustive regarding all the production companies founded between 1930 and 1995, from which I extrapolated those firms established from 1945 to 1959. Marinucci's book, the second source, was useful for the complete list of films released between 1945 and 1958, together with the names of the corresponding production companies that produced them. The third resource, the Bolaffi catalogue, was used for the 1959 films since Marinucci's catalogue includes entries up to 1958. Finally, cinematografo.it was chosen since it is reliable source of historical information, as it reports the films released with all their technical details:

²⁴ Variables that have been collected by Marinucci are: movie title; production; director; actors – from 1945 to 1958.

²⁵ Only the year 1959 has been taken into consideration from the catalogue.

its database was used for comparing information, as they can be filtered by film title, cast, genre, production, and distribution. Indeed, cinematografo.it is the website of magazine “La Rivista del Cinematografo”, the cinema magazine of the Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, which was very famous and commonly read after the war.

After the analysis of the general socio-economic context of 1950s Italy treated in section 2.1, starting from section “2.2 Film Industry: general context” of this chapter, I present a dataset of all the companies that were founded at that time. It portrays the first trend of the industry, by giving an idea of how lively, variable, and unstable it was. In order to do so, I analysed Bernardini’s list, and extrapolated all the companies founded between 1945 and 1959. After that, I am going to concentrate on the movies produced in the same period (which were both productions released by one company or by two or more companies – co-productions) basing my research on two main sources: Vinicio Marinucci’s catalogue of films and the Bolaffi catalogue. It is important to mention here that sometimes there are differences among data from Bernardini’s book, Marinucci’s catalogue and the Bolaffi catalogue, and that some of the production companies appear with more than one foundation date and city. This could depend on the fact that the companies moved from one city to another, or that the foundation date and year of the first film produced do not correspond. Sometimes, this multiple information is collected within the same source.

To overcome these inconsistencies and properly analyse the companies, I have chosen to base my data collection on the first date available. In some cases, the same company had two foundation years (due to the moving to another city), and if the first date was set before 1945, my choice was oriented to the second one,²⁶ if during this time lapse (between the two foundation years) the production companies had not released movies.²⁷ Moreover, when analysing the movies, I have taken under consideration all the films cited in Marinucci’s book and in the Bolaffi catalogue, even if some of them were re-edited or released with another title. For example, *Gli amanti di domani (Gli amici di domani)*,²⁸ or *Donne, danni e diamanti*

²⁶ This is the case, for example, of S.A.C.I.T.E.R. (founded in 1942 in Rome, that was re-founded and re-located in Turin in 1946), and A.T.A. – Artisti Tecnici Associati sa (founded in 1937 in Milan, and then relocated in Rome in 1948).

²⁷ This happened for S.I.L.A. – Società Italiana Lanci Artistici spa, founded in 1941 in Rome, and produced just one movie in 1951.

²⁸ In Marinucci’s book (1959), the film is present in 1956 under two titles:

Gli amanti di domani – French and Italian co-production: Les Films Marceaux – Laetitia; directed by: Luis Buñuel; actors: Lucia Bosè, Georges Marchal, Julien Bertheau, Gianni Esposito, Nelly Borgeaud, Simone Paris.

Gli amici di domani – French and Italian co-production: Les Films Marceaux – Laetitia Film; directed by: Luis Buñuel; actors: Georges Marchal, Lucia Bosè, Nelly Borgeaud, Gianni Esposito, Julien Bertheau, Henri Nassiet, Simone Paris, Brigitte Elloy, Gaston Modot.

(*Il maggiorato fisico*).²⁹ This was a usual occurrence with co-productions. Indeed, on several occasions, there have been films that present more than one production company in the credits (thus a co-production). Sometimes the companies listed had different nationalities, but often they were all Italians. In this case I mention the films under the heading “Italian co-productions.”³⁰ This group only includes those films that feature at least two Italian production companies in the credits, and not those where foreign companies were involved.

Data analysis

In the two chapters that follow (chapters 2 and 3), I analyse the data collected during the research. I concentrate specifically on the film industry, how it was built, how many new companies were founded, and how they were distributed on the territory. A relevant section of these chapters will concentrate on the dimensions these companies had, how they affected the industry and its productions, which genres they released, and how they were influenced by the historical context in which they acted. For this reason, the first part of chapter 2 is dedicated to the historical framework, and focuses on presenting the context in which these companies were founded and operated in. It is important to understand some behaviours within production, as it will explain why it is possible to observe growths and declines both in the releasing of movies and in the foundation of new firms.

Gli amici di domani is present neither in cinematografo.it database, nor in *Dizionario del cinema italiano* by Roberto Poppi (2007).

²⁹ *Donne, danni e diamanti* – French and Italian co-production: Transalpina – Dismage; directed by: Pierre Chevalier; actors: Eddie Constantine, Maria Frau, Francois Perrot, Furio Meniconi, Luisa Rivelli (1955).

Il maggiorato fisico – French and Italian co-production: Transalpina – Dismage; directed by: Pierre Chevalier; actors: Eddie Constantine, Maria Frau, Luisa Rivelli, Nadine Tallier, François Perrot, Yorick Royan, René Blancard (1957).

The film is present in the database and in the *Dizionario* (2007) with the title *Il maggiorato fisico*. In both the second title is mentioned.

³⁰ The term was taken from Gyory and Glas (1992), who divide co-productions into national and international co-productions when talking about specific countries, i.e. Austria.

2.1 The socio-economic context

After the Second World War, the situation of the country was very complex and problematic. Working-class living conditions were dire; according to the data reported by Ginsborg (2003, pp. 79-80), several hundreds of thousands of people were “homeless and basic foodstuffs were in very short supply...the situation in the rural area was also aggravated by the temporary overpopulation caused by mass emigration from the cities.” Inflation multiplied almost twenty-three times between 1938 and 1945, but wages on the contrary, increased only half that amount. Due to the return of men from imprisonment in German camps, the rate of unemployment augmented drastically, and by 1947 Italian unemployment figures increased from 750,000 to 1.6 million. In 1945, industrial production was less than one third of that of 1938, and the industry was made of small, artisan organisations, mostly concentrated “in sectors with high “artistic” content” (Colli, 2011, p. 191). This was a peculiarity of the Italian film industry even before the war. The system was indeed made on the one hand of (a few) big companies helped by the Government; while on the other hand, of independent firms that contributed to the affirmation of specific sectors, such as the food or textile industries. This “dialectical confrontation between small companies in light sectors and big concentration in capital intensive sectors [...] brings oscillating results” (Ibid., p. 192), with seasons of extreme vitality for the small enterprises and others in which the market privileges big businesses. However, this duality created a sort of successful mix that allowed the country to reach a remarkable development in a few years, and a relevant position in Europe from the 1950s. After the period of severe needs that followed the war, Italy started to recover, thanks also to the American financial support.³¹ The U.S. administration “designated \$176m of ‘Interim Aid’ to Italy in the first three months of 1948. After that, the Marshall Plan³² entered into full operation” (Ginsborg, 2003, p. 115).

The first half of the 1950s was characterised by social unrest. The agrarian reform represented a first attempt to help the rural poor population (Ibid.). The Christian Democrats,

³¹ According to the historian Silvio Lanaro, the damage after the war was calculated to be 3,200 billion lire, the industrial apparatus underwent few problems, while the iron and steel industry and agriculture suffered heavy damages. The black market was favoured by food rationing all over Italy, unemployment increased, and the cost of living was calculated to be twenty times higher in 1946 than in 1938. Moreover, in 1945 the national income was 51.9% of the total in 1938. This was the situation in which Italians were living right after the end of the war (Lanaro, 1996, pp. 11-12).

For an analysis of the Marshall Plan, see: Best, Hanhimaki, Maiolo and Schulze (2008); Selva (2004).

³² The Marshall Plan for Italy was part of a broader (political-economic) Recovery Plan that the U.S.A. had implemented for the recovery and restoration of Europe.

which reached power in 1948, ignited the realisation of several public works in the South in order to decrease unemployment rates. The North, with its industries, helped the country to financially recover and give new fuel to the general economy of the nation. The so called “industrial districts” (a group of small and medium companies located in a geographically defined area, a socio-economic system where the local territory and forces are crucial)³³ began to spread in Italy, giving resonance and power to small and medium firms that were able to rebuild the strength of the Italian industrial system.³⁴ In this period, Italy was struggling and craving to become one of the most developed and wealthiest countries in Europe.³⁵ Lifestyles began to change, and the main purpose of the decade was mass consumerism. All these changes also led to the triumph of mass tourism, which was well represented even in cinema.³⁶

However, in the mid-1950s agriculture was still the largest sector of employment,³⁷ and people started to emigrate: from the South to the North of Italy³⁸ and Europe or even to the American continent.³⁹ “Within Italy itself, the Industrial Triangle” (represented by Milan, Turin, and Genoa), “exercised only a limited pull in these years, mainly upon the rural populations of Lombardy, Piedmont and the Veneto” (Ibid., p. 212). Nevertheless, the late 1950s was also the period that led to the ‘Economic Miracle’. In the juncture of 1958-1963 the Gross Domestic Product had an average annual increase of 6.3 per cent, and investments in industrial plants and machines grew by an average of 14 per cent per annum. According to Ginsborg (Ibid., p. 215), it was due to several factors: “the entrepreneurial skills of the owners of the new Italian firms, their ability to finance themselves in the early 1950s, their willingness to adapt new techniques and to renovate their plant continuously, their exploitation of the

³³ For a definition and an explanation of the phenomenon on a general level, see: Alfred Marshall (1919).

³⁴ For a study of the Italian industrial districts, see: Becattini (1979, pp. 7-21); Becattini (1989, pp. 111-128); Becattini (1987); Schilirò (2017).

³⁵ According to the economist Giorgio Rodano (2018, p. 56), the growth of the real GDP in Italy was in excess of 5% per year, a result that put Italy among the most dynamic countries of Europe.

³⁶ For a deeper analysis of the phenomenon in cinema, see: Zinni (2016, pp. 125-135).

³⁷ “In the census of 1951 the category ‘agriculture, hunting and fishing’ accounted for 42.2 percent of the working population, and this figure rose to 56.9 per cent for the South” Ginsborg (2003, p. 2010).

³⁸ According to Rodano (2018, p. 58), between 1951 and 1971 Italians involved in interregional migration were more than 10 million.

³⁹ Between 1946 and 1957, emigration towards north Europe saw Italians leaving for France (381,000), Switzerland (202,000) and Belgium (159,000). Similarly, “the numbers of those leaving Italy for the New World exceeded by 1,100,000 the number of those returning: 380,000 had remained in Argentina, 166,500 in Canada, 166,000 in the USA, 138,000 in Australia and 128,000 in Venezuela” (Ginsborg, 2003, p. 211).

low cost of labour and its high productivity, the absence until the late sixties of any significant trade union organisation.”

To fully understand the growth of Italy in this period, it is necessary to briefly mention some key issues that describe the changes that characterised the socio-economic context of the time. It was registered that the gross domestic product grew more than 5% each year (Rodano, 2018). The national income went from 8,887 billion lire in 1954 to 20,760 billion lire in 1963,⁴⁰ while the income per capita went from 404,000 to 868,000 lire (De Meo, 1965, p. 129). The wealth of the country doubled, and a big change can be seen in the industrial system that left the borders of the Industrial Triangle, and started to spread to other areas of the country. The government too played a fundamental role in the economy of the country. It all started before the war, in 1933 with the foundation of IRI, the Institute for the Industrial Reconstruction. However, even if after WWII the rules of the industrial policy of the 1930s were disowned (cartels, controls over plants, autarchic guidelines), the government has maintained its form of “Entrepreneur State [Stato Imprenditore], and indeed strengthened with the establishment of new financial societies in the framework of IRI” (Amatori and Colli, 2016, p. 234). Some examples of these include, Finmeccanica (1948), Finelettrica (1952), Fincantieri (1959), and the creation of FIM (capital for the financing of the mechanical industry) in 1947 (Ibid.). However, although the government apparently disowned the industrial legacy from the Fascist era, the whole “industrial reconstruction plan” revolved around IRI, which was the prototypical Fascist industrial creation, with a very similar purpose.

One of the most important things Italy needed was independence in production and energy, which is what Enrico Mattei wanted to achieve with the foundation of ENI⁴¹ (the national hydrocarbons company). All these developments in the life of the nation and in people’s living conditions led to the era of improvements known as the Economic Miracle.

⁴⁰ The data is calculated according to the current prices pertaining to the publication year of the study. De Meo (1965, p. 138).

⁴¹ For a better understanding of the role of ENI, Mattei, Esso, consumerism, and union-based welfare in Italy, see: Cavazza and Scarpellini (2010); Agnoletto (2012).

2.2 Film Industry: general context

After the Second World War, the Italian film industry also grew exponentially. More than seven hundred production companies were born between 1945 and 1959, according to the SIAE (Società Italiana Autori ed Editori – Italian Authors and Publishers’ society)⁴² data collected by Aldo Bernardini. There were precisely 770 companies, and half of them (52.34%) lasted only one year. Less than twenty were able to survive for more than twenty years. The situation continued to be similar to the 1930s film industry, when “instead of a strategy based on economies of scale and on consolidating production, the preferred course of action was to create a new company to obtain access to state aid more profitably” (Nicoli, 2017, 54%). Francesco Di Chiara (2013, p. 24-25), who studies the Italian cinema industry, divides the 1950s companies into two groups. The first one includes the more professional and most important firms that join ANICA (Italian National Association of Movie Industry Professionals), such as Lux Film, Titanus, Excelsa, Scalera, Vides, Romana Film, and those depending on big producers like Angelo Rizzoli, Carlo Ponti, Dino De Laurentiis. On the contrary, the second group is made of many small companies which produce no more than one movie per year, and survive thanks to government support. The geographical distribution of all these firms covered the entire Italian territory, from the North (with Milan and Turin) to the South (with Naples and Palermo), as can be seen in figure 1 below. However, the vast majority of companies were concentrated in Rome (613 out of 770) (figure 2), confirming the importance of the city as the capital of cinema in Italy.

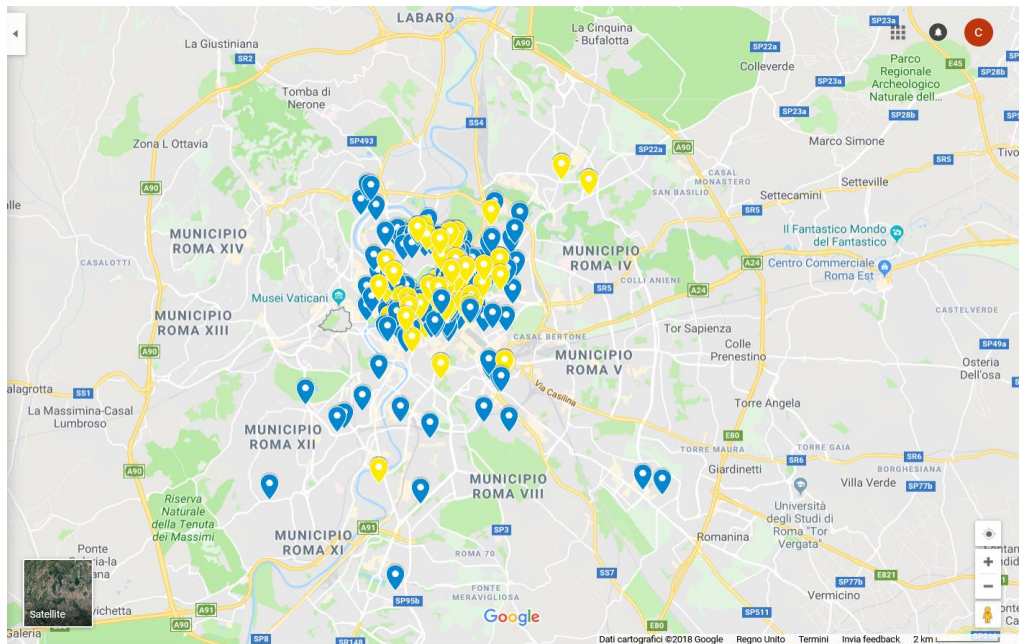
⁴² Founded in 1882, it is the Italian copyright collecting agency.

Figure 1. Distribution of new production companies in Italy



General overview of the production companies spread all over the country. Elaboration based on the information about the companies' addresses found in Bernardini. The blue dots represent the addresses where just one production company was present. On the contrary, the yellow dots represent the addresses in which more than one production company registered its legal residence, according to the source. Source: author's elaboration.

Figure 2. Distribution of new production companies in Rome



Concentration of production companies in Rome. The yellow dots represent the addresses in which more than one production company registered its legal residence, according to the source. Source: author's elaboration.

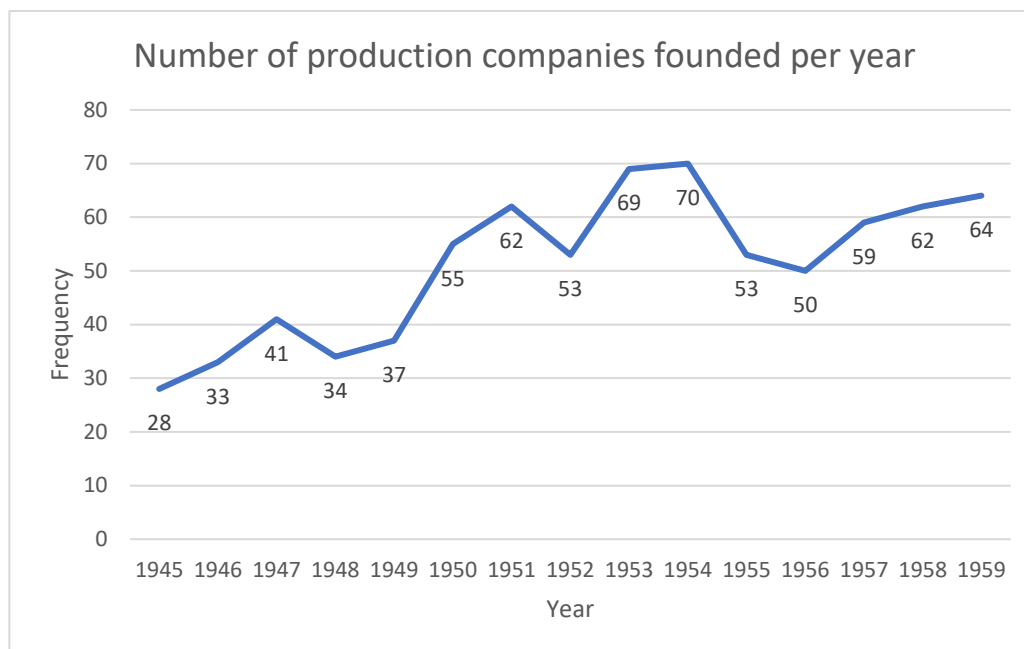
Moreover, it must not be forgotten that several other companies - founded before 1945 - were still active during this period. However, this fragmented panorama was not something unusual in the Italian cinema industry. Similar characteristics are noticeable in the development of cinema of the origins, as Marina Nicoli reports (2017), and this productive fragmentation continued to be a specificity of the Italian market even after the war. However, this situation can be compared to that of other European countries: in France, for example, during the 1930s “film-production companies came and went bankrupt with alarming rapidity and [...] it appeared impossible to achieve continuity in film production” (Forbes and Street, 2000, p. 35). The reasons Italy had such a divided landscape could have been many, both regarding the attempt of some ‘venture capitalists’ to enter and succeed in the field, as M. Nicoli states⁴³ recalling L. Rosten (1941) and H. Powdermaker’s (1951) studies on Hollywood and its capitalistic aspects,⁴⁴ and the problems related to the inadequacy of the industrial system. This latter case is what L. Bizzarri and L. Solaroli (1958) highlight when discussing the end of the 1950s, stressing the insufficient industrial possibilities of the Italian context, and the limited financial resources of the people who oriented their interest towards the cinema industry. This condition was not uncommon in the Italian industrial system in general. The opening towards international markets and the availability of innovative products and procedures coming from other countries changed the organization of firms after the war. Some of them aspired to modify their dimension, increasing their size. There were some cases of small companies which became medium and then big corporations, even though confirming the “historical peculiarity of the Italian industrial system, hinged on plenty of companies, often organised in districts” (Ciocca, 2020, pp. 242-243). In general, the number of companies grew, both overall and in relation to the number of those that closed. According to Pierluigi Ciocca (Ibid., 253), the S.p.A. (joint stock) companies were 27,000 in 1941, 18,000 in 1946 and exceeded 40,000 in 1963, at the same time doubling their corporation stock (considering inflation). The most important incentive for this growth came from “impetus for innovation a series of powers used on Italian producers: they were often new or improvised producers, former artisans and labourers animated by a desire of

⁴³ “Film industry ventures were for a long time synonymous with becoming millionaires in just a month; this deeply affected how trade journals judged the quality of Italian films, and influenced the definition of suitable censorship and control procedures. The Italian film industry seemed unable to shake off its reputation for improvisation and speculation that would lead to calls for “serious work to build the bases and re-create actors and directors, but, above all, to establish the film industry on technical, artistic and financial foundations”” (Nicoli, 2017, 15%).

⁴⁴ Both scholars highlighted how Hollywood workers were primarily motivated by money and profits. This aspect can be easily traced back in the Italian film industry when thinking about all those adventurers who tried to find their fortune in the cinema field. For a deeper analysis of the scholars’ studies, see Chapter 1.

liberation from war misery, spirit of sacrifice, ambition for a rapid enrichment and creativity” (Ibid., p. 249).

Chart 1. Number of production companies per year



Source: author’s elaboration.

Studying more in depth the evolution of the number of production companies founded per year (chart 1), it can be noticed that the birth of enterprises follows an irregular trend, that sees the number of firms growing right after the war.⁴⁵ However, this is not surprising as, during the first 25-30 years of the 20th century there were 570 film companies, and many of them were newly founded.⁴⁶ There was a decline right after the year 1947, confirmed by the analysis of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), the only body allowed to grant loans for the production of movies.⁴⁷ In the financial report of 1947, the cinema-dedicated section of the financial institution reported that during the year 1947, Italian cinema production “intensified its effort of recovery with particularly appreciated results, not only in the inner

⁴⁵ For a comparison of the number of films produced per year, see chart 2.

⁴⁶ According to M. Nicoli (2017), between 1905 and 1931, 570 companies were formed with an average corporation stock of 300,000 lire. In general, the number of active companies began growing from 1913 - the year that saw 49% newly formed companies, 39 of which were active, 19 were new. Moreover, Nicoli reports that between 1905 and 1915, new production companies sprang up at a rate of 48% (per year), with 40% of these surviving just one year.

⁴⁷ The BNL had a specific autonomous section since 1935, which supplied funds for financing films through the Sezione Autonoma per il Credito Cinematografico. This was independent from the bank, and had its own funds and administration.

market, but even abroad” (FSR, 1947). However, in the following year the reverse was registered: the cinema industry was in recession. National cinema activity had a “contraction in the production of new movies in relation to the previous management period” (FSR, 1948), evidenced by a decrease in the number of films produced, which dropped from 67 to 56.⁴⁸ This decrease will be discussed in further detail below, but for now it is worth noting that the decrease was then contrasted by a subsequent growth that brought one of the first peaks of the 1950s, comprising of 62 new firms in 1951.

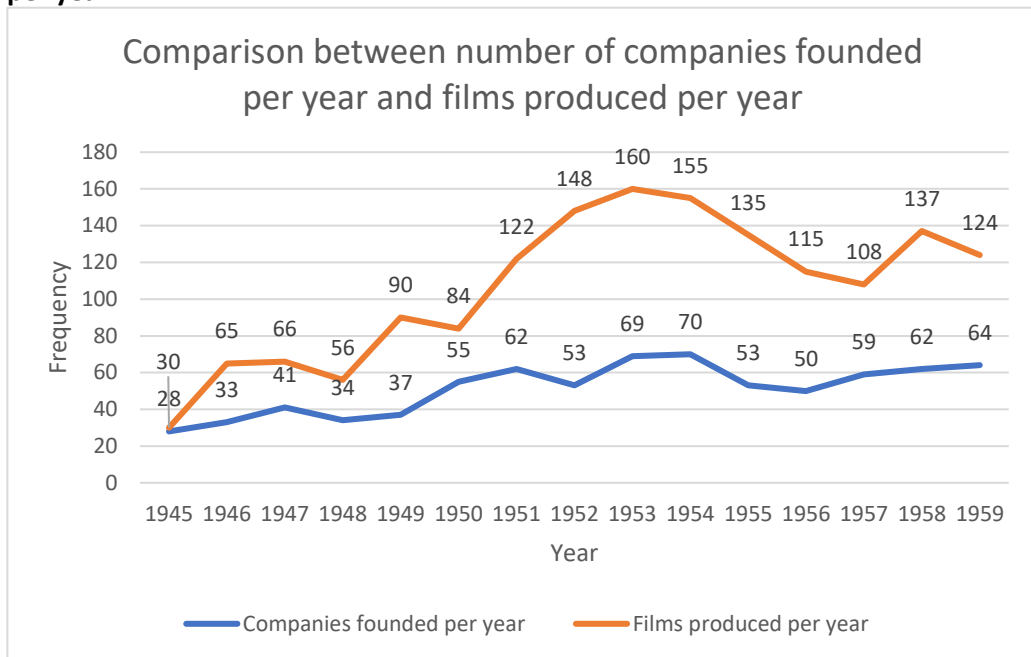
The highest peak of the period was reached in 1954 (with 70 new production companies),⁴⁹ data that confirms the previously noticed trend of the industry, which saw the highest number of movies produced in 1953 (see chart 1), and the highest number of cinema audiences attendance (Treveri Gennari, 2015; Treveri Gennari, *et al.*, 2011). Given the cinema industry was so dynamic and productive (and the general industrial sector constantly growing),⁵⁰ people from the cinema field and also from other areas such as industrialists, politicians, journalists, decided to invest more in this sector, by founding production companies and releasing movies. The one-year gap between the highest peaks in the number of films released and in that of the new firms founded, depends on the fact that the second data is strictly related to the increase in the production of movies. It is also important to note that this led later, to the establishment of new film companies.

⁴⁸ In 1947, 27 movies were financed by the Sezione Autonoma per il Credito Cinematografico; in 1948 there were 23.

⁴⁹ Famous companies like: D.D.L. spa by Dino De Laurentiis, Rizzoli Film by Angelo Rizzoli, Sveva Film srl by Roberto Rossellini, belong to this year.

⁵⁰ During the 1950s, Italy experienced a process of socio-economic development and the establishing of the industrial sector and the urban context. The opening of the country towards the international economy and the advent of a mass market determined a sudden increase in demand, and the necessity of new investments and industrial enlargement and improvement of plants. During this decade, all sectors, from iron and steel, to textile, chemicals, and mechanical industries, registered a substantial boost that influenced the entire country, and led to the economic boom of the 1960s. For a more detailed study of the topic, see Amatori and Colli (1999, p. 231-264).

Chart 2. Comparison between number of companies founded per year and films producer per year



Source: author's elaboration.

Table 1. Influence of the number of films produced over the foundation of new companies within a 2-year period

2-year period	Number of films	New companies
1946-1947	▲	▲
1947-1948	▲	▼
1948-1949	▼	▲
1949-1950	▲	▲
1950-1951	▼	▲
1951-1952	▲	▼
1952-1953	▲	▲
1953-1954	▲	▲
1954-1955	▼	▼
1955-1956	▼	▼
1956-1957	▼	▲
1957-1958	▼	▲
1958-1959	▲	▲

The table shows the increase or the decrease in the number of films released and new production companies founded during specific periods of two years. The years are staggered in order to show the correlation between the variables considered. The green symbol ▲ indicates an increase while the red one ▼ indicates a decrease.

Source: author's elaboration.

As shown in table 1, this phenomenon of interdependence can be observed also in other years, such as 1946-1947, 1949-1950, 1952-1953, 1953-1954 and 1958-1959. The opposite situation, in other words a decrease in the number of movies released and a consequent decline in the number of new firms founded the following year, can be registered in 1954-1955 and 1955-1956, the years of a deep crisis in the industry. The years that differ from this trend, show an inverse tendency in the relation to the two variables, are the two-year periods 1947-1948, 1948-1949, 1950-1951, 1951-1952, 1956-1957, and 1957-1958. These reveal three blocks of a three-year period inverse relation, as it can be seen from table 1, demonstrating the tight bond between movies released and the birth of new companies, and how much they influence each other.

It is not by chance, though, that there is a sort of three-year settlement period trend. For instance, analysis of the first arc 1947-1949, shows that between 1945 and 1946 an increase in the number of films produced followed the number of companies founded (30 movies and 28 companies in 1945, 65 movies and 33 companies in 1946). However, from 1947 to 1949 there is a decrease: 66 movies and 41 companies in 1947, 56 movies and 34 companies in 1948 and 90 movies and 37 companies in 1949. To an increase in the movies released in 1947 corresponded to an increase in the number of production companies founded in the same year (thus, according to the line of reasoning followed, it was based on the 1946 data, that saw an increase in the number of movies produced) but a decrease in 1948. Therefore, the films released in 1948 were fewer than those released the year before, but the companies increased a bit in 1949 (from 34 to 37). This led to an increase in the movies released in 1949. The two variables demonstrate being joined without the possibility of a lack of interaction.

Until now, I have assumed that the number of movies released influenced the number of new production companies founded the year that followed. However, the data can be also analysed from a reverse point of view, as it has been done in table 2. The number of new companies founded influenced the number of movies released one year later. This analysis sees a different pattern emerge, with a clear influence on the two variables over a 3-year period. According to table 2, it can be seen that the years in which the growth in, or the reduction of the number of companies and movies, are discordant, partly differ, and consist of 4-year periods.

Table 2. Influence of the number of new companies founded over the number of films produced within a 2-year period

2-year period	New companies	Number of films
1946-1947	▲	▲
1947-1948	▲	▼
1948-1949	▼	▲
1949-1950	▲	▼
1950-1951	▲	▲
1951-1952	▲	▲
1952-1953	▼	▲
1953-1954	▲	▼
1954-1955	▲	▼
1955-1956	▼	▼
1956-1957	▼	▼
1957-1958	▲	▲
1958-1959	▲	▼

The table shows the increase or decrease in the number of films released and new production companies founded during specific periods of two years. The years are staggered in order to show the correlation between the variables considered. The green symbol ▲ indicates an increase while the red one ▼ indicates a decrease.

Source: author's elaboration.

The influence the variables had on each other showed an inverse trend in 1947, a tendency that continued until 1950. The second inversion was registered in 1952 and ended in 1955. These trends confirmed the bond recorded in the previous interaction, with the variables reversed. Indeed, it can be seen a direct relationship between the number of new production companies founded and the number of films produced (for instance, if the former increases or decreases, this change impacts the number of films released). However, the opposite is also true: the increase in the number of films produced influenced the increase in the number of production companies working (Brunetta, 2019, p. 20). Nevertheless, it is not possible to know which of the two variables firstly started to influence the other, but this is of little relevance. The main element that undeniably emerged is that they are indissolubly related, and that the years in which the variables are farthestmost are 1952 and 1956.

When analysing the above phenomenon whilst looking at the possible reasons trends differed, historical context appeared to give the most suitable explanations. Indeed, looking at the years during which these opposite tendencies happened, it is noticeable that they are related to crises in the industry, often due to the lack of legislative intervention under the

responsibility of the Government. The first inversion occurred in 1947, the year that coincides with the first crisis in the period analysed due to a legislative lack.⁵¹ At this time, the Italian film market was filled with American movies, and the government did not prevent the invasion nor help the internal Italian market, as has previously been mentioned. The issue of the new law (n. 379 May 16th, 1947, also known as Cappa Law) protected only American interests.⁵² The situation was so unbearable that at the beginning of 1949, workers founded a movement in defence of Italian film production and took to the streets (Bizzarri and Solaroli, 1958), demanding that the government provides protection for the national industry.⁵³ Government responded the same year with Giulio Andreotti's *leggina*,⁵⁴ the "little law" or tax on dubbing,⁵⁵ to which Andreotti Law followed, and was issued on December 29th, 1949.

However, these were not the only elements that influenced the industry. The general context had a relevant impact too. Indeed, 1947 was a turning point in the economic history of Italy, especially given it was coming out of WWII, and that the restoration period was yet to begin. 1947 was a year when the consequences of war were still being suffered, primarily through inflation that manifested itself through the scarcity of goods. This, in turn, had a great impact on the lira and the economy more broadly, which I will discuss in more depth below. What it is important to mention now, is that inflation began before the end of the war,⁵⁶ and continued afterwards, which had a detrimental effect on Italy's poor conditions of living. The economy improved only with the monetary policy adopted by the new

⁵¹ The last important intervention of the government in cinema legislation was the Alfieri Law, issued on June 16th, 1938.

⁵² Exhibitors could import foreign films without restraints, thus affecting the Italian film market and industry. For a detailed study of the Cappa Law, see Quaglietti (1980, pp. 37-51).

⁵³ For a detailed study of the situation and the requests made by people to the government, see Quaglietti (1980, pp. 55-56).

⁵⁴ Giulio Andreotti was the Undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

⁵⁵ As Daniela Treveri Gennari reports (2011, 24%): "Dubbing was central to the relationship between American and Italian producers. After an expensive and unsuccessful attempt to produce American films in different languages, Hollywood tried by 1931 to dub its output in the United States. This too was unsuccessful, as Hollywood dubbing studios employed Italians who had strong Californian accents. In October 1933 a law (Regio Decreto Legge 5 October 1933, n. 1414) was passed in Italy that established that a tax of £2,500,000 had to be paid on any dubbed film and that films dubbed abroad could not be shown in Italy (Quaglietti 1980:17). This law was abrogated in October 1945 and by 1946 an industry that dubbed foreign films into Italian had emerged in Italy. Quaglietti, Bizzarri and Solaroli have studied the events that preceded Andreotti's decision to reintroduce the 'dubbing voucher' in July 1949."

⁵⁶ The cost of living increased by 70% in 1943, 340% in 1944, 97% in 1945. In relation to GDP, the national debt fell from 108% in 1943 to 40% in 1946. Between 1946 and 1947 wholesale prices increased by 100% per year, and things changed only in the last trimester of 1947, when wholesale prices began to decrease by 50% per year. The trend continued until the Korean crisis in 1950. (Ciocca, 2020 p. 235).

For a history of the Korean war and its impact, see Stueck (1997) and Malkasian (2001).

government. Indeed, it must not be forgotten that Italy underwent profound changes within its political sphere,⁵⁷ and suffered a period of great uncertainty. This uncertainty came to a close in 1947, a year of monetary turning point thanks to the monetary policy adopted by the government, one of the mainstays on which the economic miracle was established.⁵⁸

This foggy and troubled period is also reflected in the relationship between movies and companies, as demonstrated above. Drawing from the data in table 1, little improvement is seen between the years 1949-1950. This, I would like to argue, is largely due to the hope that the new government and its laws could have on production. This favourable period ended in just one year, because already between 1950-1951 there was another inverse proportion between movies produced and companies founded. The highest disparity was from 1951 to 1952, and can be explained using two main factors: the consequences that Andreotti Law had on the industry, in terms of the practice of film production being stopped as a “free procedure”,⁵⁹ thus open to anyone; and the Italian-American agreements. With regards to Andreotti Law, the disappearance of the lettering was an attempt to obtain more control over the industry trying to institutionalise more it. This resulted in increasing the members of the Technical Committee⁶⁰ from 9 to 11. In the aforementioned Committee, Andreotti included a representative from the distributors and an expert from the artistic field, who was nominated by the Prime Minister’s Office, to obtain the automatic majority in the Committee for the Government. This changed the forces on the ground and gave more power to the State.⁶¹ However, it did not prevent many venturers from trying their luck through cinema and film industry.

⁵⁷ The anti-fascist coalition government ended in May 1947 (Socialists and Communists were excluded, with the help of the United States), after the referendum (June 2nd, 1946) that rejected monarchy and opened the way to the republican Constitution, which came into effect on January 1st, 1948. (Ciocca, 2020 p. 235-236). For an analysis and history of the 1947 crisis in Italy, see Scoppola (1991).

⁵⁸ For an analysis of the history of inflation, see: Felice (2015, pp. 229-242).

⁵⁹ In the 1947 law n. 379, the first article recited: “The practice of film production is free.” This meant that anyone, without restrictions, could produce a film, without being a producer or having a minimum capital and financial means. This determined an invasion of the production field by many venture capitalists that saturated the industry. The lettering completely disappeared in the following law. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1947/05/30/047U0379/sg> Access date: November 7th, 2020

⁶⁰ The Technical Committee was a board that used to meet when government contributions were denied to a movie, and its producer contested the decision and asked for a second opinion. The Committee was nominated by the President of the Council of Ministers and composed by: the Undersecretary to the President of the Council of Ministers, the General Director of Cinematography, three cinema experts chosen among the exponents of the artistic, technical, and economical categories, a representative of the Ministry of Treasury, and an official from the General Direction of the Spectacle.

Law 29th December 1949, n. 958, article n. 5.

http://www.edizioneuropee.it/LAW/HTML/50/zn88_02_009.html

Access date: June 10th, 2020

⁶¹ For a detailed study of the Law and how it affected the industry, see Quaglietti (1980, pp. 52-73).

In terms of having a strong impact on the Italian industry, the second factor concerning the Italian-American agreements, also played a crucial role.⁶² As Treveri Gennari states (2011, 29%), these agreements provided “conditions in which American production companies developed production capacity in Italy with the help of the Italian Government.” They did not help the Italian film production (the creation of IFE – Italian Film Export for promoting and distributing Italian movies in the USA was quite unsuccessful), but undeniably favoured the American industry.⁶³ The Italian industry reacted with an increase in the number of movies produced in 1951 (thanks also to the investments the American companies made in production with Italian companies), but this resulted in a decrease in the foundation of new companies in 1952 due to the high levels of instability that could be felt. The effects are even more visible when looking at table 2, and the 4-year period between 1952 and 1954. Here a decrease in the number of companies can be seen in 1952, but also the increase in the release of movies (thanks to the American involvement), and the consequent increase of new companies in 1953 and 1954.

The second most evident discrepancy between the two variables analysed was recorded in 1956. Its explanation is again possibly related to two factors: a legislative absence, and the historical context, both nationally and internationally. Regarding the first point, it is worth noting that the Andreotti Law was due to expire on December 31st, 1954. The signals of a new crisis could be detected at the beginning of the year. In August 1953 Andreotti left his position, leading to a series of successors until 1957.⁶⁴ According to Quaglietti (1980), the government was unable to handle the situation, and it saw a solution in the extension of Andreotti Law, which, at that point, was beginning to cede. Some big and important companies, like Minerva Film (1912-1956), declared bankruptcy, and all the industry panicked. A new law was necessary at this point, and the entire field accused the government of inefficiency. The government responded in July 1957, with the decree n. 897: “it was a law that adjusted and integrated the 1949 law, and it absorbed, and modified the dispositions of the [...] *leggina*” (Ibid., p. 73). The decree was able to contain the decline of film production

⁶² For a complete transcription of the text of the document see Bizzarri and Solaroli’s volume (1958). For an analysis of the agreements, see Quaglietti (1980).

⁶³ “American companies could transfer 50% of their income, while the MPAA would give 12.50% of the above income to an Italian company in order to promote Italian films in America; 40% of income from U.S. companies would be reinvested in Italian film production, with the remaining 60% spent on various investments in Italy, while U.S. companies would limit their presence in Italy to only 225 films per year (Quaglietti 1980:101–102)” (Treveri Gennari, 2011, 29%).

⁶⁴ Andreotti left the position to senator Teodoro Bubbio. After only 5 months, at the beginning of 1954 Bubbio left, and professor Giuseppe Ermini arrived. However, in August he, too, left, leaving the position to Luigi Scalfaro, who remained until July 1955. The role was then left to Giuseppe Brusasca, and, in May 1957, to Raffaele Resta (Quaglietti, 1980, p. 67).

in Italy but unable to completely stop it. An increase in both variables only begins to emerge at the end of the decade.

With regards to the historical context, it should be highlighted that some international and national events occurred, which influenced the course of history. In fact, as Gentiloni Silveri thoroughly explains (2019, pp. 75-79), 1956 is a symbolic year in the 20th century, with many changes in the dynamics of power. There was a crisis in the PCI, the Italian Communist Party following the publication of Khrushchev's "secret speech", revolts in Poland and Hungary, and the Suez crisis, to name a few. All these events had big repercussions in Italy and on the Italian PCI and left wing in general. This resulted in a great deal of political instability and, consequently, a general uncertainty in the film industry. However, if we look at the film industry, we can see that the following year it registered an increase in the number of film production companies founded. This was due to a series of factors. First of all, an important decree, the 1956 currency law,⁶⁵ which forbade all the financial operations explicitly allowed, thus containing speculative movements. This limited the possibilities of overseas investments by Italians, who were pushed towards a concentration of their profits in the Italian territory. There were also other favourable dynamics which helped Italy in this period. Emanuele Felice summarises these as being: a low public debt; a restrained inflation (factors that encouraged investments); a rising sense of entrepreneurs' optimism (owing to the general, national and international, growth, the control over salaries and a better macroeconomic situation); low taxes;⁶⁶ and also public intervention. The data Felice collected reports that between 1954 and 1962 investments on state enterprises increased more than the national average. That is +350% in comparison to 140% (Felice, 2015, pp. 238-241).

2.3 Production companies' longevity

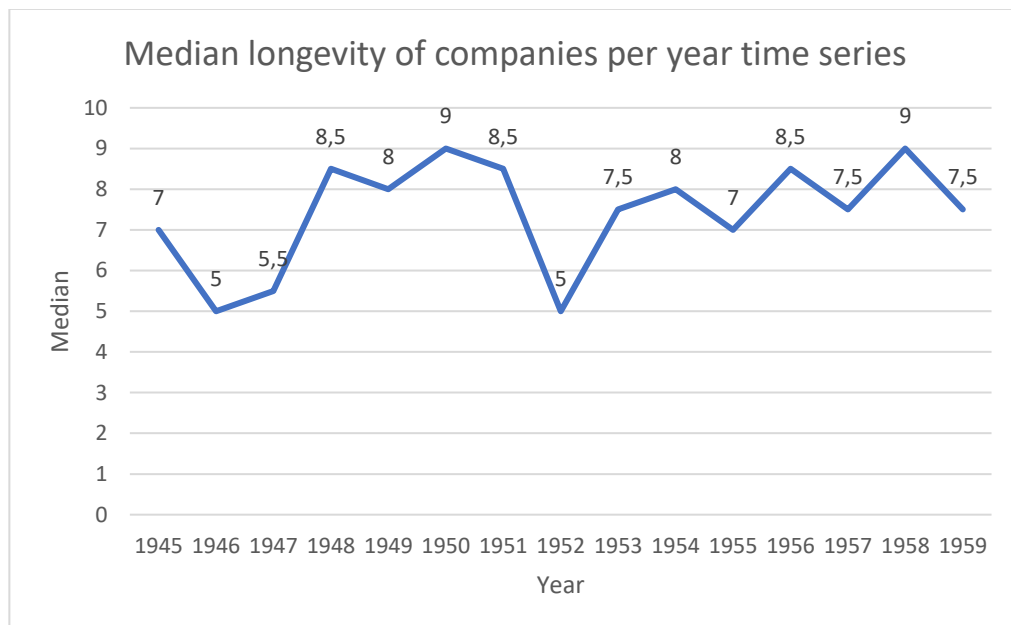
In order to have a clearer idea of how much these events influenced the industry, the companies founded during the first inverted trend are analysed here more in depth. Their reaction indeed had an impact on the following years. First of all, it has been found that the

⁶⁵ It was part of the control system over capital fluxes figured in the Bretton Woods Agreements for promoting exchange rate stability (Felice, 2015, p. 239).

⁶⁶ According to Felice (2015, p. 240), in that period there was tolerance for tax evasion for small companies and also consistent tax relief. These expedients were used by the Christian Democrats for creating electoral consensus, above all starting from the second half of the 1950s.

median⁶⁷ longevity of these companies is the lowest of the period considered,⁶⁸ together with those founded in 1946, as it can be seen from chart 3 which represents the comparison among companies' longevity in each of the years analysed. Table 3 shows that 58.49% of the 1952 companies lasted one year (against the 50% of those founded in 1946), a result that established an increasing trend in the foundation of 1-year companies in the following years. It is not until 1956 where percentages of under 50% begin to appear. While going through the information about the firms that were founded in 1952, a second relevant data emerged in the name of the companies' founders.

Chart 3. Median longevity of companies per year time series



Source: author's elaboration.

⁶⁷ The median represents the middle value in the list of the numbers considered. It represents the most reliable value to the presence of very different and distant values.

⁶⁸ It will be presented more in depth later in this chapter.

Table 3. Percentage of companies' longevity (1 year, 2 years, more than 2 years) per year

	1 year %	2 years %	2+ years %
1945	42.9	7.1	50
1946	50	6.3	43.8
1947	73.2	7.3	19.5
1948*	41.2	17.7 (3 years)	41.2 (3+ years)
1949	48.7	16.2	35.1
1950	36.4	14.5	49.1
1951	49.2	13.1	37.7
1952	58.5	3.8	35.9
1953	62.3	4.4	33.3
1954	72.9	4.3	22.9
1955	54.7	7.5	35.8
1956	44	6	50
1957	47.5	11.9	39
1958	38.7	9.7	50
1959	54.7	1.6	43.8

*1948 is the only year during which no one of the new companies founded lasted 2 years. Therefore, the percentage has been calculated based on 3-year and more-than-3-year activity.

Source: author's elaboration.

As it happens on a broader level, over the entire period analysed, there were companies with one manager and others with two or more producers. Examining more in depth their distribution, it can be seen that 32 firms belonged to the first category, thus were founded by one producer – 60.2%,⁶⁹ and their median corporation stock instructed the trend of the entire year 1952, which was 300,000 lire. Moreover, almost 80% of these companies produced only one film and lasted one year. This representation follows the general trend of the industry but registering an extreme version of the phenomenon. It is undeniably a consequence of the abovementioned events that influenced Italy and its industry between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the subsequent decade.

The presence of such a large group of production companies founded by a single producer could suggest the presence of venturers hoping to find success in the film industry. Therefore, being these “gold diggers” a large part of the industry, it would be unlikely for it to have a solid industrial structure since founded on an unstable ground.

⁶⁹ One of them released one movie in 1960, twenty-five lasted just one year, and twenty-five made one movie (not necessarily the same twenty-five that lasted one year).

The second group is represented by those producers who founded companies together with another producer. They established 12 companies – 22.6%, whose corporation stock median was 250,000 lire. Also in this case, half of them lasted one year and produced one film,⁷⁰ following the general trend of the film industry of the entire period. Then, 3 companies had three producers – 5,7%,⁷¹ and the median stock was 1.000.000 lire. Finally, there were 6 firms with more than three producers (11.3%).⁷² Among them, there were 5 companies with 4 producers and a median stock of 2.000.000 lire⁷³ and 1 company with 8 producers. It is an inverse proportion that sees the most crowded group having one of the lowest stocks. Thus, higher stocks correspond to a higher participation of producers in founding the production companies.

To the best of our knowledge, it can be then presumed that more were the producers involved in the firm foundation, more reliable and bigger the company was. This could mean that they were not improvised companies because behind the firm there was a more thoughtful organisation, with more planned and controlled funds for a longer-term vision.

Compared to the general industrial panorama of new companies founded between 1945 and 1959, we can see that 1952 followed the broader trend. Indeed, of the 770 new companies, 447 had one producer (58.1%), 170 had 2 managers (22.1%), 60 companies were founded by 3 producers (7.8%), and 65 had more than 3 managers during their life (8.4%). This means that the film industry had a sort of regular trend throughout the entire period analysed, especially if we look at the beginning and at its end. This can be clearly seen in chart 3, particularly when comparing the median longevity of companies in 1945 and 1959, as the values almost overlap, depicting an imaginary line that ties the two dates and remains nearly unvaried. The median longevity of companies was the same at the polar opposites with many changes in between. This fluctuation describes the history of the film industry and its instability, as demonstrated by the two lowest peaks in 1946 and 1952. They represent the most problematic years in the history of this fifteen-year period of analysis and they were determined by several factors, among which a lack of legislative intervention by the Government, as already mentioned in the first part of this chapter. Thus, the entire trend of the median longevity of companies represented in chart 3 depicts an industry that behaved similarly in the long term despite the aforementioned variations.

⁷⁰ Six of these companies lasted 1 year, 7 released one film.

⁷¹ One of them released its only movie in 1961.

⁷² Between 1945 and 1959, there were: 447 out of 770 with one manager, 170 with two producers, 60 with 3 and 65 with more than three.

⁷³ One company only worked continuously from 1956 to 1965 releasing 43 movies.

Focusing the attention on the producers, a further step towards having an understanding of how the industry worked became necessary. This step involved researching the question of, how many producers had other production companies during the entire period analysed and in 1952 (watershed year identified in the median longevity of companies per year time series, chart 3)? When considering the managers of these companies, it emerged that among the producers who founded companies in 1952, thirty-seven of them were managers of other production companies too. Companies that had been established both before and/or after 1952. This group of producers' names has been divided into four categories: the first category includes the whole framework examined (1945-1959), in order to have a representation of the phenomenon in its entirety. The second category considers 1952 only, as it resulted in a breaking year within analysis of the median longevity of the companies studied. As a consequence, since 1952 represents this break, the other two categories were studied considering the division that 1952 generated in the whole framework: before 1952, thus 1945-1952 (third category), and after 1952, thus 1952-1959 (fourth category). I have then divided all the producers into these four groups to see if there were common actions (regarding the foundation firms). Among the thirty-seven producers under investigation, I found that twelve belong to the first group, which considers the period in its entirety, 1945-1959;⁷⁴ three to the second category, which outlines 1952;⁷⁵ eleven belonged to the third group, thus recurring producers' names between 1945 and 1952;⁷⁶ and twelve belonged to the fourth group, thus those who were active between 1952 and 1959.⁷⁷ This schematisation, that has been done starting from 1952 due to its distinction from the trend of the previous period, as demonstrated previously and in chart 3, it could be a starting point for a deeper analysis of the entire time considered in this dissertation. However, despite being restricted to one year, this framework is useful in explaining the broader scenery of managers working in the Italian film industry. Indeed, focussing only on one year has been necessary in order to confirm two trends. Firstly, the tendency of producers to involve themselves in more than one company at the same time, and secondly, also their propensity to establish new companies in society in order to distribute the risk of investment.

⁷⁴ One producer had companies founded in the period analysed but which started to produce from 1960, and 10 other managers had companies active in the period analysed and in the 1960s.

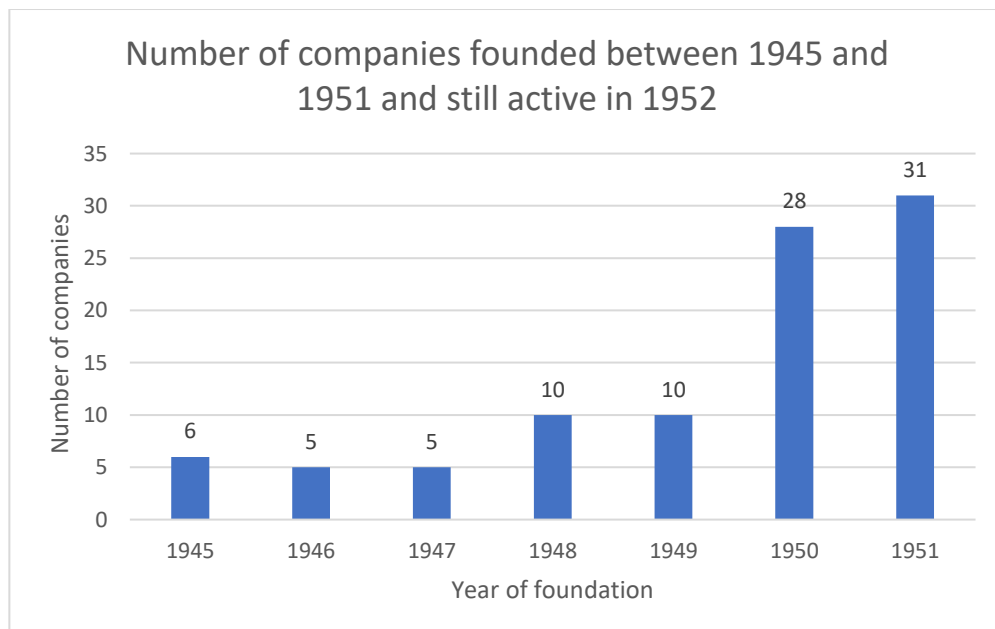
⁷⁵ One of the producers of this group had a company founded in the period analysed but that began to produce starting from 1960, and another had a company active in the period analysed and in the 1960s.

⁷⁶ Three of the managers had companies active both in the period analysed and in the 1960s.

⁷⁷ Four of the producers belonging to this group had companies founded between 1945 and 1959, but they started their activity from 1960, while 2 of them had companies active between 1945 and during the 1960s.

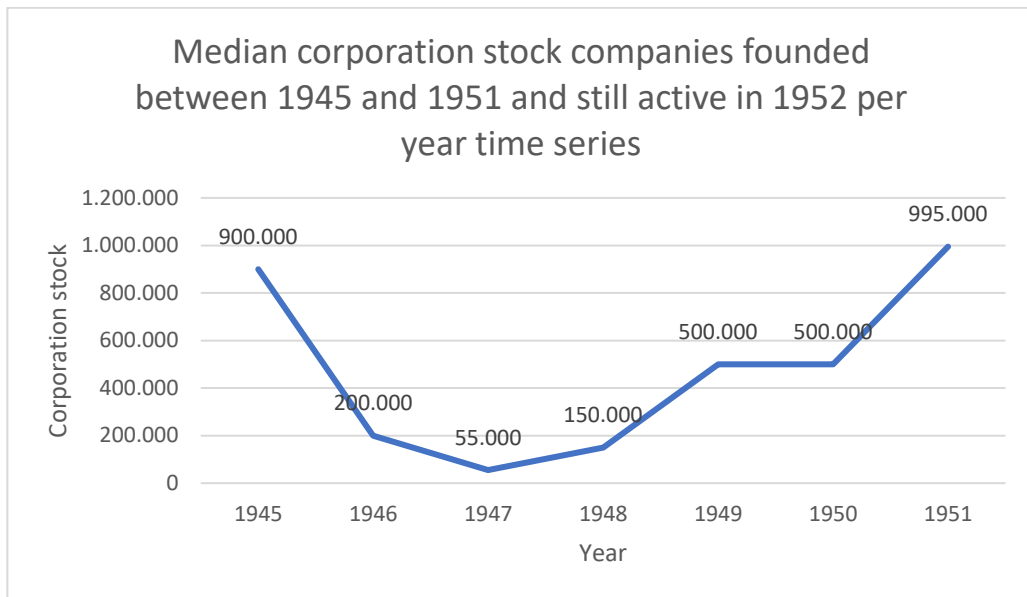
Another question that arose from this framework is how many companies of those founded before the break point year 1952 were still active in that year. What emerged is visible in chart 4, where it is obvious that, as 1952 is approached, more companies are still active. It was then necessary to compare their corporation stock, to see if there was a common reason why they survived. It emerged that the money invested at the foundation date did not have a big influence on the company's results on the market, nor on their longevity. The median corporation stock of the surviving firms was actually quite diverse year after year, so that it was difficult to identify a pattern (chart 5). However, it was possible to compare the median stock of these companies to that of all the companies for each year in the same period to investigate if there were similarities. The result was a graphic with different and sometimes divergent tendencies from the general trend of the industry, as can be seen in chart 6. A common increase can be seen only starting from 1950, giving the impression that the companies were finding common rising trend after the tumultuous period prior to the promulgation of the Andreotti Law.

Chart 4. Number of companies founded between 1945 and 1951 and still active in 1952



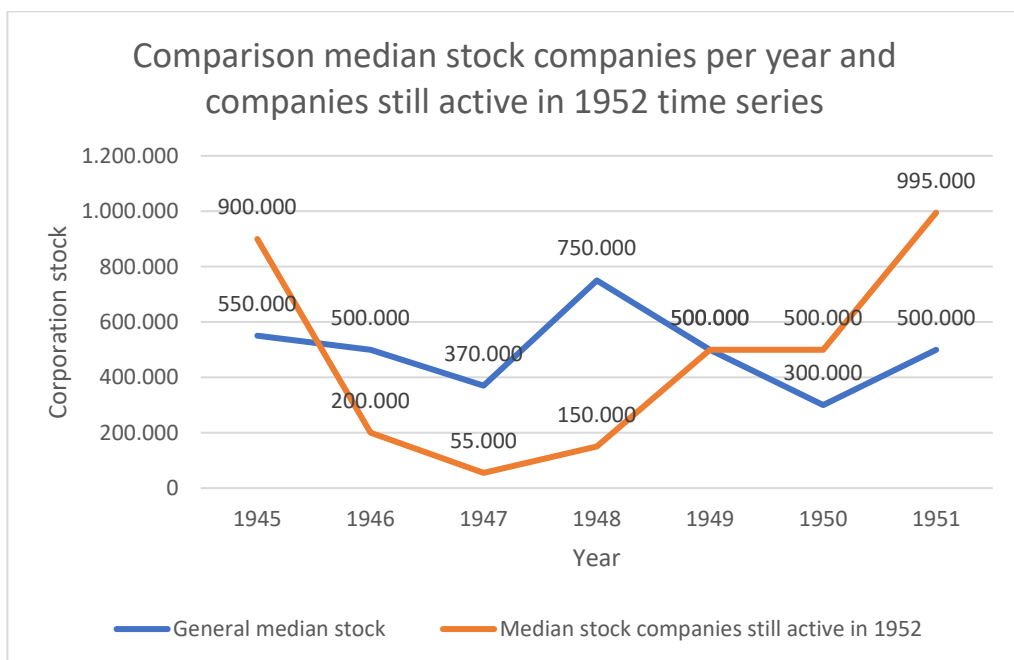
Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 5. Median corporation stock companies founded between 1945 and 1951 and still active in 1952 time series



Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 6. Comparison of median stock companies per year of companies founded between 1945 and 1959 and still active in 1952 time series



Source: author's elaboration.

2.4 Production companies' corporation stock analysis

With regards to the corporation stock of these companies and the value the firms made from all the shares maturing after their initial status, the data analysis shows that most of the production companies during this period declared a capital stock of between 50 thousand and 1 million lire. This stock is in comparison to their value at the company's foundation date. More specifically, in order to properly analyse the companies, the data on stocks have been divided into 10 groups (chart 7). This grouping criterion gave the possibility of showing the relationship and the spreading of the production companies through a precise cataloguing. The increasing groups perfectly describe the asymmetry that characterises the field. The cataloguing includes the firms whose corporation stock is not mentioned, which unfortunately represents the largest group, that being 227 companies. This lack is due to the primary sources examined, which were often incomplete.⁷⁸ As can be seen from image 12, the second most populated group includes the companies with a corporation stock between 500 thousand and 1 million lire, which, with 142 companies, represents more than the 18 percent of the total.⁷⁹ Contrary to what this could mean, particularly considering half the companies lasted one year (some intentionally), most companies at the time, invested a medium amount of money for their initial capital stock.

The following categories are two smaller groups, one from 50,000 to 100,000 lire,⁸⁰ the other, from 100,000 to 500,000 lire.⁸¹ Seeing as most firms were founded with an initial investment of up to one million lire, and considering the average cost of a movie in the 1950s was around 150-200 million lire (Di Chiara and Noto, 2021), it becomes clear that the tendency was for the Italian cinema industry to finance companies with the minimum amount of money necessary. Within the first group, it may have been that producers hoped for a longer business lifecycle or a better movie, but the reality of the situation is more representative in the other two groups. For the other two groups, it was much easier to recoup or amortise sums of up to 500,000 lire than more than this sum, even though this was

⁷⁸ For a complete explanation of the data collection and its lack of information about Bernardini's book, the primary source I consulted, see Bernardini (2000, p. V-VIII).

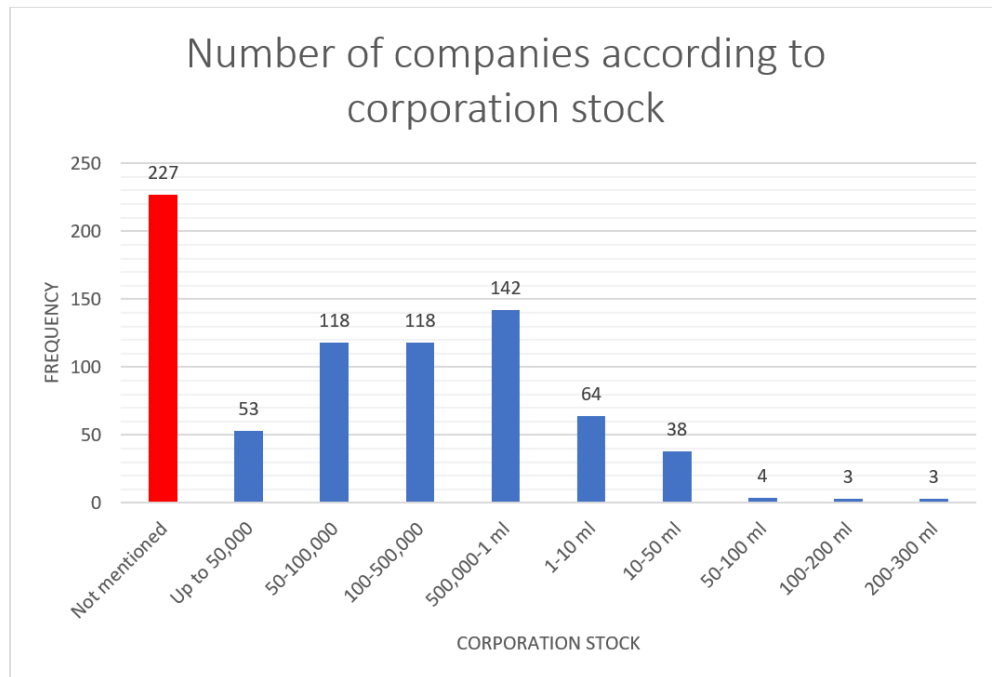
⁷⁹ The group includes companies like Variety Film srl (900,000 lire), Athena Cinematografica srl (510,000 lire), Rovere Film srl (980,000 lire), Gladiator Film srl (990,000 lire), Ar.Te.As. Film spa, Panaria spa, or Galatea spa (all of them with 1 million lire corporation stock).

⁸⁰ Some of the companies included in the group are: Film Bellissima srl, P.F.C. – Produzione Film Comici srl (50,000 lire corporation stock), Produzioni De Sica, Glomer Film srl (100,000 lire).

⁸¹ For example: Jolly Film srl (150,000 lire), Domino Film srl (200,000 lire), De Paolis – IN.CI.R. srl (300,000 lire), Trionfalcine srl, Transcontinental Film srl (both with a 500,000 lire corporation stock).

a large sum of money at the time.⁸² Therefore, the industry was made up of undercapitalised companies whose producers decided to invest low amounts of capital in response to the high level of risk with higher yielding investments.

Chart 7. Number of companies according to corporation stock



The red column represents different data to the others, in that there is an absence of any numerical value.

Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 7 clearly shows how the groups that follow included a small number of corporations. The total production companies in the sixth group of the diagram are only 64. There is a difference of almost 80 companies from the previous group (the largest one), and the number of companies continues to drastically diminish with the increase of money invested in the corporation stock, as is shown. When the corporation stock passes 50 million lire, the number of production companies is so small that it barely exceeds 1% of the total. In

⁸² To have an idea of the cost of life in Italy at the time, one can look at how the cost of the bread increased in the second part of the 1940s: 38 lire in 1944, 61 lire in 1945, 91 in 1946, 164 in 1947, 147 lire in 1948 (Chianese, *et al.*, 1985, p. 146).

ascending order, these 10 firms are: Paneuropa spa (60 million lire corporation stock),⁸³ Ponti-De Laurentiis spa (75 million lire),⁸⁴ Rizzoli e C. spa (90 millions),⁸⁵ Dear Film Produzione spa (100 millions),⁸⁶ Esedra Compagnia Cinematografica Italiana spa (120),⁸⁷ San Paolo Film (150),⁸⁸ Thetis Film spa (175),⁸⁹ Cinecittà Italiana Stabilimenti Cinematografici spa (255),⁹⁰ Rizzoli Editore spa (270),⁹¹ and Cines (300).⁹²

The size of a company depends firstly on the number of its employees, and then on its annual turnover. According to the definition of firms in the present day a small company has up to 50 employees and an annual turnover less than 10 million euros, while a medium company has fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover less than 50 million euros (European Commission website, 2020). Unfortunately, it is not possible to have access to this information for the film production companies studied, primarily because they rarely had permanent workers, and instead used to hire personnel for each of the projects undertaken. The Italian system completely differs from the American one from this point of view. To have an idea of the Hollywood industry and how far it was from the Italian one, it should be taken into consideration that in 1930, Universal was over 365 acres, had 2,000 employees and 15 stages; MGM was over 53 acres, had 1,500 employees and 15 stages; Paramount 26 acres, 1,500 employees and 14 stages; Columbia 10 acres, 250 employees and 6 stages, as it can be seen from the maps of Los Angeles hub of film production Schatz reported (2010, p. 10).

⁸³ Active between 1957 and 1959, it released 2 films, and was in Rome. Its managers were Edgardo Cortese, Vittorio Forges Davanzati, Elio Scardamaglia.

⁸⁴ Founded in Rome in 1950, it released 32 movies until 1955. It was managed by Dino De Laurentiis, Carlo Ponti, Luigi Tedeschi.

⁸⁵ Founded in Milan in 1949, it produced 9 movies until 1950. Its manager was Angelo Rizzoli.

⁸⁶ The company was founded in Rome in 1956, and its first movie was released in 1957. Till 1969, it produced 19 movies. Its managers were Roberto Dandi, Ever Haggiag, Robert Haggiag, Olimpio Milanti, Mario Tacchia, Roberto Verdozzi.

⁸⁷ Active only for the year, the company was in Rome, produced one movie and was managed by Giuseppe Clementi.

⁸⁸ The company was founded in Rome by Giacomo Alberione, Emilio Cordero, Attilio Monge, Virgilio Sabel, Palmiro Soligo. It worked until 1972 and produced 9 films.

⁸⁹ Founded in Rome in 1950, it released its first movie in 1954. It was managed by Fabrizio Bellandi, Alfonso Galleani, Riccardo Pontremoli, Oscar Zuccolotto, and till 1960 it produced 8 movies.

⁹⁰ Active between 1956 and 1966, it was in Rome and released 9 films. Its managers changed over the years, and during the period under analysis, they were Tito Marconi, Adolfo Salminci, Ettore Maria Margadonna.

⁹¹ Established in Rome in 1952 by Roberto Dandi, Guido Giambartolomei, Angelo Rizzoli, Luigi Rovere, the company was very prolific and produced 22 movies, the last one in 1956.

⁹² The company with the highest corporation stock, it was founded in Rome in 1949. It released 23 movies until 1956, and its managers were Edmondo Albertini, Aldo Borelli, Ettore Cambi, Gaspare Cataldo, Carlo Civallero, Angelo Foffano, Guido Luzzato, Eitel Monaco. A very important man in the Italian film industry from the 1930s, in those years Monaco was president of ANICA (Italian National Association of Movie Industry Professionals), a role he covered until 1971.

Thus, in order to categorise this industry, I decided to consider their nominal capital as the distinctive aspect that could define them. On the basis of the data collected, and having an overview of the total number of production companies founded and their corporation stock, I divided the firms into several groupings that could better describe and represent their dimensions. I hence considered small companies those whose corporation stock was 1 million lire, and medium companies were those with an initial investment of between 1 and 500 million lire. As a result of the previous study, it was not possible to identify any big production company, such as Lux Film or Titanus, founded in Italy at the time.⁹³ The Italian cinema industry was made of small and medium firms, a composition noticeable in all other Italian productive sectors. It was an inheritance that the industrial system carried around from the 18th century, with the unification of Italy and the development of a diversified and disjointed apparatus increased by the fragmentation of the country.⁹⁴ The cinema industry reflected the general situation of the Italian economic industrial system and seemed to have created its own equilibrium. Nicoli (2017, 26%) sums this up by noting that “a very small number of companies with medium to long-term projects co-existed with small and medium companies.”

I think is also important to underline that some companies did not end their activities in the period discussed. More specifically, it has been noticed that within the group of companies with stock of between 500.000 lire and 1 million, there are 29 companies, founded during the analysed time frame, which continued to produce after the 1950s,⁹⁵ and 8 that started to invest directly only during the 1960s or after (even though they were

⁹³ As Brunetta reports (2009, p. 19) referring to the decade 1945-1955, Italian film industry was devoid of production companies with a little industrial and financial structure, which could be counted on the fingers of one hand

⁹⁴ For a detailed analysis of the history of the industrial system in Italy, see Amatori and Colli (2016); Ciocca (2020).

⁹⁵ They are: Alexandra Produzioni Cinematografiche srl (1957-1970), 12 movies; Atlantica Cineamtografica spa (1958-1961), 2 movies; Avers Film-Cinematografica Internazionale srl (1957-1963), 4 movies; C.A.P.R.I. – Commercio Attrezzature Produzioni Realizzazioni Industriali spa (1957-1962), 2 movies; Carlo Ponti spa (1956-1962), 9 movies; CEIAP srl (1958-1964), 5 films; C.I.R.A.C. (1951-1963), 9 movies; DA.MA. Cinematografica srl (1953-1963), 22 movies; David Film spa (1959-1963), 5 films; D.D.L.spa (1954-1964), 24 movies; Domiziana Internazionale Cinematografica srl (1956-1965), 11 films; Elfo Film srl (1951-1961), 2 movies; Galatea spa (1952-1965), 43 movies; Gladiator Film (1957-1961), 2 movies; Illiria Film srl (1956-1961), 4 films; M.M. Cinematografica srl (1958-1962), 3 films; Monteluce Film spa (1957-1974), 2 movies; P.A.R.C. Film srl (1958-1963), 2 films; P.A.R. Film Produzioni Artistiche Riunite srl (1957-1964), 2 films; Roma Film Produzione srl (1945-1962), 10 movies; Slogan Film srl (1957-1970), 4 films; SPA Cinematografica srl (1957-1963), 11 movies; S.P.E.S.-Sviluppo Pellicola e Stampa-Esercizio srl (1956-1960), 2 films; S.P.I.C. – Società Partenopea Industrie Cinematografiche srl (1956-1962), 5 movies; T.A.I. Film srl (1956-1960), 4 movies; Variety Film srl (1945-1990), 40 movies; Vic Film spa (1957-1961), 6 films; Virtrus Film srl (1953-1964), 2 movies; Zebra Film srl (1953-1977), 38 movies.

founded in the period studied).⁹⁶ In the last two groups, on the contrary (with the highest stocks, from 100 and 200 million lire and from 200 to 300 million lire), there are only 3 companies founded in the 1950s that continued their production in the years that followed. There are 2 companies in the first group mentioned⁹⁷ and 1 in the second,⁹⁸ and none of the companies founded between 1945 and 1959 started their production after this period. This information offers an outline of the production history of companies from this time, and the analysis shows that some of them were founded in the 1950s, perhaps due to governmental incentives, and that they started to produce in the following decade. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that most of the films were made by companies with small corporation stock, confirming the idea of an industry made of many minor firms, many of which were business ventures founded with the intention of attaining easy success. On the contrary, the companies with the highest stocks produced only 134 movies.

Further important data analysis carried out in this area was through my investigation of the median of corporation stocks. These data allow the measure of a central tendency in a more descriptive and effective way than the mean.⁹⁹ The latter reports the average, while the median represents the middle value in the list of the numbers considered. Regarding the corporation stock, in order to better explain the difference between these categories, both the average value and the median value have been calculated. The average value corresponds to 6,206,689 lire, while the median value is 500,000 lire. This huge discrepancy is largely due to the fact that there are very few production companies with high corporation stock. Furthermore, the large amounts of money invested at the foundation date for these companies increases the average value and, therefore, the average value is not representative of the phenomenon of the production firms in Italy after WWII and during the 1950s. Indeed, by examining the median value, it becomes immediately apparent that a multitude of small to medium production companies made up the dimensions of the firms of the Italian film industry at the time.

⁹⁶ The group includes: B.D.C Produzione Cinematografica srl (1959-1970), 1 film (1970); Compagnia Cinematografica Mondiale – C.C.M. srl (1959-1966), 17 films (first one in 1961); Fi.C.It. – Finanziaria Cinematografica Italiana spa (1959-1964), 14 movies (first one in 1960); MEC – Cinematografica srl (1959-1964), 5 films (first one in 1961); Produttori Associati Internazionali-Associated Producers International spa (1956-1962), 2 movies (first one in 1961); Rodes Cinematografica spa (1959-1964), 5 films (first one in 1961); R.P.A. – Registi Produttori Associati srl (1956-1975), 8 movies (first one in 1966); Vanguard Film srl (1958-1962), 7 movies (first one in 1960).

⁹⁷ San Paolo Film (1954-1972), 9 movies; and Thetis Film spa (1950-1960), 8 movies.

⁹⁸ Cinecittà Italiana Stabilimenti Cinematografici spa (1956-1966), 9 movies.

⁹⁹ It is obtained by adding all the numbers taken into consideration (in this case, corporation stocks) and, then, dividing the result for the number of numbers added.

Chart 8 demonstrates clearly that the median value decreased right after the war until 1947. This then rapidly increased in 1948 in conjunction with the growth of film production, as has previously been shown. What follows is a period of constant successions, and moments of decreases and increases until the end of the 1950s, which features its lowest point in 1954, and its highest peak in 1958. These findings should not surprise the reader, given the money invested for the foundation of production companies, follows primarily the trend of film production until the beginning of the above-mentioned decade.

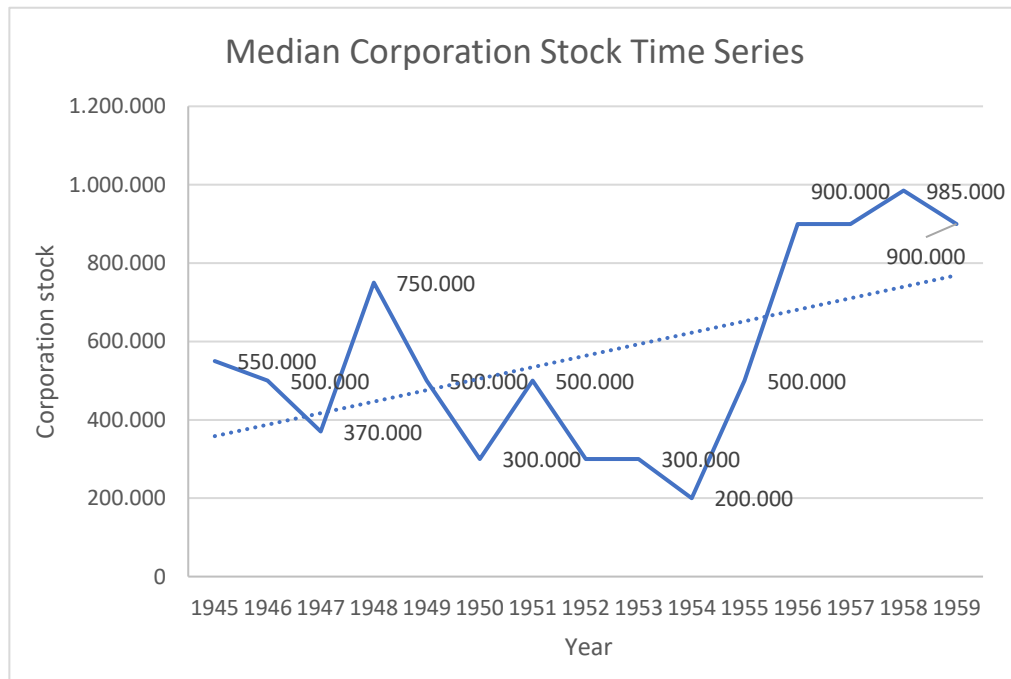
By referring to the reports written by the BNL at the end of each year,¹⁰⁰ it is possible to partially see the representation of the firms' composition. The report reveals the difficulties in production reported by the bank in 1947, which corresponds to an increase in the median of corporation stock, and also a peak in 1948. It is in 1948 that, according to BNL (FST, 1948), cinema activity is in regression, and consequently, even the money invested in the founding of new companies. 1949 saw a clear recovery of production, as did the entire industry, which was evidenced by a consequent expansion of the sector the following year. On the other hand, the effects of the crisis in the middle of the decade, which were due to the expiring of Andreotti Law, had, as previously mentioned, an apparently "positive" effect on the corporation stock of the new companies. Chart 8 shows that from 1954 there was a sudden and rapid increase that led to the highest peak of the diagram – 985,000 lire in 1958. Even though the production of movies does not correspond exactly to this growth,¹⁰¹ a great increase can be seen, that did not only depend on the number of companies founded, but also on the amount of money invested on single enterprises. That is to say, that more money was provided for every company. In order to better understand this phenomenon, the median value of the corporation stock of each year has been calculated,¹⁰² since it always constitutes the most representative data for such trends. From the median, it is possible to see that the middle value related to the amount of money used to found new companies changed throughout the years, with peaks in 1948 (at 750,000 lire) and, particularly after 1955, when it reached its highest in 1958 at 985,000 lire.

¹⁰⁰ Years were: 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959 (FSR).

¹⁰¹ According to reports by the BNL, production followed a different growth: the year 1954 saw a problem that arose because of uncertainty around the expiry of the 1949 law; in 1955 production increased only in the second semester; 1956 was the year in which the crisis had its effects; 1957 was a difficult year of consolidation; in 1958 production increased; and in 1959 it continued its development (FST, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959).

¹⁰² In 1945 it was 550,000 lire; in 1946, 500,000; in 1947, 370,000; 750,000 lire in 1948; 500,000 again in 1949; in 1950 it was 300,000 lire; in 1951, 500,000; in 1952 and 1953, 300,000 lire; 200,000 lire in 1954; 500,000 in 1955; in 1956 and 1957, 900,000 lire; 985,000 lire in 1958; and 900,000 lire in 1959.

Chart 8. Median corporation stock time series



Source: author's elaboration.

These values do not take under consideration the influence of monetary inflation. However, to have an idea of the price changes, here is a small table of the prices between 1940 and 1950 based on the value of the lire in 1938 (1938 = 100) (table 4).

Table 4. Retail prices between 1940 and 1950 based on the value of the lire in 1938 (1938 = 100)

Source: V. Zamagni. *Dalla periferia al centro. La seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990) 322, tab. 8.4

Year	Retail price
1940	122
1941	141
1942	162
1943	273
1944	1215
1945	2392
1946	2825
1947	4566
1948	4854
1949	4926
1950	4854

Table 5. Coefficient for translating retail prices of the various years according to 2011 values

1947	36,884	1948	34,835	1949	34,331	1950	34,800	1951	31,718
1952	30,426	1953	29,846	1954	29,064	1955	28,272	1956	26,931
1957	26,420	1958	25,214	1959	25,318	1960	24,664	1961	23,963
1962	22,800	1963	21,206	1964	20,019	1965	19,186	1966	18,809
1967	18,441	1968	18,209	1969	17,711	1970	16,854	1971	16,052
1972	15,198	1973	13,770	1974	11,528	1975	9,839	1976	8,444
1977	7,150	1978	6,358	1979	5,494	1980	4,535	1981	3,821
1982	3,284	1983	2,856	1984	2,583	1985	2,378	1986	2,241
1987	2,142	1988	2,041	1989	1,915	1990	1,805	1991	1,696
1992	1,609	1993	1,544	1994	1,486	1995	1,410	1996	1,357
1997	1,334	1998	1,310	1999	1,290	2000	1,258	2001	1,225
2002	1,196	2003	1,167	2004	1,145	2005	1,125	2006	1,103
2007	1,085	2008	1,051	2009	1,043	2010	1,027		

Source: Istat (National Institute of Statistics)

On the contrary, table 5, shows the coefficients, year after year, for translating retail prices based on the monetary values of 2011. 2011 was also when the last census was in Italy, thus it can be considered the most official updated and reliable measure. It provides a more complete scenario of the changes in Italian currency throughout the entire period analysed, and also beyond it. However, in order to better understand its fluctuation and above all its effects on investments in the film industry, corporation stocks of the companies have been recalculated according to nowadays currency (see table 6). By consulting “Il Sole 24 Ore”¹⁰³’s website, I was able to evaluate the investment of a specific year in relation to the value of the euro. All the capital stocks have been calculated and converted into the value of the Euro in 2014 (the latest figure available). This gives a new perspective to production companies’ foundation capitals and illustrates their “real” growth throughout the 15-year period.

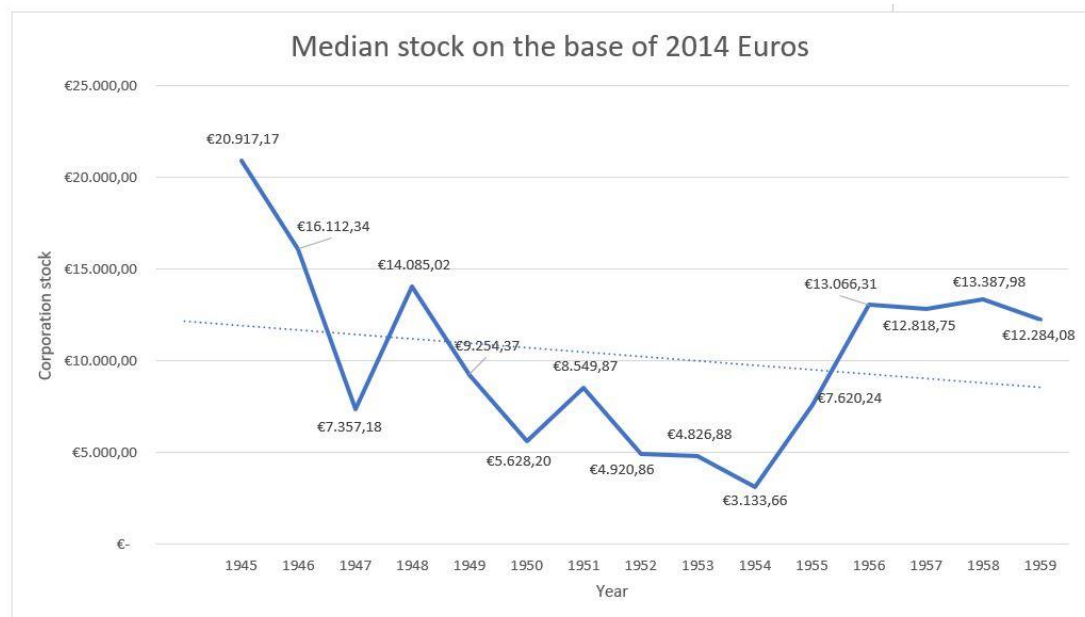
¹⁰³ Il Sole 24 Ore is the most influential economic and financial daily newspaper in Italy.

Table 6. Companies' corporation stock in 2014 euros value

Year	Median stock (lire)	2014 value (euros)
1945	550	20,917.17
1946	500	16,112.34
1947	370	7,357.18
1948	750	14,085.02
1949	500	9,254.37
1950	300	5,628.20
1951	500	8,549.87
1952	300	4,920.86
1953	300	4,826.88
1954	200	3,133.66
1955	500	7,620.24
1956	900	13,066.31
1957	900	12,818.75
1958	985	13,387.98
1959	900	12,284.08

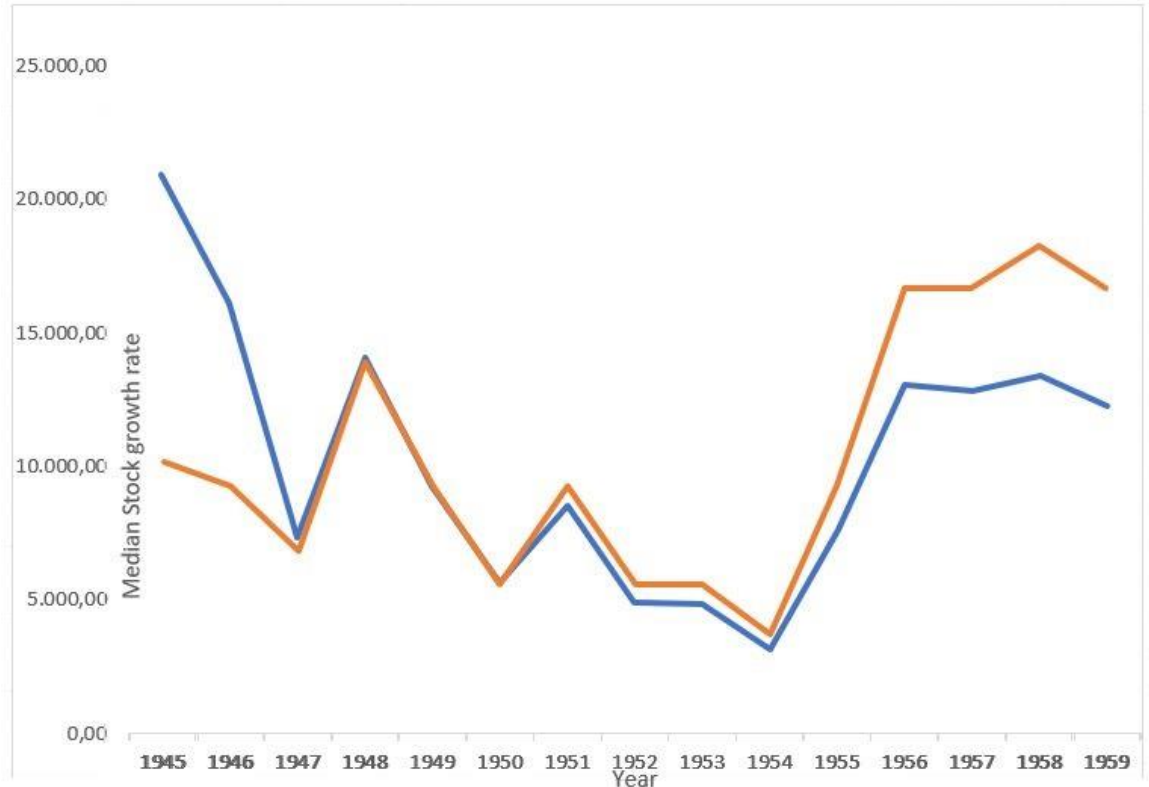
Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 9. Median stock on the base of 2014 Euros



Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 10. Median stock growth comparison between the general growth in lire and in 2014 euros



Median stock growth comparison between the general growth in lire (orange line) and in 2014 euros (blue line)

Source: author's elaboration.

When focusing the attention on stock evolution, one can notice from the charts 9 ad 10 above, that growth follows the same general trend, with some years almost completely overlapping. However, two discrepancies appear, one at the beginning of the period studied (1945-1947), and the other at the end (1956-1959). In these two time lapses, currency registers a bigger difference in value. Proportionately, the median of investments made in 1945 was much more substantial than the one made in 1956, even though the amount of money was less (550,000 vs 900,000). This happened because the currency value registered a significant variation due to inflation. Indeed, between 1947 and 1954, the distance between the general median stock and the stock based on the Euro's value is basically equivalent. However, right after the middle of the decade, a growing gap follows, despite investments having registered an increase. At this point, the comparison between the lire and Euros is

inverted. This is largely because in 1956-1959, inflation had a lesser impact on the lire than it had done previously, which, as mentioned earlier, was thanks to the effects of the monetary policy adopted by the government at the beginning of the decade. For this reason, if we compare capital stocks, we can see that companies in 1948 and 1958, at 10-year distance, had almost the same median investments, even though the amount of lire used is quite different. For instance, 750,000 vs 985,000 lire is equal to approximately 14,000 vs 13,000 Euros.

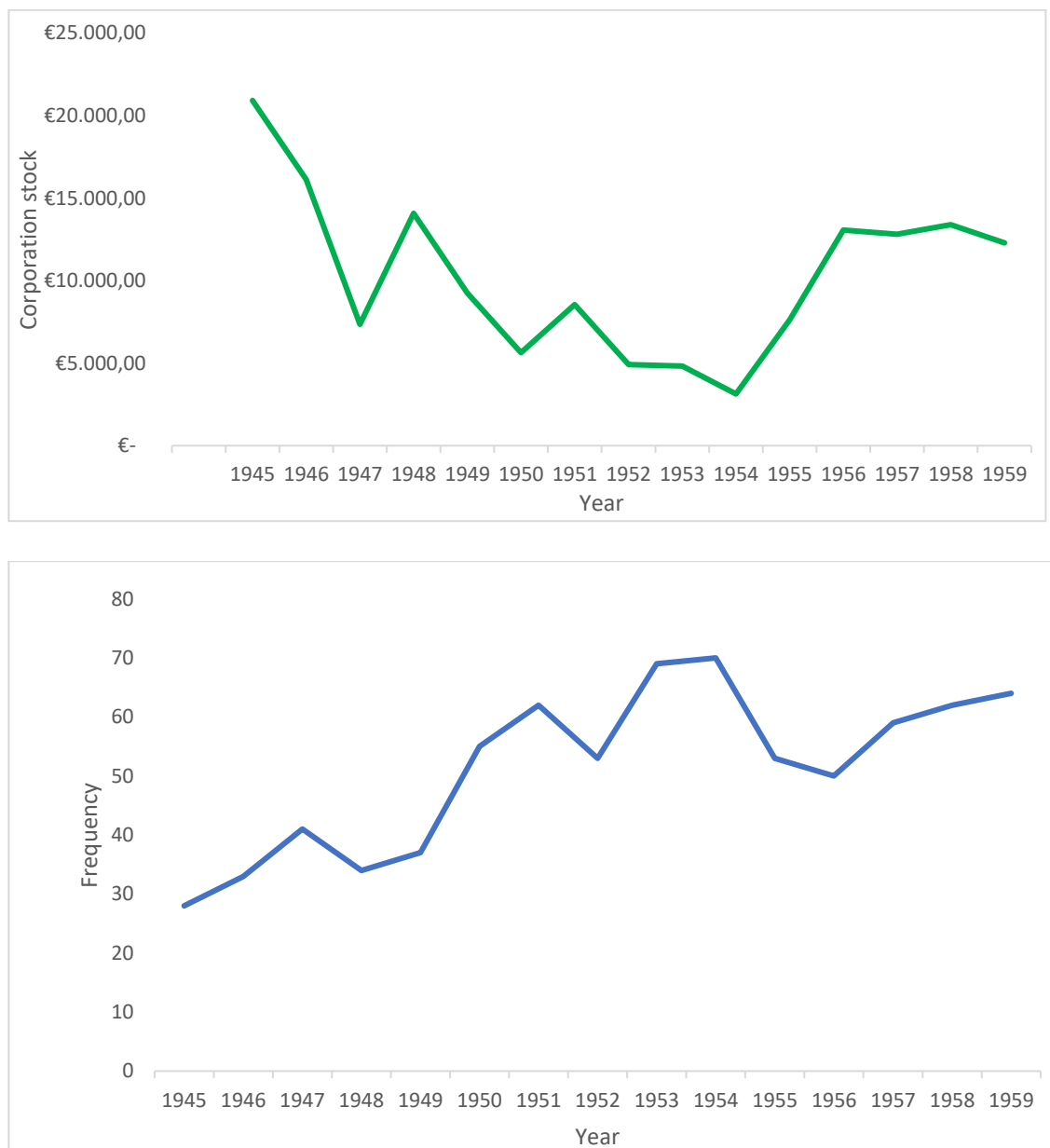
Another question that is raised is if company stock influenced the total number of films produced year after year, and if so, how much? In order to analyse this aspect, it was necessary to compare graphs to see the trend of the period. Chart 11 was very helpful in this regard, as there are two different growths illustrated throughout the entire cycle considered. The time series of the number of companies founded is represented by the blue line, while the median stock of the companies founded in Euros, is represented by the green line.¹⁰⁴ Even though they have different values, they have been compared to see the influence the stock had on the number of companies founded between 1945 and 1959. As chart 11 shows, the trend of capital stock completely differs from the one representing the number of companies founded. This means that the investments made at the foundation of the corporations had little impact on the evolution of the firm itself and, consequently, on the number of movies it released. Indeed, this is also shown at the highest peaks of the time series, where the companies founded between 1952-1954, corresponds to the lowest initial stock. This is hardly surprising when considering the investment risks. That is, the more crowded the industry was, the higher the risks the industry hid. This was because of the possible increase in the number of movies produced, therefore, more market competition, which led to fewer loans and government aid.

Inversely, the lowest number of companies founded and highest foundation investments, occurred in 1945-1946. This could be explained by the historical situation in Italy, when more money was needed to produce movies, and many films could not be made due to the lack of manpower, studios and overall wealth of the country and its people. On a more general level, an inverse tendency is notable among these values, with the stock line appearing fluctuated due to its dependence on the availability of investors' capital. A similar trend among the two variables can be traced in the second half of the 1950s, particularly from 1956 onwards. A possible explanation for this trend could be the improvements in the general conditions of

¹⁰⁴ The graph takes into account only the initial investments, and not their modification (increases or decreases) during the company's lifespan.

the film industry, and the monetary policy, as mentioned above. The image demonstrates an absence of a direct and clear correlation between the number of companies founded, and corporation stocks. However, seeing as the trend of companies founded per year, and number of movies released per year are directly related (see chart 2), it could be suggested that capital stocks did not influence the number of movies released between 1945 and 1959.

Chart 11. Comparison between median stock in 2014 Euros time series and number of companies founded per year time series



Comparison among median stock in 2014 Euros time series (first graph, green line) and number of companies founded per year (second graph, blue line) time series.
Source: author's elaboration.

Finally, before entering the era of the golden age in cinema, the companies of the 1950s registered another peculiarity. Most of the firms founded during the period studied, produced just one movie (427 companies), and only 3.5% of the companies included twenty or more titles on their lists. Nevertheless, this aspect should not be surprising, as according to Nicoli (2017), between 1905 and 1944 the situation was quite similar. Nicoli (Ibid.,36%) states that, between 1905 and 1930, 53% of the industry was made of companies that released just one movie, and only 8% produced more than 16 films. During the remaining years, up until 1944, “a total of 255 production companies were formed (producing a total of 945 films), of which 52% were short-lived speculative ventures that made only one film (14% of all films produced in this period).” The founding of these speculative production companies boomed between 1934 and 1938.¹⁰⁵ This demonstrates that Italian film industry system had not gone a long way from its beginning.

2.5 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to present the context in which the Italian cinema production developed, and how this industry was organised after the war and during the 1950s. What has been presented here is a summary of the research undertaken through the data analysis. The data analysis represents part of the modes of film production in 1950s Italy, which, as we have seen, resemble the general European context, that were united against the ‘American domination’ of the film market. The thesis provides an analysis aiming at reporting how fragmented, yet how powerful and fertile, the Italian film industry of the time was. The chapter shows how many companies were present in Italy between 1945 and 1959, how they were distributed on the territory, how the context influenced their development, their increase and decrease. It also shows how the film industry cannot be considered detached from the Italian and worldwide economy and industry. It is undeniably an industry and a business, sometimes a profitable activity while others a disastrous

¹⁰⁵ According to Marina Nicoli (2017), short-lived companies covered 39% of the total number of enterprises in 1934, 42% in 1936 and 29% in 1938.

employment. However, with all its problems, the Italian film industry of the time paved the way for the greatness of the 1960s.

All of this was achieved thanks to an industrial apparatus that was surely fragile but alive nonetheless, and ready to take risks that addressed the field. There was a definite lack in stability, and the industry was “characterised by production groupings of a distinctly transient nature” (Small, 2014, p. 111) as has been demonstrated. However, the analysis of this industry, together with the huge number of diverse companies and movies released, indicate that, although unstable, this industry experienced such great development and growth, it eventually led to the golden age of Italian cinema. Perhaps the shifts from one successful trend to the next - from neorealism, musicals, opera movies, melodramas to comedies - were all necessary and mandatory routes the industry had to follow, in order to reach the pinnacle of its domestic success in the 1950s, and to expand further afield afterwards into the foreign market.

Chapter 3

Genre analysis

3.1 Genres produced: methodology

After the analysis of the industrial context, how it was built and how it worked at the time, in order to better understand its mode of operation, the necessary following step is the analysis of what this industry produced. When analysing the films, firstly, I had to make a list of all the films produced to have a first idea of the amount of production. Therefore, I have taken under consideration all the films cited in Marinucci's book and in the Bolaffi catalogue,¹⁰⁶ and then grouped them according to their genre. Film genre has been used as one of the discriminating factors for analysing films as products of the industry because the film industry is strictly related to its public. As a matter of fact, it defines its audiences' tastes and at the same time it is deeply influenced by the spectators. Thus, it was necessary to know what the main genres were in order to take one more step forward towards an understanding

¹⁰⁶ I have opted for a direct study after the collection of the movie titles present in the mentioned sources. In this way I had the possibility to relate the films to the list of production companies created. However, there are several other options – for example, the annual publications of ANICA (Italian National Association of Movie Industry Professionals) on Italian production. This source was not an option due to its broad conception of films produced: it indeed includes distributed movies, produced (but not released) movies, and films under production (that risk not being seen at the theatre). For other definitions of "film produced", see Corsi (2001, pp. 16-17).

of the course of action followed by the industry. The main source for grouping films according to genre has been Marina Nicoli's paper *Historia non facit saltus* (no date). Even though the movie genres used were the ones Marina Nicoli (2018) quoted,¹⁰⁷ I have decided to enlarge the group to include other genres (like, for example, fantasy, horror, sci-fi) so as to comprise those genres that I believe to be illustrative of the Italian film production of the time.¹⁰⁸ Although the movies produced and identified as fantasy, horror, and sci-fi are quite rare and, thus, irrelevant from a statistical point of view, I have included them in the analysis of the genres because I consider them symptoms of the desire for innovation the Italian industry was registering. The films in Marinucci's book (1959) and in the Bolaffi catalogue (Rondolino, 1967) have been divided into genres according to the subdivision visible in the database available on the website cinematografo.it. I have taken this database as reference due to the importance of the magazine "La Rivista del Cinematografo" (the most ancient Italian publication in the field) during the 1950s: it was a Catholic publication aimed at a multi-level audience, with specific cultural sections. However, the database identifies different genres adopting more than one category for the movie descriptions in order to analyse and discuss the film more accurately (for example: drama, comedy; or comedy, detective story; etc...). Because of the vast amount of detail, I tried to reduce the number of genres listed in order to include the films in broader groups.¹⁰⁹ Finally, in order to study the relation among films, genres and box office, these last data have been grouped into subcategories, in accordance with the information found in the dictionary of Italian films by Roberto Poppi (2007). The cataloguing depends on the box office's revenues, and it has been divided into small classes that describe and categorise these data.

¹⁰⁷ Marina Nicoli grouped genres as follows: drama, comedy, musical, adventure, historical, war, comic, mythology, detective story, documentary.

¹⁰⁸ The genres identified are: comedy, drama, comic, adventure, war, thriller, spy story, social, sentimental, sci-fi, satirical, romance, religious, psychological, opera, noir, mythological, musical, horror, grotesque, fantasy, family, fairy tale, episodes, documentary, detective story, crime drama, biographic, animated, allegoric.

¹⁰⁹ Generally, I have used the first genre quoted by the database. However, in some cases, I have opted for the second classification because I considered it more specific and descriptive of the title mentioned. It is the case of musicals, for instance, the database generally describes these movies firstly as drama or comedy, then adding the label "musical." Being a separate category that identifies a specific genre, I therefore decided to separate it from the broader groups of dramas and comedies, and to classify them under the category of "musical". I have done the same for opera movies, a specific type of the broader musical genre, that was quite common in Italy.

3.2 Genre popularity

With regards to the number of movies produced between 1945 and 1959, there was a significant increase, particularly if compared to the preceding war period. Almost one thousand six hundred movies were released during the period analysed, according to the chronological collection of movies published by Marinucci and the Bolaffi catalogue. According to Alberto Abruzzese (1979, p. 389), Italian national production included 33 films in 1937, 45 in 1938, 77 in 1939, 86 in 1940, 71 in 1941, 96 in 1942, 66 in 1943, 37 in 1944. Following this, the number of films increased again (except for a small decrease in 1948), totalling more than 1000 during the entire 1950s, with a peak of 201 movies in 1954 (an outcome reached again only during the 1960s).

The distribution of the movies, as detailed in the catalogues, differs somewhat from those reported by Abruzzese (1979), as shown in chart 12. By analysing the historical trend of film production in Italy at the time, a growing tendency in the number of movies released up until the middle of the 1950s would be expected. However, as chart 12 illustrates, it could be argued that the production and distribution of movies follow a historical juncture that is independent of genre success. This is demonstrated by a slow and fragmented but constant increase, save for a few declines, until the peak in 1953 when 160 films were produced. This is followed by a decrease that is related to the industry crisis around the middle of the decade, when the number of movies produced drops to 108. In just one year the situation improves rapidly, with 137 movies being released in 1958.

This vast offering of films is hardly surprising given the large number of companies operating during this period. The variety of films produced ranged from low profile movies aimed at audiences on the outskirts, to upper-middle products, and high-budget films created for attracting audience's attention.¹¹⁰ Most of the movies produced were dramas, followed by comedies, and comic films, "popular products thought for mass consumption, and based on *divi's* appeal", as Barbara Corsi states (2001, p. 64).¹¹¹ These three typologies of movies were followed by another popular genre, adventure movies, as will be discussed in greater detail below. This genre classification follows Marina Nicoli's analysis according to

¹¹⁰ The orientation towards a specific audience has consequences for companies and their profits. Indeed, movies for a popular audience (which were projected in second and third vision theatres, thus in the cities' outskirts) could guarantee high income, but they were distributed over a longer time period than movies that were meant for first vision theatres (Di Chiara, 2013, pp. 25-26).

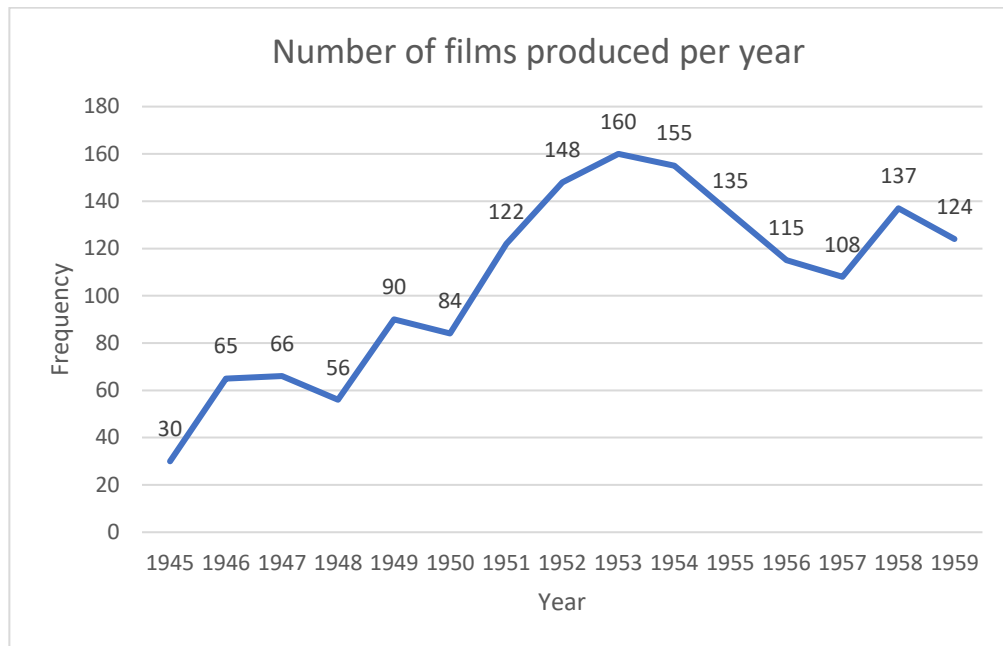
¹¹¹ The most important actors at the time, those that ensured the best profitability of a movie, were Amedeo Nazzari, Totò and Silvana Mangano (Ibid.).

which “leading and regular companies [...] were quite similar in their entrepreneurial attitude, focussing on an average of three genres” (2017, 75%): Occasional producers, on the other hand, opted for one genre, due largely to the company’s short lifespan and their release of few movies, very often being only one.

This data confirms a similar trend found in other European countries. As Jill Forbes and Sarah Street report (2000, p. 42), European cinemas used to support domestic audiences’ tastes, and included such popular genres as comedies, melodramas, musicals and crime thrillers. This last genre was fundamental in the process, due largely to its overlapping nature with popular Hollywood productions. Similarly, although crime thriller films were interpreted in different ways depending on the country,¹¹² they still contained similarities and references to famous Hollywood movies. This made the crime thriller a “pan European genre which shares similarities but is also integral to each particular country’s national output” (Ibid.). It is important to mention that the American film industry has always been a criterion of comparison for the European one, which aspired to a similar industrial development. Therefore, genres were important because they were “integral to the functioning of [the] system since they provided a key dynamic to the challenge of judging which films would be popular” (Ibid.).

¹¹² According to Forbes and Street (Ibid.), there is always some overlap with Hollywood cinema: “in Britain crime was a staple genre, particularly the ‘spiv’ films of the 1940s featuring characters who were swindlers and blackmarketeers; in Spain the *Cine Negro* genre, which dramatised social discontent in the 1950s and 1960s, was akin to both American *films noirs* and French *polars*, while the post-war German *Trümmerfilme* (ruin films) also demonstrated close affinities with *film noir*. Similarly, contemporary Russian *chernukha* (‘made black’) films depict a bleak reality with the killers as hero”.

Chart 12. Number of films produced in Italy per year



Source: author's elaboration.

However, before explaining all the genres found in the Italian film market, it is necessary to have a general idea of the other production industries in Europe, so as to create a more complete overview and have all the related information. In their book *Statistics of the Film Industry in Europe* (1992) Michel Gyory and Gabriele Glas registered the number of films produced in many European countries from the 1950 onwards. Taking out only the movies released in the 1950s, I discovered that the other most prolific film industries were Great Britain with 1243 films, France with 1058 and Germany with 1016 respectively.¹¹³ The peaks in film production were reached in 1956 and 1955. However, in the same decade, Italy still remains at the top with 1288 movies produced. While the second half of the decade was more fertile for other European countries, in Italy this productivity peak had already occurred in 1953. This demonstrates that the Italian film industry responded better to the generalised growth of the industry than other European countries. Italy followed the increasing trend of the industrial sector, with the additional support of the new law that was promulgated right before the beginning of the decade, the Andreotti Law,¹¹⁴ as mentioned previously.

¹¹³ Spain: 588 movies (peaked in 1956 and 1958 with 75 films); Austria: 247 movies (peaked in 1956 with 37 films); Denmark: 135 movies (peaked in 1956 and 1957 with 17 films); Belgium: 3 movies (Ibid.).

¹¹⁴ The law confirmed the obligation of programming Italian movies for 80 days per year, the government contribution for producers of 10% of the films' gross takings, increasing the price for those

Andreotti law came into effect in 1950, and was replaced by another in 1953 upon its expiration. It was crucial in its role as the first stimulus for the Italian film industry that established an increase in investments from 7 to 25 billion lire, an increase in market shares from 17.3% to 38.2%, and an overall 300% increase in exports. This expansion, according to Barbara Corsi (2012, pp. 30-31), was also largely a result of producers' dynamism, which in turn depended on the faith of a new agreement between cinema and Government. Like many other European countries, the main challenge during the post-war period was the protection against Hollywood competition and its domination of European cinema markets.¹¹⁵ This domination was favoured by many for several reasons. Firstly, the validity of Hollywood products for Italian audiences, particularly after the deprivation of the Fascist era and its protectionism. Secondly, the practice of dubbing, which was a very common custom in Italy and also the number of cinemas Hollywood companies controlled. Thirdly, the lack of laws in the country that limited imports and provided precise timelines for their circulation permits (Nicoli, 2017). Every country in Europe adopted a defensive strategy that included measures of protection for national film production and an impulse towards international cooperation. One outcome of this was the Italian-French agreements (Corsi, 2001), which opened the path towards the other countries.

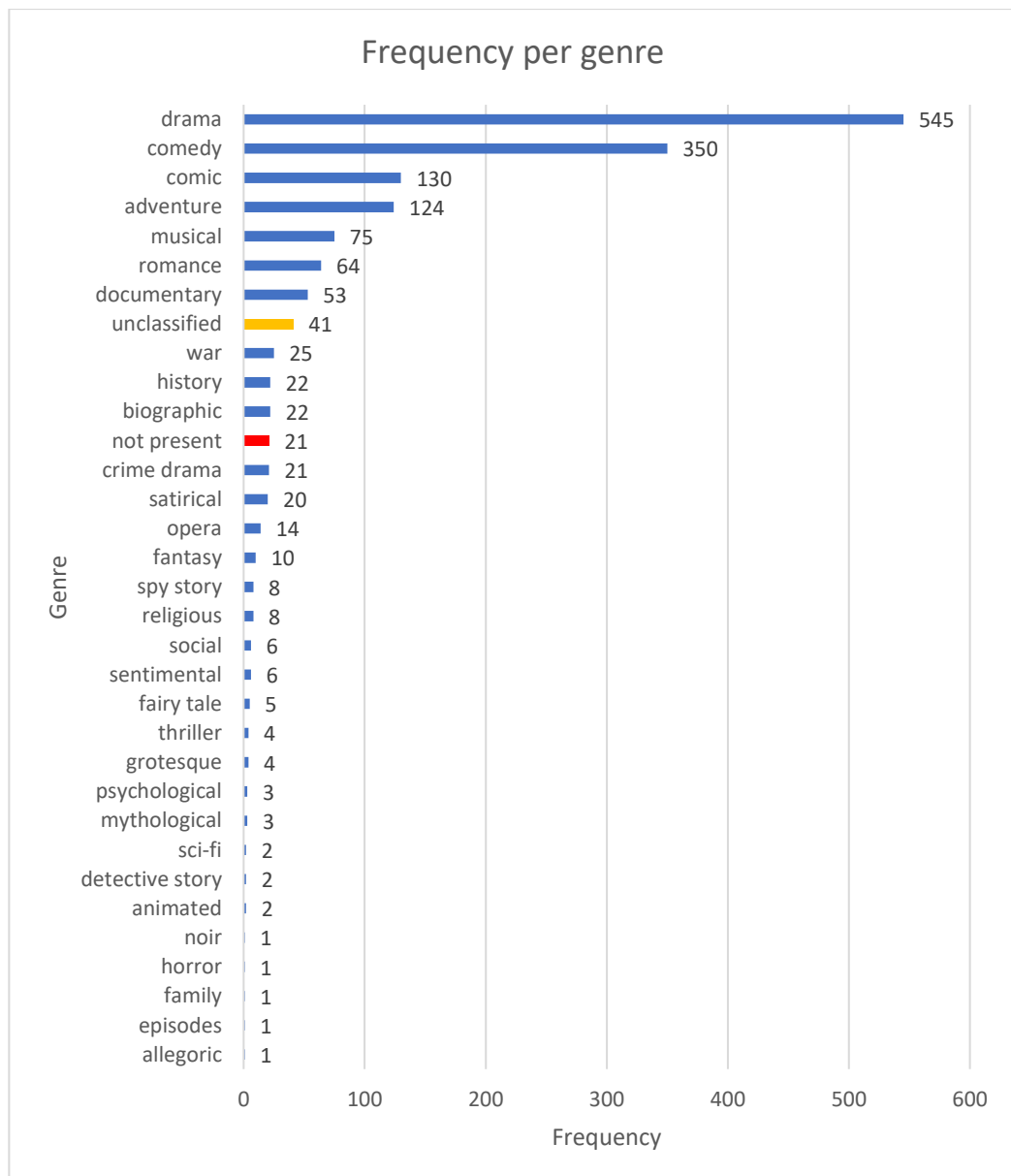
All the films produced, even co-productions, tried to follow the tastes of the audience. Thus, it has been necessary to examine the genres produced in the framework observed. By grounding my research in the film genres listed on the cinematografo.it database, I was able to identify 13 categories from which I could allocate all 1595 movies released. The starting point was Marina Nicoli's paper "Historia non facit saltus. The Italian movie industry from 1945 to 1965" (whose genres are based on Quaglietti's *Cifre commentate di sette anni di cinema italiano* (1978, pp. 15-38), to which I have added other categories, like fantasy, horror and science-fiction. As reported in Nicoli's paper (2018), prevalent movie genres produced by Italian companies in the period 1945-1965 were: drama; comedy; adventure; historical; comic; documentary. However, these genres were not completely representative of the variety of films released. For this reason, musicals, war, mythology, and detective story

films considered having a particular artistic feature to 8%, and the contribution for documentaries and newsreel (3% plus a 2% for the artistic value). Moreover, there was a 20% tax refund for the programming of Italian films for cinema owners (Quaglietti, 1980, pp. 65-66).

¹¹⁵ Regarding the Italian market, Marina Nicoli (2017, 60%) reports: "To make sure they had direct control of demand, the Hollywood majors returned to Italy in late 1945. First Paramount, then Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros, RKO and Universal re-opened their Rome branches, while others preferred to give exclusive rights to Italian distributors, like Columbia Pictures working with Ceiad or United Artists with Artisti Associati."

genres have been added to the list. Below is a complete catalogue of the movies produced between 1945 and 1959, divided by genre.

Chart 13. Frequency of genres between 1945 and 1959

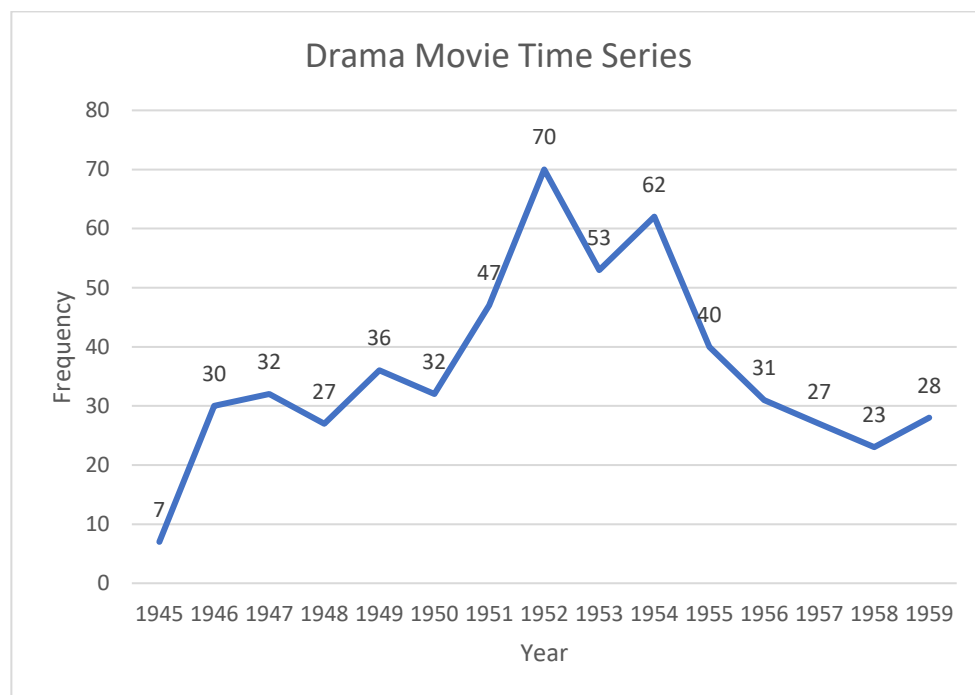


The different colour of some columns depends on the fact that they register different data to others (in this case, the absence of the movie from the list or the impossibility to classify it).

Source: author's elaboration.

Chart 13 shows all the genres produced using the cataloguing system previously discussed. This list demonstrates that, during the selected period, drama was indisputably the most common and popular genre, seeing as it made up 545 movies out of 1595 films released. Unsurprisingly then, and given the dramatic historical conditions of the period under consideration, it is no coincidence that Neorealism was born during this time.¹¹⁶ Neorealism provided both a platform and a voice for the tragic conditions Italians and Italian arts were enduring.

Chart 14. Drama movie time series



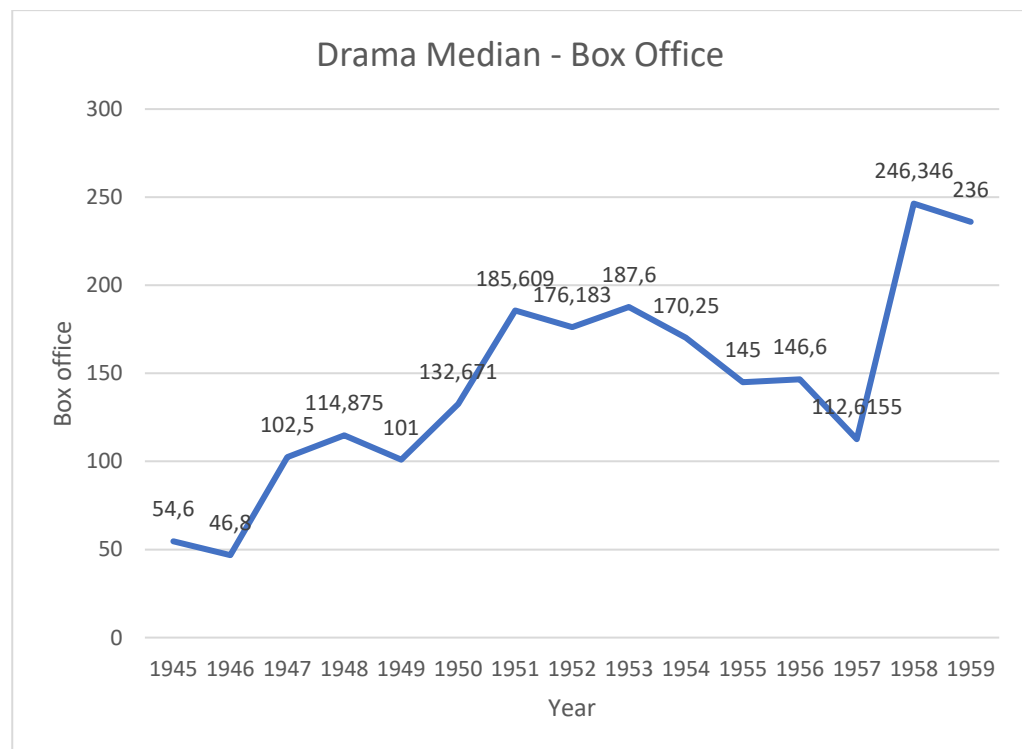
Source: author's elaboration.

Indeed, as chart 14 shows, dramas were a widespread feature of the Italian cinema. It was the most produced genre, and the most financed by banks, 30% against 27% for comedies and 15% for comic movies (Nicoli, 2017). Dramas flourished, given the historical context and difficulties people were facing after the war. The trend following the war went from 7 dramas being released in 1945, to 30 in 1946. This jump accounts for half the entire production, considering 65 movies were produced in 1946 in total. Between 1950-1952, dramas grew exponentially, but within the same range of around 50% of the total production, meaning 70

¹¹⁶ For some studies on Neorealism and its impact on the Italian society, see: Marcus (1986); Micciché (1999); Wagstaff (2007); Brunetta (2009); Parigi (2014); Farassino (2017); Gundle (2020).

out of 148 movies were produced. After the crisis that hit the industry in the middle of the decade, the genre lost its power and production diminished to its lowest peak. Only 23 out of 137 dramas were produced in 1958 (chart 14). It is during these last two years of the decade that a different trend in production can be registered. Despite the decreasing general production, dramas and comic movies increased in number, even if for just a few releases. On the other hand, comedy follows the trend of general production, experiencing a lowering number of the movies that can be classified within its category, as will be discussed in further detail below.

Chart 15. Median value of the box office of drama films in Italy per year



Box office data was taken from Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano* (2007)
Source: author's elaboration.

As previously mentioned, the data analysis will always be associated with the study of the box office median value, to give a clearer idea of the trends. Information about box office was taken from Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano* (2007), based above all on SIAE (Società Italiana Autori ed Editori – Italian Authors and Publishers' society) sources and archival researches (developed, revised, and updated edition after edition). In chart 15, the median for drama box office results completely differs from the schematic drawings of the drama

movie time series (as shown in chart 14).¹¹⁷ This means that results in theatres did not depend entirely on the number of dramas produced and released. More movies did not automatically mean more profits. This was the case, for example, in 1946, when 30 dramas were released, but revenue was less than 1948, when 27 movies were produced.¹¹⁸ It could depend on the increase of ticket prices, which grew from 57.4 lire in 1946 to 72.7 lire in 1948 (Treveri Gennari and Sedgwick, 2015, p. 77).

The second most common genre was comedy, as represented in chart 13, which shows the evolution of comedies throughout the period studied. This genre started to grow gradually at the end of the 1940s, and reached its peak in 1953, when 47 comedies were released, out of a total of 160 movies produced. It was the highest number of comedies produced during the period, with an increase of 25 movies in just one year – in 1952 22 comedies were released (chart 16) out of a total of 148 films.

After the war, however, the genre was not so popular. In 1945 and 1946 only 8 comedies were released in both years, and just 4 in 1947. It could be argued that the genre was not in line with audiences' feelings and did not manage to represent the contextual condition. Economic marginalisation, everyday challenges, hunger, and misery were very much felt issues and concerned large sectors of the population, which could find difficult to find proper representation in light comedies. In some sense, it could be said that the right genre at the time was drama – Italians could sublimate their suffering through cinema, and release themselves through a cathartic experience rather than “escapism”.¹¹⁹

It is not incidental, therefore, that when everyday life started to improve and families' income began to recover and grow after the war, comedies also experienced an increase in production. What is more, comedies of this time, represented the contradictions and conflicts of Italian society, and integrated a perfect mixture between humour and drama that “became a promoter of change”, to use Nicoli's words (2017, 83%). From 1947 to 1953, there was a constant increase in the production of such films, even in relation to previously highlighted increases in movies produced.¹²⁰ After 1953, the general production of movies

¹¹⁷ The numbers reported are in million lire.

¹¹⁸ For a complete analysis of box office and theatres, studies about cinema audiences at the time should be taken into consideration. Unfortunately, there is no space here for this kind of evaluation due to the amount of data reported and analysed, and in part because of the more specific focus on production.

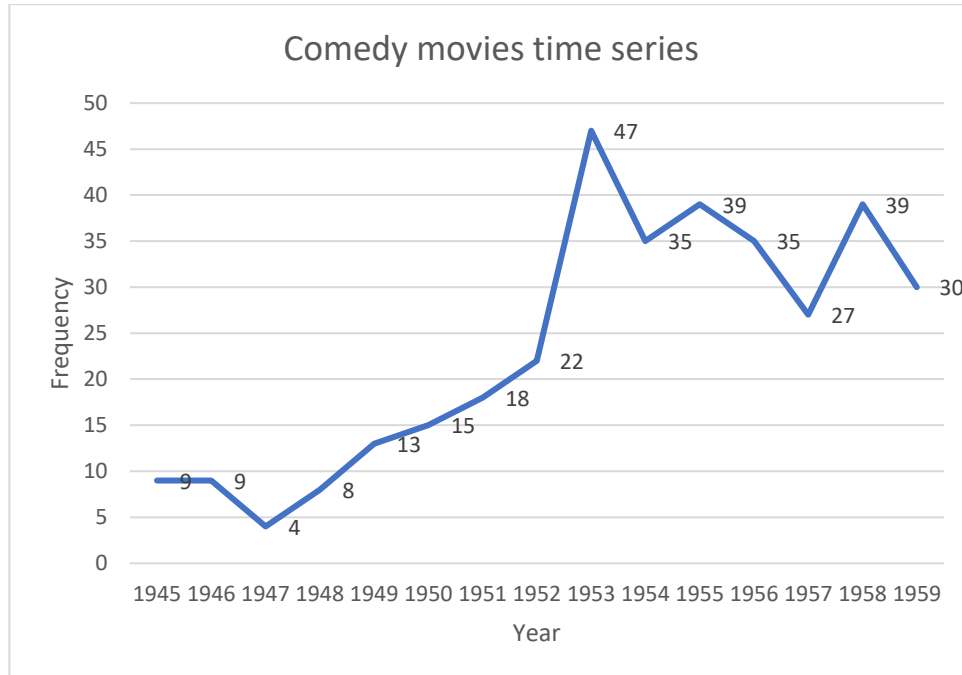
For specific references on audience studies, see: Treveri Gennari, *et al.* (2011); Treveri Gennari (2015); Treveri Gennari, and Sedgwick (2015); Hipkins, *et al.* (2016); Treveri Gennari, *et al.* (2019).

¹¹⁹ See Gundle (1995); Morreale (2011); Barattoni (2012); Bayman (2013); Bayman (2014).

¹²⁰ 8 comedies in 1948 out of 56 movies released; 13 in the following year out of a total of 90 films produced; 15 in 1950 out of 84 movies; 18 in 1951 out of 122 movies; 22 in 1952 out of 148; 47 in 1953 out of 160.

started to decrease, and so too did the production of comedies.¹²¹ It is not until the 1960s that a new wave of comedies appears. This was owing to the invention of *commedia all'italiana* and its diffusion in cinemas throughout the entire world.¹²²

Chart 16. Comedy movies time series



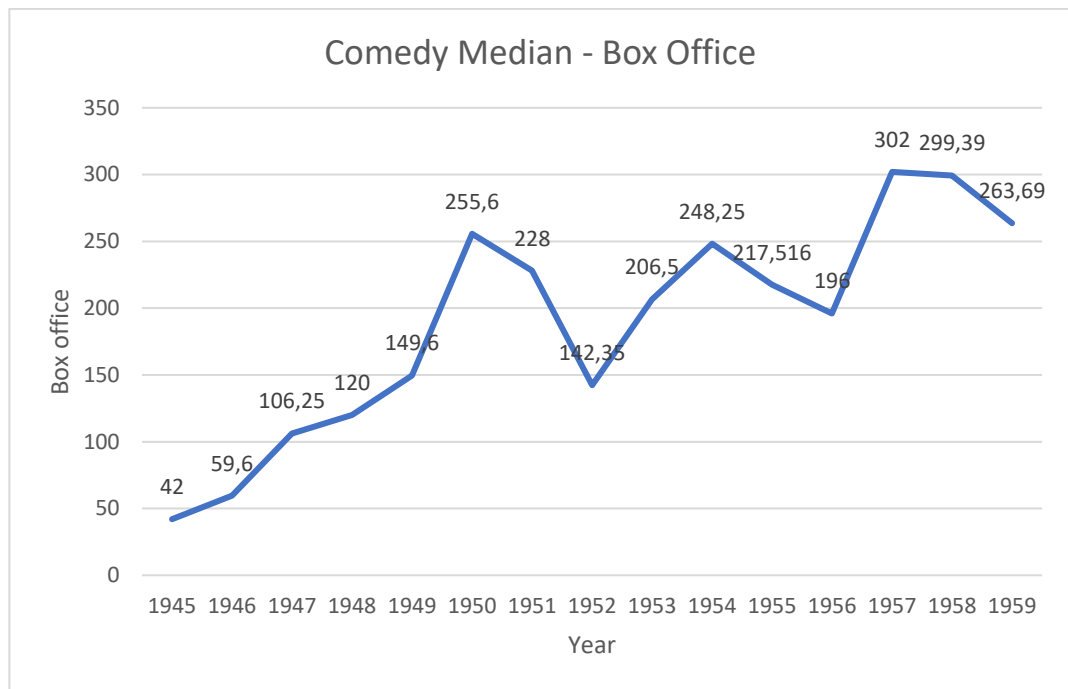
Source: author's elaboration.

In order to have a more reliable understanding of the diffusion of comedy and its appreciation among Italians, the genre's median value at the box office is presented in chart 17.

¹²¹ 35 out of 155; 39 out of 135; 35 out of 115; 27 out of 108; 39 out of 137; 30 out of 124.

¹²² For some detailed studies, see: Aprà and Pistagnesi (1986); Fournier Lanzoni (2009); Bini (2015).

Chart 17. Comedy median for box office



Box office data was taken from Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano* (2007)
Source: author's elaboration.

This chart shows a fragmented trend throughout the period studied. From 1945 to 1950, we see an uneven yet constant increment. During the 1950s, the evolution of the genre sees continuous increases and decreases, with many reverse peaks. Every two years, the median value shows dissimilar trends to that of the previous period. This demonstrates a highly irregular and conflicting growth of the genre, specifically during the first two thirds of the decade. The median, thus, illustrates a genre widespread among people at the time, while also struggling between having to divide its popularity with dramas, another really popular movie type. Chart 16 clearly demonstrates drama's popularity, and this will be explained in further depth later, after the analysis of another prevalent genre in Italian cinema.

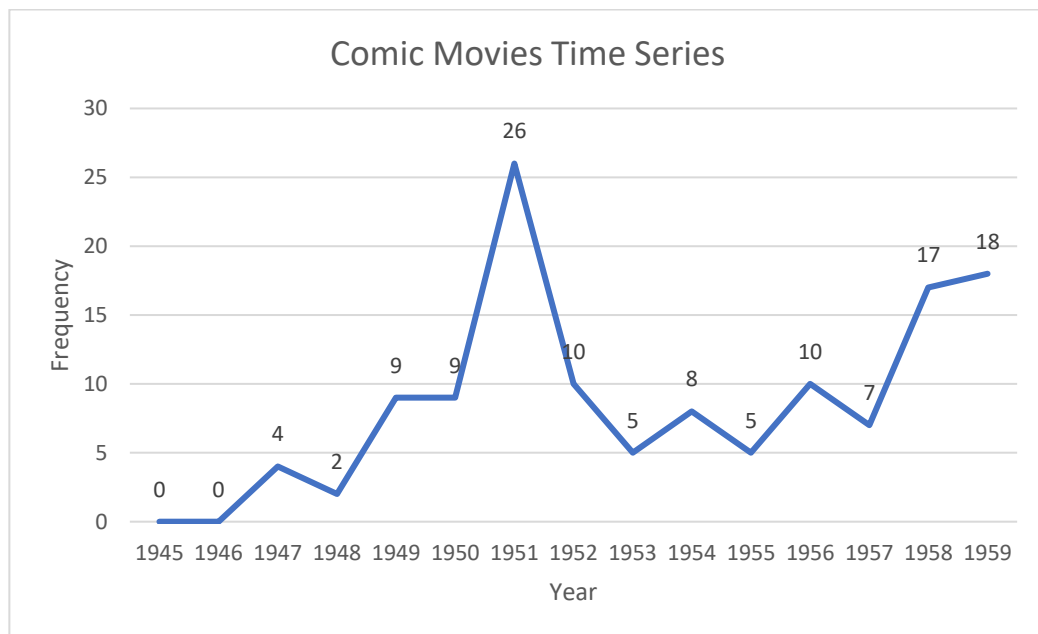
Comedies and comic movies¹²³ released from that moment onwards, were the favourite choice in accordance with Italian population taste.¹²⁴ It is important to notice that, right after the war, from 1945 and 1946, comic movies were not released at all (chart 18). They started being produced in 1947, with production increasing from 1949 and after a sharp rise, reaching a peak in 1951, with 26 comic movies produced out of a total of 122 films. The

¹²³ For a distinction of the two genres and the importance of maintaining both of them into this research, see the Introduction.

¹²⁴ When talking about comic films, I refer to those movies, using Roberto Campari's words, "where the protagonist's personality determines in a certain sense even the plot", and can be related to actor figures like Macario and Totò (Campari, 1986, p. 129).

previous year, just 9 out of 84 were produced. After 1951, production began to decrease, returning to 10 out of 148. It is only at the end of the decade that a second significant growth in production appears.

Chart 18. Comic movie time series



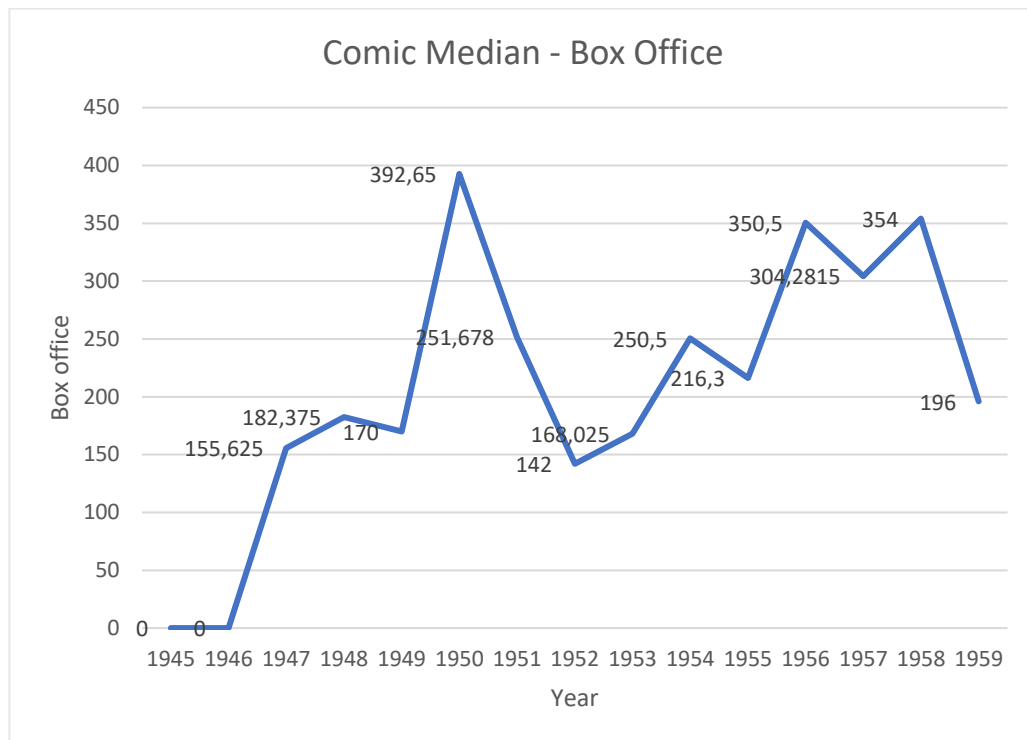
Source: author's elaboration.

When considering the median value of comic movies in relation to the box office, it is noted that the trend is very irregular, with significant changes from one year to the next (chart 19). The movement aligns with the same peaks and troughs of production at the time, though from 1950, it features a descending trend until 1952, the lowest point within the entire fifteen-year period. There is a definite correlation among these trends. For instance, if the genre had lower proceeds, the following year, production companies tended to release fewer comic movies. Moreover, the median tells us that the genre had great success in 1950, with three out of the five highest performing movies at the box office, starring Totò.¹²⁵ The overall trend then increases again after the middle of the decade. This coincides with many movies starring Totò being released, all of which had great success at the box office.¹²⁶ Therefore, Totò could be considered as one of the most profitable actors of the industry, and surely a valuable resource for the comic genre.

¹²⁵ *47 morto che parla, Totò sceicco, Totò Tarzan.*

¹²⁶ These were: *Totò lascia o raddoppia?* (527 million lire); *Totò, Peppino e i... fuorilegge* (450 million); *Totò, Peppino e la malafemmina* (almost 700 million lire).

Chart 19. Comic median for box office

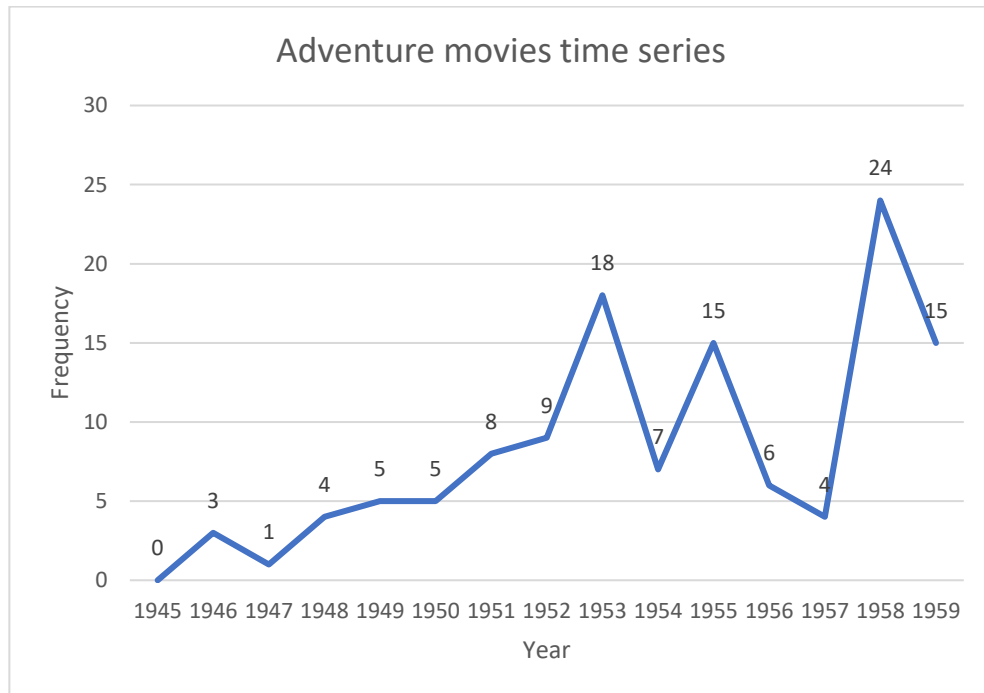


Box office data was taken from Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano* (2007)
 Source: author's elaboration.

Surprisingly enough, the fourth most common genre was adventure. Together with dramas, comedies, and comic movies, these four genres cover 72% of the entire production. The adventure movies time series, as illustrated in chart 20, shows an increase over the duration of time, consisting of two major peaks: one in 1953 when 18 movies were produced; the other in 1958 when 24 movies were produced. If the historical context is considered, the evolution of the genre should not surprise. After WWII, when the situation was difficult and the general spirit affected by contextual social hardships, it is plausible to suggest that audiences did not want to find escapist pleasure with fantasy narratives and heroines/es they could hardly empathise with. Moreover, it is noticeable that the genre tends to be in contrast with the general industry trend, given its increase in 1955, when the industry released fewer movies overall.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Even though the report of the BNL registered an increase in the second half of the decade (with 73 movies financed, instead of 72 in 1954 and 90 in 1953), it is important to remember that generally the production and release of movies happen in different periods, often one year after the other. Therefore, the film industry responded to data and results of the year before the one analysed (FST, 1953, 1954, 1955).

Chart 20. Adventure movies time series

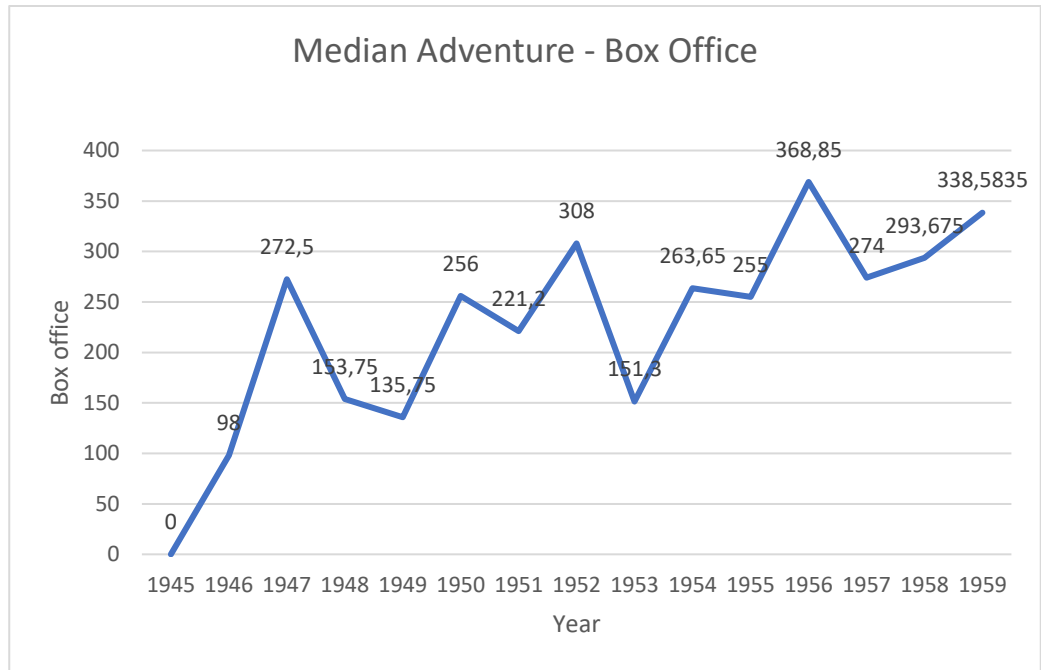


Source: author's elaboration.

The median value of the adventure genre at the box office (chart 21), follows the same trend of other genres under consideration. In other words, the trend of the median does not follow that of the time series. Understandably, however, production was mostly influenced by box office figures. For instance, in 1952, the adventure genre's box office median reached one of its highest peaks since 1945, the first year analysed. Consequently, the following year, companies invested in the production of further adventure movies, thereby doubling the number of films released identifiable as adventure films. What is particularly interesting to note, is that this increase occurred, irrespective of the fact that the most successful film of a particular season may have been a musical.¹²⁸

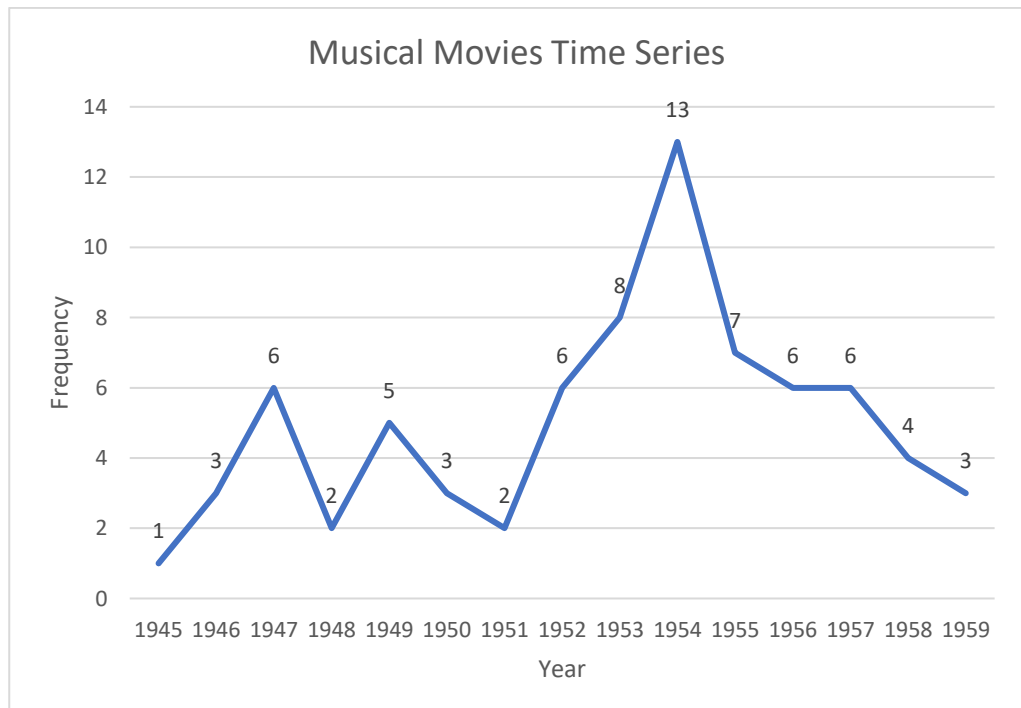
¹²⁸ *L'Uccello di fuoco* (H. Ekamn), an Italian-Swedish co-production that collected 1,800,000,000 Lire.

Chart 21. Adventure median for box office



Box office data was taken from Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano* (2007)
Source: author's elaboration.

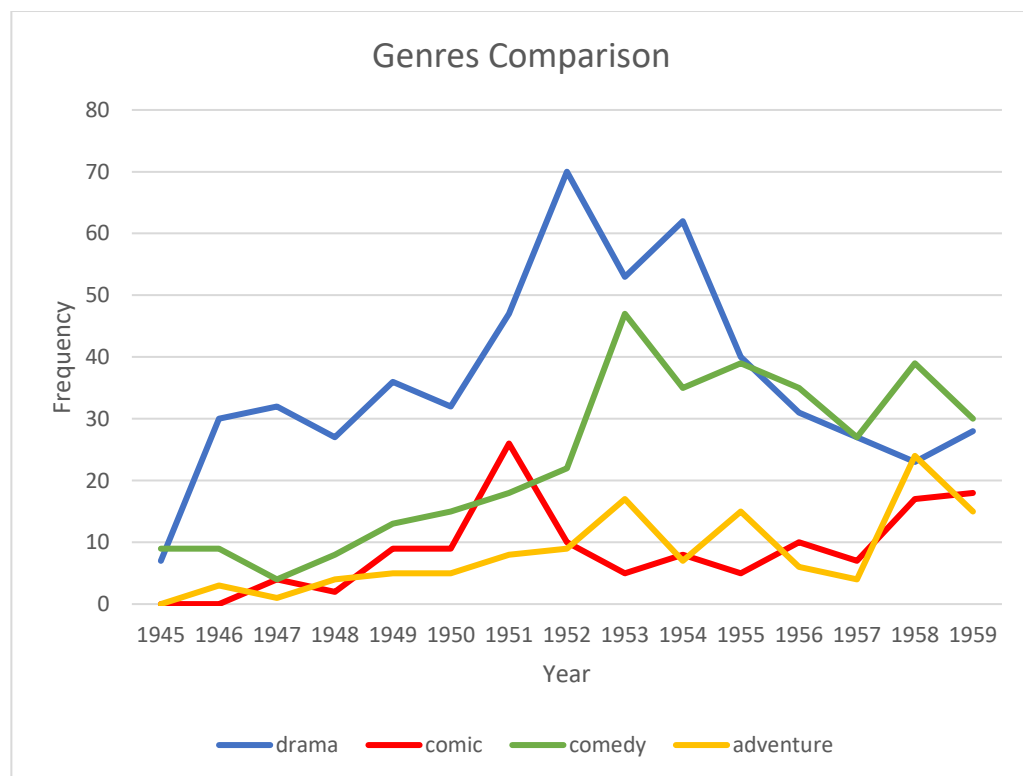
Chart 22. Musical movies time series



Source: author's elaboration.

Musicals were the fifth most common genre in the Italian cinema industry, with 75 movies released between 1945 and 1959 (chart 22). I am not going to extensively deepen the discussion about musicals, but I thought it was important to mention it, too, due to its relevance in Italy and Europe, particularly in France, even before the war.¹²⁹ For this reason, distribution of this specific genre throughout the period will be highlighted because it had successful results at the box office notwithstanding the scarce number of films released, as will be shown. In spite of its ups and downs the genre was present for the entire period. As the time series shows (chart 22), from 1945 to 1959 production companies released at least one musical per year. This genre reached its peak in 1954, with 13 movies being produced. Growth was not stable before 1954, and after this time, the genre experienced a constant decline, that led to the production of just 3 movies in 1959, the same as in 1946. As for Hollywood, the genre began to have more representation in cinemas after the war, but during the second half of the Fifties, its diffusion gradually decayed.¹³⁰

Chart 23. Four most produced genres comparison time series



Source: author's elaboration.

¹²⁹ In 1930s France, the box office was dominated by musicals, together with screen adaptations of boulevard theatres (Forbes and Street, 2000, p. 44).

¹³⁰ For studies on Hollywood and musicals, see for example: Feuer (1993); Lev 2003); Biesen (2014).

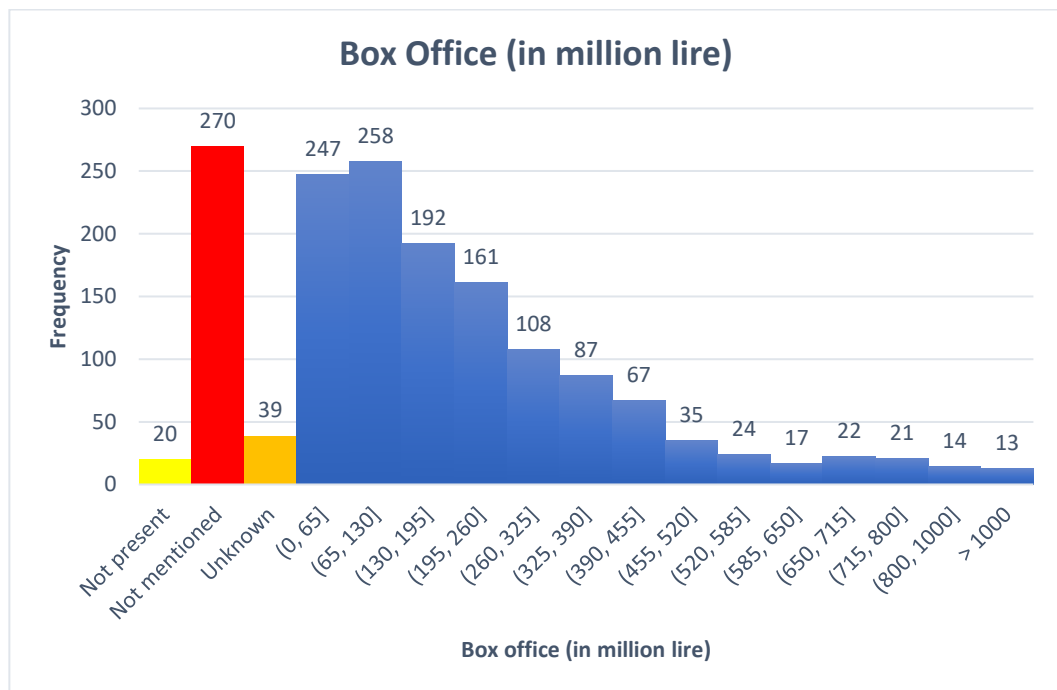
Following the description of the first four genres produced in Italy after the war and during the Fifties, it is important to underline that their comparison (chart 23) shows not only the trends of the genres, but also the broader evolution of the industry. Firstly, in order to have an idea of the Italian film market during the period analysed, it is important to note that dramas, comedies, comic and adventure movies covered 72% of the entire production. As seen in chart 23, drama had the most spread, which surpasses all other genres produced until the first half of the 1950s. After the crisis of the decade, drama and comedy figures start drawing closer. On the other hand, comic and adventure movies show similar yet clearly conflicting developments. Both high and low peaks of both genres alternate, so that generally when one genre registers a positive juncture, the other, conversely, experiences a decrease in numbers. There is just one clear difference that occurs in 1951, when the comic movie genre reaches its highest point. The same result is almost reached by the adventure film genre, but not until 1958, a year when the production of all movie genres increases, with the exception of dramas. This evolution of genres should not be surprising, as according to Emanuela Martini (1986, p. 99), they not only depend on audience's tastes, but also follow a "natural path of adaptation to trends and changes in the social tissue" of the time. Indeed, the alternation of genres follows the transformation of popular culture more generally, and the shift from agricultural to urban.

3.3 Genre and box office

As already mentioned, it is not possible to study the film industry without taking into consideration box office figures, a fundamental indication of audience response and appreciation. The histogram chosen (chart 24) presents box office figures of the data collected (expressed in million lire) in relation to the number of films produced, and represents the asymmetry of the data depicted. The information is different for each film, but had similarities among the movies released when considering dividing it into categories. Therefore, I decided to choose a grouping which could better depict this diversification and allow me to examine its ongoing at the same time. This cataloguing was the most representative of the profit differentiation due to the presence of specific and diverse data.

It does not present space between the bars to give a sense of continuity. The round brackets indicate that the value is not included within the class; on the other side, the data before the square brackets are included.

Chart 24. Films box office data in million lire (1945-1959)



The different colour of some columns depends on the fact that they represent the absence of any numerical value: not present, not mentioned and unknown.

Source: author's elaboration.

It must be added that a large portion of the aggregate figure is represented by the movies whose box office outcome was not mentioned. The total number of movies produced between 1945 and 1959 was 1595. Most of them collected between 65 and 130 million lire at the box office (258 movies – second blue column); 247 collected up to 65 million lire (first blue column). This means that out of 1595 movies produced, almost one third (505) collected a small amount of money, implying that many movies produced did not have satisfying financial returns, forcing many production companies to close. Concurrently, the difficulties registered by the film industry during these years should not be a surprising factor. It is also possible to argue that box office results were also affected by the excessive number of movies circulating.

Very few movies had a significant profit. The curve progressively diminishes, as chart 24 shows, to reach a somewhat stabilised lower range after the 585 million lire level. It was very

difficult for a movie to collect more than 300 million lire at the box office.¹³¹ The first one that reached and surpassed a billion was the comedy *Don Camillo* (J. Duvivier), in 1951.¹³² From this moment onwards, all movies that feature among the most successful at the box office exceeded the billion lire mark, with the exception of Kolossal *Guerra e Pace* (*War and Peace*, 1956) by King Vidor, which grossed 2,370,000,000 lire and became the highest grossing film in 1957. The fact that very few movies were great box office successes depended not only on the great number of films produced by the Italian industry, but also on the high presence of foreign films in the market. Considering the number of American, French, Spanish, German etc. movies being distributed in Italy after the war, and how many of these films were circulating in Italian cinemas, it is difficult to imagine if Italian movies had ample margins with which to manoeuvre. The market was overflowing, and the cinema economy saturated.

3.4 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to present and analyse the genres produced by the Italian film industry in the context in which the Italian cinema production developed and was studied in chapter 2. A film industry that was primarily based on investments in dramas and comedies. These were also the most common genres throughout Europe, and while the

¹³¹ The movies that collected the most during the period were: in 1945: *Roma città aperta* (R. Rossellini) – drama, 125,000,000 lire; in 1946: *Rigoletto* (C. Gallone) – opera, 210,000,000 lire; in 1947: *I miserabili* (*The Miserables*, R. Hampton, G. Lincoln, W. Pareto) – drama, 375,000,000 lire; in 1948: *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* (B. John, M. L'Herbier) – history, 841,000,000 lire; in 1949: *Domani è troppo tardi* (M. Leonide) – drama, 783,000,000 lire; in 1950: *Tormento* (R. Matarazzo) – drama, 726,868,000 lire; in 1951: *Don Camillo* (J. Duvivier) – comedy, 1,500,000,000 lire; in 1952: *L'Uccello di fuoco* (H. Ekam) – musical, 1,800,000,000 lire; in 1953: *Pane, amore e fantasia* (L. Comencini) – comedy, 1,500,000,000 lire; in 1954: *Ulisse* (M. Camerini) – adventure, 1,800,000,000 lire; *La donna più bella del mondo* (R. Leonard) – drama, 1,825,000,000 lire; in 1956: *Guerra e pace* (K. Vidor) – drama, 2,370,000,000 lire; in 1957: *Belle ma povere* (D. Risi) – comedy, 808,500,000 lire; in 1958: *La tempesta* (A. Lattuada) – adventure, 1,750,400,000 lire; in 1959: *La grande guerra* (M. Monicelli) – comedy, 1,750,000,000 lire.

¹³² I am referring only to Italian films released in Italy during the period examined. However, starting from this data, another line of research that could be developed is the comparison between Italian and foreign films on the Italian market. Investigating the percentage of non-Italian films would provide a representation of the market shares and a study of the industry from another (complementary) perspective.

Italian market registered a major interest in them, it also created completely new genres such as the *commedia all'italiana*. This chapter has provided extensive evidence into how the industry was able to follow the mainstream, to indulge the tastes of the audiences (after first having shaped them), and to create a production that could compete with the giant Hollywood industry in terms of the number of movies released and the quality of product.

The Italian film industry of the time provided with a vast offering of films which ranged from low profile movies aimed at audiences on the outskirts, to upper-middle products, and high-budget films created for attracting audience's attention. This diversity increased the generalised growth of the industry (certainly helped by the Andreotti Law and the new legislative framework), which followed the expanding trend of the industrial sector in Italy. As seen, drama was indisputably the most common and popular genre, and the most financed one by banks, followed by comedies and comic movies. Together with adventure movies, these four genres cover 72% of the entire production, showing not only how diversified the offering of films released was, but also how the alternation of genres follows the transformation of popular culture.

However, this diversification did not correspond to adequate revenue. Indeed, very few movies had a significant profit. Considering all the films imported from different countries (U.S.A., France, Spain etc.) that were circulating in Italian cinemas, the cinema economy saturated, and Italian films had difficulties in distribution. The market was overflowing, registering a constant increase between 1945 and 1951, and not a perfect linear trend during the Fifties when considering profits, showing some stalemate periods. These periods correspond to the most relevant crisis of the industry, as stated in chapter 2. This trend portrays the more general trend of the Italian cinema industry, which saw a constant increase from the end of the war to the beginning of the following decade, and a series of decreases contrasted by successive growths throughout the decade. The assortment of genres produced, and the huge number of films released were all necessary to direct the Italian film industry throughout the 1950s for reaching the great successes of the 1960s, both in the inner and in the foreign markets.

Chapter 4

Production companies out of Rome and fragmentation of film financing

As discussed, the majority of film production companies (namely, 613 out of a total 770) were based in Rome. Unsurprisingly then, given the centrality of Italy's capital city for the film industry, due also to the presence of the most important studios in the country, Cinecittà, this confirms the idea of a concentration of labour forces, as mentioned by M. Curtin (2009). The remaining 157 companies were spread out throughout Italy, with more concentration in specific areas that could be identified as "industrial (cinema) districts".¹³³ The most important of these were Milan, Turin and Naples, with other relevant cases also in Sicily. As demonstrated, most Italian production companies were small and medium firms, and the film industry followed the more general industrial trends of Italy, as found in small and medium production companies in all the other sectors. In this chapter I will examine first of all, the geographical distribution of the companies founded between 1945 and 1959 in Italy in order to see if Rome was the only cinema centre in Italy. I will then focus on some production companies in specific areas of the country, specifically Northern and Southern Italy, by taking some of the most representative cities per each area as a sample given they combine the two characteristics mentioned above: they are small and medium firms and based in areas other than Rome. The representative cities are Palermo (in Southern Italy), due to the presence of many companies headed by one person; Naples¹³⁴ (in Southern Italy), due to the considerable number of enterprises and its relationship with Eduardo De

¹³³ For an explanation of the idea of a film industry district, see chapter 2.

¹³⁴ Even though Naples is considered South geographically speaking, it is the only closest city to the Centre of Italy, where a significant number of companies were founded during the period analysed.

Filippo,¹³⁵ one of the most important personalities in the film industry; and Turin (in Northern Italy), due to the value the city had for the *cinema delle origini*, the early cinema of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. While the cities have been selected in order to study the geographic distribution of the film industry, the companies under investigation are considered good examples for identifying behavioural patterns. These patterns draw from Powdermaker's examples, which are adapted, adjusted and then applied to the Italian context. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to detect and identify the production industry's geographic dissemination, in order to contest the false perception that the film industry was entirely based in Rome. As well as this, film production working practices, behaviours, and contacts are investigated to explore the modes of financing and realising movies in Rome, and in other areas of Italy too.

4.1 Decentralisation of production companies and film financing assemblage

After a general analysis of the companies' dimensions and their distribution throughout Italy, and of the specific genres produced, it is necessary to look at specific places outside Rome, the Italian cinema centre par excellence, to better comprehend the growth and progress of the film industry in the entire country. The capital's centrality depended on the 1930s policy of the Fascist regime, which tried to stimulate film production within Italy.¹³⁶ Moreover, it should also be mentioned that the pre-war period saw other places as chief centres for film industry, such as Milan, Naples and Turin,¹³⁷ all pivotal places for silent film production. Important industrial development can also be seen in Venice, where studios were created during the last years of Fascism by Scalera and Cines, two of the major companies in Italy (Small, 2014). In order to examine the nature and significance of historical

¹³⁵ Of the two companies led by the actor and director, the first one is located in Rome and the second one in Naples. It is an important element that offers a glimpse into the way he conducted business: the first company needed to be in Rome probably for managerial reasons (due to his new approach to the industrial cinema world), while the second could be in Naples thanks to an acquired familiarity with the production field.

¹³⁶ The regime founded the Venice Film Festival in 1932 and the film school Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in 1935. Moreover, it completed Cinecittà studios in 1938.

For other information about cinema and Fascism, see: Brunetta (1975); Gili (1990); Reich and Garofalo (2002); Zaggarro (2004); Ricci (2008); Gundle (2013); Ben-Ghiat (2015).

¹³⁷ The Italian film industry was polycentric, and the city of Turin was especially important. It hosted the FIAT car factory, which made it an industrial city (Nicoli, 2017).

industrial transformations, I retraced the production histories of some companies located throughout Italy, and that of their movies through combined research among different archives. These include the Archivio Centrale dello Stato di Roma, the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, and the historical archive of BNL, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. This work allowed me to observe whether the productive centres mentioned earlier remained hosting cities for film projects, if there were other relevant places for the Italian cinema industry, and how production companies were distributed in Italy.

My archival research offered invaluable sources that have informed much of this chapter. From the Archivio Centrale dello Stato di Roma, I retrieved information regarding the films produced:¹³⁸ the data collected include the notification of filming, financial plans, contracts for actors and workers, letters from and for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, among various other relevant documentation. Occasionally, I found production companies' deeds of incorporation, which provided valuable information into the company's foundation, its date, location, corporation stocks, and its managers. This material helped in outlining a pattern of the films produced and, primarily, of the film's production history, which then offered insights into the company's composition and workflow. The Chamber of Commerce in Rome held official information about single production companies. For instance, the deeds of incorporation (not always available), meeting of minutes, and documents of registration in the Chamber itself and/or at the courthouse. Finally, at the historical archive of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL), I found information and documents related to films that required a loan. This bank was the only organisation authorised by the government to provide funds for the film industry. The documents indicated the preferred amount a company applied for, the sum agreed by the bank, warranties provided by the company (most of the time, they were the film royalties), and the date of repayment of the loan (or the dates of extensions and the amount of money still not repaid). The procedure depended on the fact that, often film productions were financed both through the company's resources and short-term loans, either in combination or independently.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ In order to have this information, I have consulted the list of films produced in the period under analysis, and I have also researched all the films related to the production company I was interested in at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, and selected those belonging to the 1945-1959 period.

¹³⁹ According to M. Nicoli (2017), the majority of independent productions were financed through loans. However, most of the films "produced by the large groups were financed by the companies' own resources – resources that could of course be partly based on long-terms loans." Due to the Italian financial structure of the industry, made up of small to medium enterprises and big companies, the method of the credit loans dominated over the equity capital.

I have selected ten production companies throughout Italy, in order to have a greater appreciation of how production companies worked, specifically those outside Rome. Among the companies about which information has been found in the archives,¹⁴⁰ these ten companies are considered among the most illustrative examples of the evolution of the industry away from its Roman centre. According to the archival data, they embody the modes of production of the period analysed, and help in understanding and explaining some of the industry's patterns. Indeed, like most companies established at this time, these ten belong to the category of almost four hundred companies that declared having between fifty thousand and one million Lire at their foundation dates.¹⁴¹ Moreover, they were located in some of the main cities of the country, which were hubs of cultural and industrial life. Therefore, the remaining part of this chapter will focus on Palermo, Naples and Turin, three Italian cities that hosted film industries, and some of their production companies.

However, before dealing with this section in detail, it is important to note the companies' distribution and the "colonisation" of the territory. As mentioned, production companies in Italy covered the entire peninsula from North to South. This happened during the inception of the film industry, and the phenomenon continued to develop after WWII. During this period, Barbara Corsi states (2001, pp. 51-59), the demand for cinema was widespread on the entire Italian territory. One of the most energetic centres was Milan, but production companies and film projects could have been started in almost any region. The decentralisation of production firms was seen as an emancipation from the Fascist regime, which wanted to concentrate film production in Rome through Cinecittà, its studio, and the entire film infrastructure. However, most of the time, this reorganisation of production forces was due to "the premature re-emerging of the dispersion trend of capitals and productive energies typical of the Italian cinema industry and of the lack in professionalism with which people threw themselves into cinema" (Corsi, 2001, pp. 51-52). That is to say, some companies tried to make their fortunes by producing one or two movies. This trend did not seem to concern ANICA, the Italian national association of movie industry professionals, until the 1950s, when the growth of the production segment began to exceed normal

¹⁴⁰ Finding enough information about a single company which could help in defining its characteristics and modes of producing has not been an easy process. Most of the times, this information was fragmented and not exhaustive in outlining a solid overview of the company. Thus, first of all, I researched all the small and medium firms based in the most important cinema hubs of the chosen areas. Subsequently, I found that there was only partial information about most of these companies which could not allow for a trustworthy analysis. Therefore, I had to select the company's with the most complete information at my disposal.

¹⁴¹ For the analysis of production companies and their dimensions in Italy during the period studied, see chapter 2.

rhythms of expansion in relation to inflation rates. Any attempt of regulating and planning production activity was futile and unsuccessful. Furthermore, according to ANICA, it was impossible for it to control the size of production, if the law regulating the field stated that “production is free”.¹⁴² The multiplication of firms and movies alongside the saturation of domestic and international markets, resulted in increased costs that depended on the support, loans and laws provided by the Government. The Government was unable to enact appropriate procedures to contrast not only the proliferation of companies (Corsi, 2001, pp. 51-52).

Studying the list of companies extrapolated from Bernardini’s book that were founded between 1945 and 1959, it is worth highlighting that 79.61% of these chose Rome as their legal residence. However, this did not mean that companies could not be present in other cities at the same time, for example with offices in Turin or Milan (for a list of companies present in two cities at the same time, see table 7).

¹⁴² In the 1947 law n. 379, the first article recited: “The practice of film production is free” (*Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, no date).

Table 7. Companies present in two cities

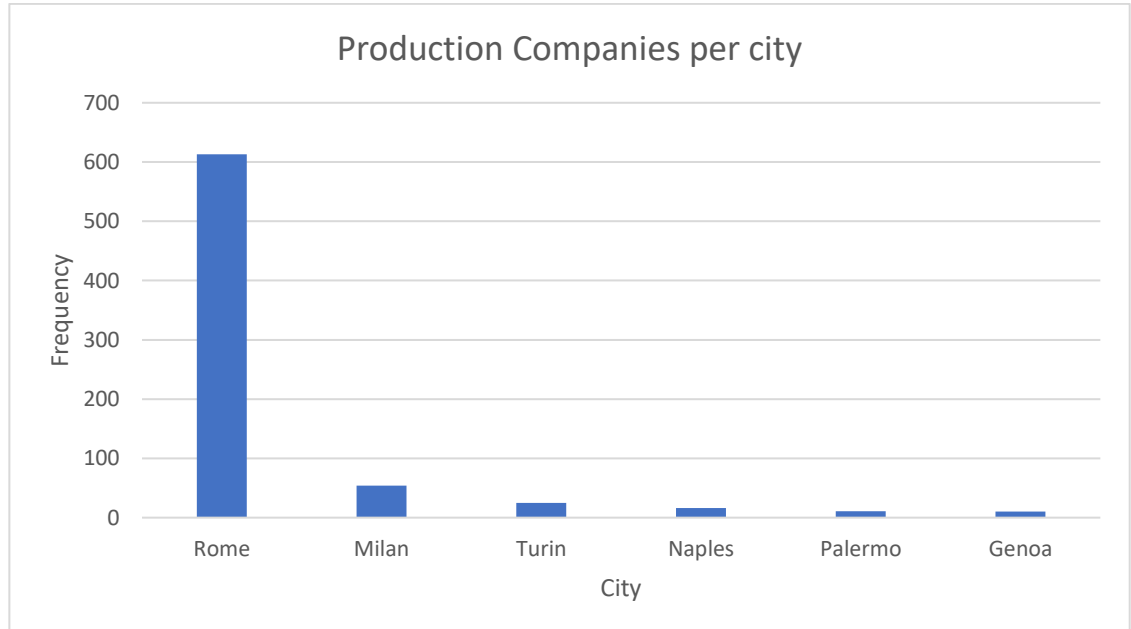
Cities	Companies
Bornato-Milan	I.M.A. Film di Antonio Domenighini
Caserta-Rome	Edera Film srl
Cervinara-Rome	Lombardi Film e Comp. Srl
Genoa-Rome	Ardire Film srl
Genoa-Rome	Cooperativa Spettatori Produttori Cinematografici srl
Imperia-Rome	Riviera Film srl
Messina-Rome	Faro Film spa
Milan-Rome	Humanitas Film spa
Milan-Rome	IN.CI.M. - Industrie Cinematografiche Milanesi
Milan-Rome	A.T.A. - Artisti Tecnici Associati sa
Milan-Rome	Stella Film (1956) srl
Milan-Rome	Tempo Film spa
Padua-Rome	Diva Film srl
Palermo-Rome	Panaria Film srl
Perugia-Rome	Umbria Film srl
Rome-Bergamo	San Vitale Film srl
Rome-Ferrara	Este Film spa
Rome-Milan	Cinecultura
Rome-Milan	Filmitalia srl
Rome-Milan	Produzione Venturini srl
Rome-Milan	Telfilm srl
Rome-Palermo	Panaria spa
Rome-Trieste	Faretra Film srl
Rome-Turin	Augustus Film srl
Rome-Turin	S.A.C.I.T.E.R.
Salò-Rome	Onda Film
Soriano-Rome	Produzione Cinematografica M.G. di Girolami Marino
Turin-Milan	Dora Film sa
Turin-Rome	RAI-Radiotelevisione Italiana spa
Turin-Rome	Vides srl
Turin-Rome	Villani Film
Turin-Rome	Caretta Film spa
Venice-Budrio	Felsinea Produzione Film di Alberti Gaetano di Ulisse
Verbania-Rome	Italgamma Film srl

Source: author's elaboration.

Rome, Turin and Milan were the centres of operation that allowed production companies to be active in the most important cities where cinema used to have its managers and studios. It is not incidental, then, that Rome used to host most of these offices. However, with the exception of Rome that housed 613 production companies out of 770, it can be easily hypothesised that the other important hubs for production companies were Milan and Turin, with 54 (7.01%) and 25 (3.25%) companies respectively. In other cities the number of production companies decreases. In Naples, for instance, there are 16 enterprises (2.08%); 11 in Palermo, (1.43%); and 10 in Genoa companies (1.3%). Many of the cities where the film industry established itself were the same that used to be active even before the wars, such as Rome, Milan and Turin. Others emerged throughout various decades, such as Palermo and Genoa.

All of these cities are represented in the diagram below (chart 25), which shows the importance these cities had for the location of production companies.

Chart 25. Number of new production companies founded per city



Source: author's elaboration.

Number of production companies in Rome (79.61% - 613 companies), Milan (7.01% - 54 companies), Turin (3.25% - 25 companies), Naples (2.08% - 16 companies), Palermo (1.43% - 11 companies), and Genoa (1.3% - 10 companies).

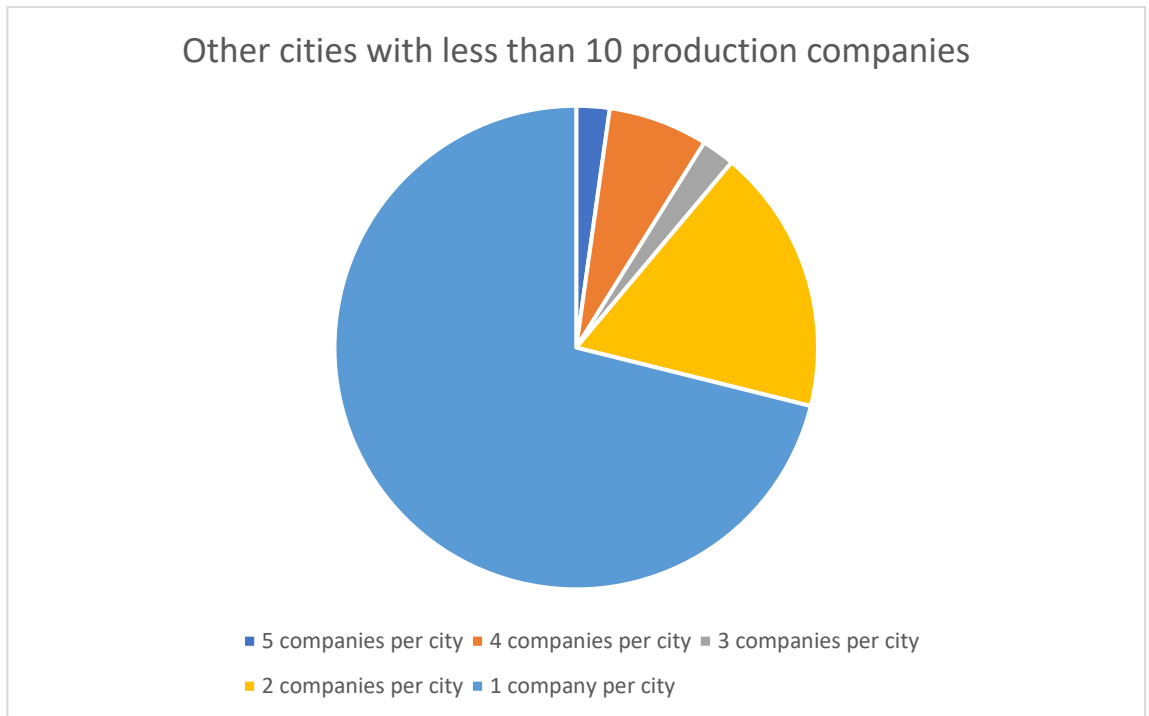
There are then other cities that were chosen as legal residence by a few companies, totalling less than ten per city. These include: Venice, with 5 companies (0.65%); Florence, Leghorn and Padua with 4 (0.52%); Bari with 3 (0.39%); Biella (VC), Bologna, Castellammare di Stabia (NA), Latina, Messina, Pisa, Rovereto (TN), and Treviso with 2 (0.26%). Finally, thirty-two cities hosted just one production company.¹⁴³ Each of them represents 0.13% of the total number of production companies founded in Italy at the time. This sample shows how the main cinema hubs were in only a few districts of the cinema industry, compared to the great number of cities that held film enterprises. However, it is not clear if these companies were located in cities different from the ones usually housing film studios, and other central industrial activities of the country, because of particular geographical/bureaucratic reasons related to their founders' places of residence, or because of financial reasons and fiscal incentives. It may simply have been the convenience of living in a less expensive city compared to Rome or Milan. The reasons could be multiple, and there is no indisputable answer.

In the following diagram (figure 3), the distribution of companies is shown from a reverse point of view, to depict the towns that hosted less than 10 production companies. The pie chart shows that most of the cities, 32 cities out of 51 in fact, housed only one production company (62.75%), and that 8 hosted two companies per city. 5 of these were located in Venice and 3 in Bari, as mentioned above. This confirms Barbara Corsi's suggestion (2001, p. 51) that even the most hidden province registered an "irrepressible fermentation of projects". According to Corsi (2001, p. 52), Andreotti's Law guaranteed a great amount of money from the beginning of the 1950s, which fuelled an increase in production and, as a consequence, a multiplication of enterprises, which released only one movie, to take advantage of the percentage contributions of profits.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ For a list of these cities and the percentage of company presence in them, see chart 27.

¹⁴⁴ These contributions were given to almost all movies at a maximum of 18% of the proceeds.

Figure 3. Number of cities with less than 10 production companies



Under the number of 10 production companies per city, there are: 5 production company in Venice – 0.13%; 4 companies in Florence, Livorno and Padua – 0.4%; 3 companies in Bari – 0.13%; 2 companies in Biella (VC), Bologna, Castellammare di Stabia (NA), Latina, Messina, Pisa, Rovereto (TN), and Treviso – 1.04%; 1 production company in other 32 cities: Ancona, Bergamo, Bolzano, Bornato, Budrio (BO), Cagliari, Campione d’Italia (CO), Caserta, Catania, Ceriale (SV), Cervinara (SV), Ferrara, Grottaferrata (RM), Imperia, Isernia, Lazise sul Garda (VR), Lodi (MI), Monteforte d’Alpone (VR), Ostia Lido (RM), Perugia, Ravenna, Reggio Calabria, San Giovanni Lupatoto (VR), Salò (BS), Soriano nel Cimino (VT), Tirrenia (PI), Trieste, Udine, Verbania (NO), Verona, Viareggio, and Vicenza – 4.16%.

Source: author’s elaboration. This graphic represents the number of cities that hosted less than 10 production companies.

4.2 Case study: Sicily and Palermo

When taking into consideration the film industry that established itself outside Rome, a very peculiar place seemed to be the Sicilian region. This was due to the fact that all the analysed companies were tied to the same city and the same producers. A notable film production hub was Palermo, which had eleven production companies.¹⁴⁵ Very interestingly,

¹⁴⁵ According to Bernardini’s (2000) list of production companies, the one founded between 1945 and 1959 that had their legal residence in Palermo were: AL.MO. Film Produzione Cinematografica, Cochlea Film, Delta Film, Epica Film, Hidalgo Film, O.F.S. – Organizzazione Filmistica Siciliana, Panaria S.p.A., Panaria Film S.r.l., P.D.C. – Produzione Distribuzione Cinematografica Italiana, Sicania Film, Società Generale Elettrica della Sicilia (S.G.E.S.).

one name appeared to be present in many of these production companies, such as others located in Rome. This was Sicilian Prince Francesco Alliata di Villafranca, who according to Bernardini (2000), was the manager of five production companies: Panaria S.p.A.;¹⁴⁶ Panaria Film S.r.l.;¹⁴⁷ AL.MO. Film Produzione Cinematografica S.r.l.; Delphinus S.p.A.; and Delta Film S.r.l. Three of them, Panaria Film S.r.l., AL.MO. Film, and Delta Film were run together with another Sicilian aristocrat and friend of his, Pietro Moncada. The connection between Prince Alliata, film production, and Palermo is not accidental, but stressed by the fact that this city, as a film industry district, had a short existence in the period analysed. This coincides with Prince Alliata making life changes that involved leaving the film industry. However, before this shift, Prince Alliata's interests in sea, innovations and shootings guided him towards documentaries and underwater takes, passions that resulted in the production of films and in the foundation of many companies. Nevertheless, seeing as the film industry was a very difficult field that brought unprofitable results at the box office, Prince Alliata declared bankruptcy and dedicated himself to other activities, such as wine and ice cream, which were among his most successful ventures (Alliata, 2015). However, before abandoning film production, he offered several noteworthy films to Italian cinema, which will be explored in further detail below.¹⁴⁸

The first company Prince Alliata founded, together with Moncada, was Panaria Film Film in 1946, with a corporation stock of 100,000 Lire, after an expedition to the Aeolian archipelago. The name of the companies comes from the name of one of the islands of the archipelago, the island of Panarea.¹⁴⁹ The firm operated for 5 years, produced one film, and was legally located in Palermo, with its offices in Rome. *Volcano* (Vulcano, W. Dieterle, 1950)

¹⁴⁶ S.p.A. means Società per Azioni, joint-stock company. According to the Civil Code, these kinds of companies had to divide shares among the partners, and be founded with a corporation stock not lower than 1 million Lire.

Civil Code, articles from 2325 onwards (*Normattiva*, no date).

¹⁴⁷ Società a responsabilità limitata – Ltd. It represents the most appropriate type of corporation for small and medium companies that can be founded with a small corporation stock. (Auletta and Salanitro, 2012, pp. 273-275).

Talking in terms of modern currency, today an srl company can be founded with a corporation from 1 to 9,999 Euros (Civil Code, article 2463 bis, *Normattiva*, no date).

¹⁴⁸ For a story of his life, see: Alliata (2015).

¹⁴⁹ "In the 1946 Autumn, when we came back to Palermo after the first expedition to the Aeolian islands, Pietro, Quintino, Renzo and I thought to give a "home" to our documentary *Cacciatori sottomarini*. We founded a company, Panaria Film, taking its name from the sweet name of Panarea, one of the seven Aeolian islands we loved so much" (Alliata, 2015, p. 180).

All the quotations from the books and the documents found in the archives were in Italian, and were translated by the author.

was the one movie produced by Panaria Film, and co-produced with Artisti Associati¹⁵⁰ production company. It was a very important feature film, a drama starring Anna Magnani and Geraldine Brooks, that was described as “very noble cinema work, both for the productive effort and the artistic result obtained”.¹⁵¹ The movie was admitted to mandatory scheduling, to the 10% State contribution, as well as, to the additional 8% share award established by the government for the worthiest movies (they were first and second clause of article 14 of the December 29th, 1949 law, n. 958).¹⁵² According to the documents found in the historical archive of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro,¹⁵³ the companies requested a 90,000,000 Lire loan¹⁵⁴ giving as warranties all the royalties of the movie, and listing Messrs Ferruccio Caramelli¹⁵⁵ and Francesco Alciola as guarantors.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, in December

¹⁵⁰ The company was founded in 1932 in Rome with a 500,000 lire corporation stock by Angelo Besozzi, Ferruccio Caramelli (the first managers), Roberto Dandi, Luigi Fattori, Giorgio Genesi, Vincenzo Genesi, Arnaldo Gussi, Mario Luporini, Secondo Mignone, Oreste Nuzzo, Fulvio Ricci, Vittorio Vassarotti.

¹⁵¹ Written in a letter by de Pirro:

“Dear Caramelli,

I watched “Volcano” the other night, and I loved it. It is very noble cinema work, both for its productive effort and the artistic result obtained.

For this reason, it is a pleasure for me to send my congratulations, and I ask you to send in my name felicitations to Dieterle and Brookes.

Please say to Magnani that her new, powerful interpretation comfortably confirms the fact that in our cinema she represents the actress who must not fear competition with foreign female celebrities.

I wish you, dear Caramelli, the best I can for the film's success, which I am sure will have audiences all over the world, and my best regards.

Lawyer Nicola De Pirro” (ACS, en. 11 CF 0834).

¹⁵² Here are the first two clauses of the article: “Art. 14: For every national film whose length is up to 2000 metres admitted, according to the Technical Committee, to the mandatory scheduling, even though realised through animated designs, that will ask for the permission of public projection after the entering into force of the present law, and whose first public projection in cinema theatres, verified by SIAE, is done before December 31st, 1954, the producer, for a period of 5 years since the first public projection, will receive a contribution equal to the 10% of the gross takings of the shows where the national film has been projected.

An additional 8% of these gross takings, and for the same 5-year period, could be allowed as reward to those films recognised worthy for their particular artistic value from the Technical Committee referred to in the article n. 4. The percentages planned in the previous clauses can be reduced by half if the national film will be projected in the same show together with other movies whose length is more than 2000 metres. [...]” (*Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, no date).

¹⁵³ It is referred to also as BNL.

¹⁵⁴ Loans were requested from a specific section of the Bank, the so called Sezione autonoma per il Credito Cinematografico (Autonomous Section for Film Credit). Founded on November 14th, 1935, it was an autonomous branch of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, with separate assets than the bank and a different management. It approved direct loans, but they could not exceed 60% of the total of the movie cost, and it was divided into two parts: the ordinary fund (*fondo ordinario*) and the special fund (*fondo speciale*), established in law July 26th, 1949, n. 448.

For further information, see the Constitution Document available at the Archivio Storico of BNL, and the Gazzetta Ufficiale website (<https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1949/07/30/049U0448/sg>).

¹⁵⁵ He was one of the managers of Artisti Associati company, co-producer of *Volcano*.

¹⁵⁶“Ratifications: [...]”

1) Artisti Associati S.A. Produzione Film – Panaria Film Soc. a r.l.
90,000,000 Lire loan to produce “Storia dell’isola” (“Vulcano”)

1949, they asked for a partial release of the money from the Motion Pictures Corporation, a total of US\$ 47,920, which would give them exclusivity of the film in the USA *BCMM, minutes n. 21, 1949*). This meant Panaria Film could officially pay off their loan on February 8th, 1951 (*Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations, deliberation n. 153, 1949*), thanks to one of the most common mechanisms used in Italy, the *minimo garantito*, or minimum guarantee system,¹⁵⁷ fundamental for the realisation of the movie. The company alone was thus unable of both producing the movie and repaying the loan, neither with its money nor with the profits from its movies.

It is necessary to specify these production aspects because they represent a common mode of production in Italy at the time. As producer Valentino Brosio (1956, p. 12) mentioned in his manual, the capital for producing a movie could be provided by the production company in its entirety (which is, according to him, the best possible situation),¹⁵⁸ or in part. This last case sees the company group with other financiers, with whom it will divide profits, or ask for a loan from a bank or a private citizen (Brosio, 1956). As the case of Panaria Film s.r.l. has shown, the company was unable to cover film costs on its own, not even in association with Artisti Associati. Moreover, being based in Sicily, the company did not have the infrastructure it might have done, had it been based in Rome, thus it probably needed more money for transportation and general organisation. It can therefore be assumed, that the company applied for a loan because of undercapitalisation, especially considering the budget of the projects it was involved in, and the consequent impossibility of covering necessary costs, not to mention the fear that such an important investment could have ruined the company. Unfortunately, though, and despite all precautions taken with the involvement of another company and a bank loan, this is exactly what happened.

Use: promissory notes given to the bank by S.A. Artisti Associati in the name of the previously mentioned production companies.

Warranties: transfer of all the rights of the film "Storia dell'isola"; suretyship from Mr. Ferruccio Caramelli, son of Arturo, and Dr. Francesco Alciola, son of Gabriele.

Time-period for reimbursement: 18 months from the first instalment through periodical deduction to be decided (and, eventually, then changed) by the Section [Autonomous Section for Film Credit] Offices in relation to the profit possibilities of the film;

Interest rate: the one in use" (*BCMM, minutes n. 14, 1949*).

¹⁵⁷ "The minimum guarantee system meant that the distributors took part in film production by investing capital in the form of cheques or bills of exchange, which they would recoup with box-office earnings. The minimum guarantee was, broadly speaking, an estimate of takings, at least in the Italian market. The producer's, distributor's and exhibitor's percentages were estimated on net takings—equal to gross takings minus government taxes and VAT. The distributor took a percentage of the net takings from the cinema, and then had to deduct the share that the producer had agreed to give him to cover the cost of distribution and risk" (Nicoli 2017, part III, chapter 6).

¹⁵⁸ It represents the best possible situation because the company that has enough funding to produce a movie itself, would find loans with lower interests.

After this film and some previously produced documentaries,¹⁵⁹ Panaria Film s.r.l. closed, and Francesco Alliata founded Panaria S.p.A.,¹⁶⁰ which produced three movies. The first was *La carrozza d'oro* (J. Renoir, 1952), the other two were *Il segreto delle tre punte* and *A fil di spada*, both of which were filmed by Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia in 1952, with part of the same technical cast.¹⁶¹ Documents located at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato relating to *Il segreto delle tre punte* and *A fil di spada*, offer evidence that there was some confusion about which company, Panaria Film or Panaria S.p.A., produced the movies. This misunderstanding was clarified by the president of the company, Alliata himself, in a letter specifying that the movies were produced by Panaria S.p.A. (founded with 1 million lire corporation stock), which was located in Messina, but had production offices in Rome (located at via Giulio Caccini, 3).¹⁶² This is a relevant fact, not only because it provides information about the change in the company's name and staff, but also as it attests to confusions that could easily be made on official documents regarding the production company and, as a consequence, regarding the films produced and the challenges during the research process.

The first film mentioned released by this Sicilian company was *La carrozza d'oro* (Renoir, 1952),¹⁶³ with Anna Magnani. The company was able to secure big names such as director Jean Renoir and actress Anna Magnani, thanks to personal contacts, as was often the case. The film was the first period movie for the company, and the second colour narrative feature film in Europe.¹⁶⁴ The first appointed director was Luchino Visconti, who was suggested by Renzo Avanzo, one of the company's founders and husband to Visconti's sister, Uberta.

¹⁵⁹ The reference is to 5 documentaries, that were never distributed: *Cacciatori Sottomarini* (1946), *Bianche Eolie* (1947), *Isole di cenere* (1947), *Tonnara* (1947), and *Tra Scilla e Cariddi* (1948). They were pioneering documentaries where Alliata together with other young cinematographers and divers (Pietro Moncada, Quintino di Napoli (Alliata's cousin), and Renzino Avanzo) used to invent and test equipment for divers and cinematographers in order to film underwater scenes.

For a study of the documentaries, see: Cafiero (2008).

¹⁶⁰ According to Bernardini (2000), it was founded in 1951 with 1 million lire corporation stock and produced three movies. It was legally located in Rome (via G. Caccini, 3), and had offices in Palermo (via Bandiera, 11). As will become evident, Alliata's companies revolved around these two addresses, tracing a specific route the producer followed based on his life in these two cities.

¹⁶¹ From a note dated June 20th, 1952 among the documents of *A fil di spada* available at Archivio Centrale dello Stato: "Please note that on June 16th, 1952 the shootings of "A FIL DI SPADA" and "MISSIONE SENZA GLORIA" [which was the first title for *Il segreto delle tre punte*] have finished. For this reason, the cast of the two movies were completely settled financially on June 14th, 1952" (ACS, en. 51 CF 1375).

¹⁶² The correction is dated April 28th, 1952 for *Il segreto delle tre punte* (ACS, en. 54 CF 1406), and April 22nd, 1952 for *A fil di spada* (ACS, en. 51 CF 1375).

¹⁶³ In the documents about the film in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the production company reported is Panaria Film S.p.A. (not Panaria S.p.A.), and its address is Rome, via Basento 37.

¹⁶⁴ According to Francesco Alliata (2015, p. 212) himself, it should have been the first colour movie in Europe, but Luchino Visconti, the director who was supposed to film the movie, wasted so much time before beginning shooting that the record was achieved by *Totò a colori* (Steno, 1952).

However, after some difficulties,¹⁶⁵ he was replaced by Jean Renoir, owing to the fact that the movie was a coproduction with France.¹⁶⁶ The idea was, to realise a co-produced international comedy, with a capital split of 70% Italy – 30% France. The first French company involved was Silver Films, which was then replaced by Hoche Productions. The initial evaluated cost was 478,790,000 lire, supported, according to the financial plan, by: Banco di Sicilia (120 million lire);¹⁶⁷ Hoche Productions (45 million francs); American participation for Technicolor (60 thousand US dollars); and Panaria (240 million lire) (ACS, en. 22 CF 1095). All the film rights then passed to Delphinus S.p.A., but the movie had a poor box office return, and an economic loss for the company (ACS, en. 22 CF 1095). Even though it was a comedy (the second most followed genre of the period), starring a great leading actress such as Anna Magnani, and was distributed in a period that was registering a great increase in production of the genre,¹⁶⁸ the movie did not achieve the desired success among the audience. Box office sales totalled only 142,350,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 97).

For this reason, the company decided to concentrate on drama, Italy's most famous and developed genre during the 1950s. The release of movies belonging to different genres was quite common at the time, particularly if the company had produced more than one or two movies,¹⁶⁹ which was common among firms that were not managed by occasional producers.¹⁷⁰ What is more, it is important to consider the growth of the drama genre during that period, which increased from 32 to 47 movies released in 1950 and 1951, reaching its

¹⁶⁵ From what Alliata writes (2015, pp. 214-216), Visconti re-wrote the screenplay, transforming the comedy into a vulgar accusation against the Church. The producers had it written again by Hugh Gray, author of the story and the screenplay of *Quo Vadis?* (1951), but Visconti refused to film it, and he was replaced.

¹⁶⁶ "The choice for the direction was between René Clément, author of the wonderful *Jeux Interdits* [...] and Jean Renoir, who was legendary already, because he directed the masterpiece as *La Grande Illusion*. However, Clément seemed to me too meek, and could have been easily subjugated by Anna Magnani's impetuous personality. I considered Renoir a man with a big attitude, judging from his films with the "tough" Jean Gabin" (Alliata, 2015, p. 217).

¹⁶⁷ This bank is unusual to the film credit. It agreed to the financing probably due to the importance of Francesco Alliata and his family in Sicily.

¹⁶⁸ Comedies went from 18 released in 1951, and 22 in 1952, to arrive to the highest peak in 1953 with 47 films. For a study of the genre, see chart 15, chapter 2.

¹⁶⁹ The analysis has been developed through a list of all the movies released between 1945 and 1959 done by the author. The data has been collected from a chronological list of movies published by Vinicio Marinucci (1959) and the Bolaffi catalogue edited by Gianni Rondolino (1967).

¹⁷⁰ The data is confirmed by M. Nicoli's studies (2017, 75%), which report: "Occasional producers focused on one genre, but this does not mean that they were more specialized, since these companies had a very short life cycle and produced very few movies before abandoning the market. Leading and regular companies, on the other hand, were quite similar in their entrepreneurial attitude, focussing on an average of three genres."

highest peak of production in 1952, when 70 out of 148 dramas were released – see chart 13 in chapter 2.¹⁷¹

In order to produce *Il segreto delle tre punte* and *A fil di spada*, Panaria S.p.A. applied to BNL for a loan, a very common practice at the time. For the realisation of *Il segreto delle tre punte*, Alliata asked for a 65 million lire loan (35 million lire on the special fund – *fondo speciale*), while the total amount of the film was calculated at around 110,000,000 lire. For *A fil di spada*, a 70,000,000 lire loan was applied for, 40 million lire on the *fondo speciale*, and the cost of this film was thought to be around 120,000,000 lire. In both cases, distribution was undertaken by the Distribuzione Cinematografica Nazionale company, which pledged a 50,000,000 lire profit for the first film and 45,000,000 lire profit for the second, within 18 months. The bank approved a 45 million lire loan for *Il segreto delle tre punte* (23 million lire on the ordinary fund, 22 million on the *fondo speciale*), and a 50 million lire loan for *A fil di spada* (28 million on the ordinary fund, 22 on the *fondo speciale*). This diversification of financing is not just confirmation of undercapitalisation and low-risk activities, but also of the complications in providing funds, and just how much the finances remained puzzles to be solved. Interestingly, the companies alone would have been unable to provide the necessary funds for the realisation of the movies without external interventions.

One aspect that attracted attention was the use of both loans and the guarantors contained in the minutes of the Council Meeting (*BCMM, minute n. 31, 1952*). The minutes reported the same date and text; what changes is the amount of money, due to the small difference in the amount of loans. According to the minutes, 87.33% of the loan for *Il segreto delle tre punte* (39,300,000 lire) and 80.60% of *A fil di spada's* (40,300,000 lire) could be used as “promissory notes given to the bank by the distribution agencies of the area, that were managed by S.p.A. D.C.N. in the name of D.N.C. itself, endorsed by in the name of S.p.A. Panaria, and having the guarantee of Dr. Francesco Alliata”. The remaining amount of the loan, that is 5,700,000 lire for *Il segreto delle tre punte*, and 9,700,000 lire for *A fil di spada*, could be used “through direct promissory notes endorsed as above.” This appearance of having the same production company, the same cast, the same distribution company, and the same loan (almost the same amount of money requested at the same time), suggests that Panaria S.p.A. had one single product, and not two different movies. It appears then, that Alliata seems to be looking for the highest margin of profitability, whilst trying to recover its loss from *La carrozza d'oro*. *A fil di spada* and *Il segreto delle tre punte* collected

¹⁷¹ For an analysis of the production history of the genre during this period, see chapter 2.

163,000,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 20) and 132,650,000 lire respectively, proving their box office small success (Poppi, 2007, p. 385).

What is of particular interest, is the list of agencies S.p.A. D.C.N. covered in different cities. These are mentioned in the BNL's Book of Council Meeting Minutes, as well as the money they used for promissory notes, together with the guarantees granted to the bank, such as transfers of all the movie's royalties, Francesco Alliata's own properties, and the surety of Società Commissionaria Internazionale Finanziaria.¹⁷² The list shows not only the names of the people responsible for the agencies, but also their distribution from the North to the South. Moreover, documents at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, confirm that *Il segreto delle tre punte* was screened for the first time in Turin, at cinema Ambrosio on September 26th, 1952, and *A fil di spada* in Ancona at cinema Goldoni on October 3rd, 1952. Knowing the history of the films gives an idea of the company's history also, and how it chose to operate in making its movies popular and widespread. From these two first screenings, we know that Panaria S.p.A. released the films almost simultaneously in two different cities, covering half of Italy. It can also be assumed that instead of trying to cover all of Italy, Turin and Ancona could have been tester cities before entering more profitable markets, such as Rome and Milan. It is also known that Italy was a country with different preferences among its cities, which were characterised by very localised tastes (Sedgwick, Miskell and Nicoli, 2008). Comic movies, for instance, appealed largely to Northern audiences, while other genres appealed to Southerners.¹⁷³ Both films, in this case, were swashbuckling movies, with the same cast. For this reason, it can be hypothesised that the company tried to test the market to see the movie's trend throughout parts of the country, whilst at the same time saving money by optimising on time and resources by making two movies simultaneously.

¹⁷² Here are the agencies mentioned: Ennio Costantini (Ancona), Ditta Sepe Film by Sepe Salvatore (Bari), Superior Film Soc. p.A. (Bologna), Aurora Sicala Film S.r.l. (lawyers Santi Ronidone and Salvatore Polizzi) (Catania), Seniori Costantini Pier Luigi (Florence), S.p.A. Buschiazzo e C. (lawyer Luigi Buschiazzo and Fausto Taddei) (Genoa), Soc. in nome collett. Superfilm I. ed E. Monteverde (Milan), Omnia Film S.r.l. (lawyer Carlo Caiano) (Naples), Alta Italia (lawyer Giacomo Maglia) (Padua), Volcine Soc. r.l. (lawyer Arturo Voltaggio) (Rome), Ponzano Film di Giovanni Ponzano (Turin) (*BCMM, minute n. 31, 1952*).

¹⁷³ "[...] we can observe the market mechanism operating at the city level, allowing the exploration of differences in preferences between the cities [Milan, Turin, Naples, Bari, and Rome]. [...] clear evidence is found to support the coexistence of national and local tastes. This phenomenon is examined with respect to those films that were exceptionally popular throughout, and those with particular geographically specific audiences. The example of the many films that starred Totò, appealing in particular to southern Italian audiences, is highlighted and contrasted with the Don Camillo series of films that were set in Emilia Romagna and appealed differently to filmgoers in the north." (Sedgwick, Miskell and Nicoli, 2008, pp. 1-2).

After these releases, Panaria S.p.A. changed its company name to Delphinus S.p.A.,¹⁷⁴ a company that had ceased to exist in 1957.¹⁷⁵ The liquidator was Bruno Vailati,¹⁷⁶ one of the managers of Galatea S.p.A., the company that owned the film rights during the 1970s and had the same address as Panaria S.p.A.¹⁷⁷ Many company names, recurring people in the cinema industry, and problems in finding definite information render it impossible to know the company's evolution clearly. What has been found, however, is that the same company that started as Panaria Film s.r.l., became Panaria S.p.A., then Panaria Film S.p.A., and finally Delphinus S.p.A., narrating the business history and evolution of the producer more than that of the firms. Unfortunately, Delphinus S.p.A. did not survive, and the last information available about it and its films, was that the movies were transferred to Antonino Spitali, who then owned the film rights to *La carrozza d'oro*, *Il segreto delle tre punte*, and *A fil di spada*, in 1959.¹⁷⁸ The ways in which these companies operated, demonstrates how movies were relevant trade goods, with a plausible never-ending lifespan when talking about royalties, which could be ceded for money. In a certain sense, they became marketable commodities in their single parts, as seen for instance with financing. Here, part of the film rights was usually given to the bank as a warranty for loans, which then guaranteed the production of other films, or the payment of the employees. As a matter of fact, it was common practice

¹⁷⁴ Extract from a note dated January 22nd, 1953: "The undersigned Clerk of the Court of Messina – Commercial Section certifies that the S.p.A. "PANARIA" located in Messina, with the minutes of the general meeting of September 15th, 1952 [...] changed its company name from S.p.A. "PANARIA" into "DELPHINUS" S.p.A." (ACS, en. 54 CF 1406).

According to Bernardini (2000), the company was founded in 1952 (September 15th) by Francesco Alliata, Giovanni Conti and Lionello Santi, had 1 million lire in corporation stock, and produced 4 movies. According to the information in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, it was founded on September 17th, 1950, and in 1953 its corporation stock was 5 million lire.

¹⁷⁵ The document was dated April 23rd, 1957: "The undersigned lawyer Bruno Vailati as liquidator of company DELPHINUS S.p.A. located in Rome – via Beroloni, 26 – that produced the movie: "IL SEGRETO DELLE TRE PUNTE" respectfully asks to this honourable General Direction to have a duplicate of the certificate attesting the Italian nationality of the film." (ACS, en. 54 CF 1406).

¹⁷⁶ He will reappear in the documents of the film *Sesto Continente*, produced by Delphinus S.p.A.: he is expedition chief, one of the authors of the script, and even production manager.

¹⁷⁷ "The undersigned "GALATEA S.p.A." located in Rome, Via Giulio Caccini, 3, exclusive dealer of the movie: "IL SEGRETO DELLE TRE PUNTE" asks to this honourable Ministry to have a duplicate of the certificate attesting to the Italian nationality of the film mentioned above produced in 1952. It is necessary for administrative reasons" December 12th, 1972 (ACS, en. 54 CF 1406). The same is for *A fil di spada*.

¹⁷⁸ The same document is present in the file of every film, and it says: "The undersigned Spitali Antonino, owner of the movie "IL SEGRETO DELLE TRE PUNTE", directed by Carlo L. Bragaglia, due to the property transfer from Delphinus S.p.A. through deed of sale [...] registered in the Registrar Office of Rome, Private Acts, on 12.12.1959, n. 29585/1, Vol.837, and notified to the Tourism and Spectacle Ministry and to SIAE on December 16th, 1959, requests a certificate attesting to the [italian] nationality of the film mentioned above, released in 1952." (ACS, en. 54 CF 1406).

for producers to cut and divide their film shares in order to allow shooting to proceed, as this thesis will show.

In 1953 Delphinus S.p.A. tried to produce another film, *La dame de Monsoreau*, but the movie was never shot. The following year it produced *Sesto continente* (F. Quilici, 1954), a documentary about the Italian scientific expedition in the Red Sea. Shown for the first time on September 4th 1954 in the cinema Ariston in Milan,¹⁷⁹ this documentary collected 22,400,000 lire at the box office, during the month of September¹⁸⁰ (around 10% of total box office takings).¹⁸¹ What is noteworthy about this film is that Delphinus S.p.A. arranged a co-production after its production and release. On March 26th, 1956, the company signed an agreement with two French production companies, Société Lyre and Chronos Film (which then withdrew, leaving its bonds to Société Lyre),¹⁸² that would cover 15% of the film's cost, or 15,000,000 lire out of 100,000,000. The deal was possible due to the new Italian French agreement released on March 15th, 1955.¹⁸³ *Sesto Continente* was declared appropriate for youngsters, thus the classic 70%-30% forms of co-production could be substituted with a 10%-minimum participation of the film cost.¹⁸⁴ The deal did not help the film's realisation, since it was signed after its production. However, it could be assumed that it was signed in order to make the film circulate both in Italy and France, and to allow the film to benefit from the profits of both countries. This also increased the film's visibility among audiences.

The last two companies owned by Alliota were AL.MO. Produzioni Cinematografiche and Delta Film. AL.MO. Produzioni Cinematografiche was managed with Prince Alliota's friend

¹⁷⁹ It is a note by SIAE dated February 18th, 1955 (ACS, en. 82 CF 1682).

¹⁸⁰ It is a note by SIAE to Delphinus and General Direction of the Spectacle about film proceed dated December 14th, 1954 (ACS, en. 82 CF 1682).

¹⁸¹ The box office takings were 222,000,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 392).

¹⁸² It was officially communicated on March 2nd, 1957.

¹⁸³ Here is the agreement: "The undersigned DELPHINUS S.p.A. communicates to have made an agreement on March 2nd, 1956, with the French companies Société LYRE of Paris – 45, Avenue George V, and CHRONOS FILM of Paris, 44 Avenue des Champs Elysées the clauses here reported in order to co-produce the movie SESTO CONTINENTE. The movie is in Technicolor, is directed by Folco QUILICI, and has been declared appropriate for youngsters, as written in article 6, letter D in the Italian French agreement of March 15th, 1955:

1°) Film cost: 100,000,000 lire

2°) Part of the French co-producers: 15% equal to 15,000,000 lire

3°) Market division: due to the commercial importance of the movie, which is higher than a common film for the youngsters, the co-producers receive the 100% of the exploitation rights in the following territories: France, Principality of Monaco, Sarre area, ships under the French flag, North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco), colonies and countries under protectorate or mandate and French troops in Germany; the rest of the world is completely assigned (100%) to the writing company DELPHINUS S.p.a." (ACS, en. 82 CF 1682).

¹⁸⁴ For the complete description of the article, see the co-production agreement between Italy and France dated March 15th, 1955.

Pietro Moncada and was located in Palermo.¹⁸⁵ According to Bernardini, the company was founded in 1954 with 100,000 lire in corporation stock, and produced one film.¹⁸⁶ The movie produced was *Vacanze d'amore (Le Chanois, 1954)*, a romance story that collected 142,500,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 465). It was an Italian-French co-production (50-50) between AL.MO. Produzioni Cinematografiche and Société de Productions Cinématographiques Européennes. The documents specified it was considered to have been a twin production, so another twin movie filmed in France was necessary.¹⁸⁷

In order to produce the movie, Alliata and Moncada requested a loan from BNL. The producers required 75,000,000 lire, 37,500,000 of which were “to be under the *Fondo Speciale*”, giving as guarantees the film rights (before its actual realisation), and the *minimo garantito* of the distribution company SIDEN Film, which was 50,000,000 lire within 18 months (ACS, en. 91 CF 1785). The bank granted a loan of 55 million lire, 25 of which were

¹⁸⁵ The company also had offices in Rome, in via Caccini 3 (ACS, en. 91 CF 1785).

¹⁸⁶ The information is confirmed by the documents in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, where it mentioned another film, *I mercenari*, which was never produced. However, the plans for its release went quite far, to the point that it had a complete and very complex financial plan (dated November 11th, 1955). It is reported here in order to give an idea on how the production companies of the time tried to find funds for their productions, while struggling with many difficulties:

“The film cost, estimated to be 934,000,000 lire, will be covered as follows:

- lire 600,000,000 as *minimo garantito* given by the distribution company [...] [Columbia Pictures International Corporation]

- The remaining money will be divided as follows:

a) 50,000,000 lire already spent for buying rights, for making it conform to cinema, and for treatment, script, translations, historical and technical studies, travels, location scouting, cinemascope license, anticipations for director, actors, general preparation expenses etc...

b) profits to be due to Mr. Alliata and Mr. Moncada owners of Almo Film company for the following movie:

1) Panaria Film production: “Vulcano” and five documentaries

2) Panaria-Delphinus production: “A fil di spada” il “Segreto delle tre punte”, “Carrozza d'oro”, “Sesto continente” and five documentaries

3) Almo Film production: “Vacanze d'amore” and four documentaries in progress

4) Delta Film production (company owned for 80% by Mr. Alliata and Moncada): “Agguato sul mare” (Glaucio e Scilla) in Cinemascope.

Please note – for the films number 1, 3 and 4, financiers have been refunded, so all the profits will be assigned to the financing of the present film.

c) If these profits will not cover completely the cost of the film, Mr. Alliata and Mr. Moncada will personally intervene. References on their patrimonial amount and that of their families can be requested to:

- for Alliata: Cooperativa Doppiatori Cinematografici, Tecnostampa, S.P.E.S., Banco di Roma – Rome, Banco de Italia y Rio de la Plata, Titanus, Cinecittà.

- for Moncada: Banca Commerciale Italiana, Cassa di Risparmio (Palermo), Cooperativa Doppiatori, Titanus.

d) CINECITTÀ S.p.A guarantees to the distribution company that the production of this film will be ‘successful’ (ACS, en. 91 CF 1785).

¹⁸⁷ The agreement specified that the coproduced films should have been 2, one mostly financed by Italy with a specific number of Italian people in the cast (both artistic and technical), the other by France with a specific number of French people working in the film.

from the *fondo speciale*, secured with Alliata and Moncada's signatures as guarantors, together with that of Fortunato Misiano, owner of SIDEN Film.¹⁸⁸ In December they asked for another loan of 20 million lire, to which the bank responded with a 10,000,000 lire grant (*Book of minutes of the Executive Board, minutes N. 42, 1953*). The total amount of the loan (65,000,000 lire) was extinguished in 1954 (*Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations, deliberation n. 587, 1956*). Here, the difficulties of how a company assembled the necessary funds for producing a movie become apparent particularly if the firm did not have the finances itself. AL.MO. Produzioni Cinematografiche, for instance, was founded with 100,000 lire, a stock below the 1954 median of 200,000 lire. A small corporation stock undoubtedly implied less risks for the producers (in case of a lack of takings), but it also made the creation of the financial plan more difficult.

The last production company Alliata headed with Pietro Moncada was Delta Film S.r.l.¹⁸⁹ According to the files in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the company produced two movies, *Benvenuto Signor Petrolio* and *Agguato sul mare* (Mercanti, 1955). Unfortunately, there is little information about *Benvenuto Signor Petrolio*, and impossible to know if it were ever released, even with another title.¹⁹⁰ It was a coproduction with the Spanish Produzione Orduna Film (P.O.F.) (70% Italy – 30% Spain), and the Italian counterpart was supposed to finance 140,000,000 lire out of circa 200 million lire. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that the drama *Agguato sul mare*, had an intriguing financial life. Indeed, in order to shoot it, Alliata and Moncada involved Panaria Film S.r.l., AL.MO. Film, and Delta Film, which were all the production companies they were managing at the time in this last production.

¹⁸⁸ “[...] Loan: 30,000,000 lire to be worth on the “ordinary fund”
25,000,000 lire to be worth on the “special fund”

Use: - one part through promissory notes given to the bank by the district agencies of Siden Film in the name of Siden itself. The agencies will be decided by the Section. Siden will endorse the promissory notes to the production company, and the notes will have Francesco Alliata's and Pietro Moncada's signature;

- another part, that is for the sum corresponding to the *minimo garantito* for the area of Milan, where S.I.D.E.N. acts directly, and for the sum corresponding to the anticipation given by Siden itself, with the endorsement of Mr. Fortunato Misiano, in the name of the production company and endorsed as previously mentioned.

The Offices of the Section have the authority to agree with eventual substitution proposals that single agencies can promote during the operation.

Warranties: a) transfer of all the rights of the film “Villaggio Magico”; b) endorsements as above” (*Book of minutes of the Executive Board, minutes N. 40, 1953*).

¹⁸⁹ It was founded in 1955 and worked until 1964 producing 2 films. The company then became Penta Film, inoperative for film productions. The corporation stock is unknown.

In a letterhead stored at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, it is stated that the company had its head office in Palermo (Via Bandiera, 11), and representative offices in Rome (via Giulio Caccini, 3).

¹⁹⁰ A letter available in the folder of the film referred to the title as a temporary one (ACS, en. 153 CF 2396).

Firstly, it should be noted that the movie was instigated by AL.MO. Produzioni Cinematografiche, as demonstrated in correspondence announcing the beginning of filming on July 18th, 1955 (ACS, en. 136 CF 2243).

Two other letters report the same date, one from Panaria Film S.p.A. to Delta Cinematografica,¹⁹¹ the other from AL.MO. Film to Delta Cinematografica. In the first letter, the then president of the company, Michele Silvestri, committed to retain the proceeds belonging to Alliota and Moncada from the movies produced. Alliota and Moncada resulted in owning 25 out of a 50 percent share of *Volcano* (the other half belonged to Artisti Associati). They also owned a 50% share of Delphinus S.p.A. – the company that produced: *La carrozza d'oro*, *A fil di spada*, *Il segreto delle tre punte*, *Sesto continente*, and about ten documentaries.¹⁹² In the second letter, signed by Pietro Moncada, AL.MO. Film designated a money deposit from box office and general profits from the exploitation of *Vacanze d'amore* to Delta Cinematografica (ACS, en. 136 CF 2243). This confirms a correlation among all Alliota's companies, as they formed a financial group with Delta Cinematografica, which became the head company and main producer. The convenience of this assemblage was to create a group of firms which could finance one another, and build a financial chain for supporting production. This had been possible due to the exchange of incomes from one company to the other in order to cover the cost of the film. Each company acted like an independent enterprise and not as firms that had the same producers. Every company was considered a company in its own right and contributed to the realisation of movies even if not directly involved in their production.

Illustrative of the modes of production of companies at the time, was the (undated) financial plan present in the film file at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato. In addition to the BNL loan, Delta Cinematografica planned to finance its movie through the promissory notes from the film rental. These were signed by regional agencies, distribution company Glomer Film and its owner Enzo Merolle (as *minimo garantito*), and the remaining letter of credit was signed by Alliota and Moncada, both in their own right and as representatives of Delta Film.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ It is the same company as Delta Film. Many companies are referred to equally as Film or Cinematografica, probably due to the fact that transcriptions were handmade and presented several errors.

¹⁹² This is the demonstration that all the rights of these films were moved from Panaria S.p.A. to Delphinus S.p.A. when the company decided not to exist anymore changing its name. It means that the owner of the companies was the same, and brought all the goods with him, giving to the new company a stable starting basis, assets that rendered them attractive for other investors in case of loans or co-productions.

¹⁹³ "The estimated film cost is lire 201,000,000. It will be prepared as follows:

They applied for a 100,000,000 lire loan, to which they added an additional 16 million lire subsequent loan. In total, the bank agreed to finance 70,000,000 lire, which was extinguished in August 1955. In the meantime, Delta Film became Penta Film s.r.l., which was located in Palermo (*Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations, deliberation n. 799, 1959*).

This overview about the relation of Palermo and cinema shows that in this region the film industry is strictly related to a single person, Prince Francesco Alliata. He transformed his passion for filming into a career as a producer in the film industry, trying to build a bridge between Palermo and Rome. With his five companies, run alone or together with one of his best friends, Pietro Moncada, Alliata tried to make Sicily a relevant cinema hub at the time. He built an industry based on an interconnectedness of companies, which demonstrated that the firms were not only related one another due to the fact that they shared the same producer and the same origins, but also that they financially depended on each other for producing films. Each company alone could not afford the completion of a production, but with the help of their predecessors, that were used for the film's royalties and as guarantors for loans, each company was in a position to complete its film. Panaria S.p.A.; Panaria Film; AL.MO. Film; Delphinus; and Delta Film all demonstrate how undercapitalized companies operated in Sicily, by overcoming the difficulties of providing necessary funds for producing a movie, particularly if the firm did not have the finances itself. Some of these practices were commonly used by undercapitalised companies at the time throughout Italy, as will be seen throughout this chapter.

lire 90-100 million through a loan on the ordinary and special funds of B.N.L. The loan will be covered with promissory notes from the renting signed by regional agents (approved by B.N.L.), from Glomer Film and from Mr. Enzo Merolle, for 50.000.000 as minimo garantito. The remaining promissory notes signed by Mr Alliata and Moncada, in first person and as owners of Delta Film.

The difference for covering the film cost will be covered as follows:

a) 20,000,000 lire already spent for cinemascope license, down payments for actors and technicians, script and story, preparation expenses, etc.

b) Profits to be due to Mr. Alliata and Moncada coming from the following films:

1) Panaria Film productions: "Vulcano" and 5 documentaries

2) Panaria-Delphinus productions: "A fil di spada", "Il segreto delle tre punte", "Carrozza d'oro", "Sesto continente", and 5 documentaries

3) Almo Film productions: (the company is entirely owned by Mr. Alliata and Moncada) "Vacanze d'amore"

and 4 documentaries in progress.

[...]

c) If these profits will not cover the entire film cost, Mr. Alliata and Moncada will personally intervene. References on their patrimonial amount and that of their families can be requested to:

- for Alliata: Cooperativa Doppiatori Cinematografici, Tecnostampa, S.P.E.S., Banco di Roma – Rome, Banco Rio de la Plata – Rome.

- for Moncada: Banca Commerciale Italiana, Cassa di Risparmio (Palermo), Cooperativa Doppiatori, Titanus" (ACS, en. 136 CF 2243).

Prince Alliata's experience demonstrates that the difficulties in the development of a film industry in Sicily were so substantial that not even his entrepreneurial insightfulness could save his companies. Alliata's abilities allowed him to efficiently move within the industry, finding ways of supporting his productions through all his aforementioned companies, with a concatenation of investments. However, his skills, intuition and the importance of his name in the region, proved insufficient in ensuring revenue that guaranteed an enduring lifespan of Sicilian made productions.

4.3 Case study: Naples and Eduardo De Filippo

Eduardo De Filippo represents another significant example of the decentralisation of production, in spite of being very different with respect to the first case study analysed in this chapter. Indeed, Eduardo De Filippo is the first example studied in this thesis of an actor and director that founded production companies in order to produce his own films as a director, perhaps because he wanted to lighten the procedure of production, or because he did not find external investors. De Filippo could also have been included as a case study for chapter 5, seeing as the chapter is reserved for directors and actors who produced movies. However, De Filippo's filmic career is not analysed in chapter 5, together with other actors and directors producers because of he is strictly related to Naples, his hometown, the second city in Italy in terms of number of depictions on screen after Rome (Melanco, 1995). For his close relationship to this city, his case study is examined in this chapter, among the other decentralised companies investigated. Theatre and cinema actor, director, writer and also producer, he founded two production companies in the period analysed,¹⁹⁴ one of which was in Naples. He also financed three movies: *Napoli milionaria* (1950); *Filumena Marturano* (1951); and *Questi fantasmi* (1954). *Napoli milionaria* is an example of a production that this investigation has not encountered yet and that seemed not so extraneous to the Italian context of the time, as it was a co-production between an Italian company and a single person. It is indeed a 50-50 co-production between a company, Teatri della Farnesina S.r.l., and a single person, Eduardo De Filippo, who is indicated in the documents as *Commendatore* (knight commander) Eduardo De Filippo. If the person asking for the loan was someone well

¹⁹⁴ He had a previous company founded in 1938 with his brother and sister, the DeFilm, created to produce *In campagna è nata una stella* (E. De Filippo, 1940) (*Giornale dello Spettacolo*, 1938).

known, who benefitted from the trust of the creditor, he could apply for the loan in his own name. This is also the case, for example, of Aldo Fabrizi, about whom I will discuss in chapter 6. However, the company that produced *Napoli Milionaria* is represented by Agostino (Dino) De Laurentiis, and the film shooting started in October 1949 (ACS, en. 14 CF 0920). What is more, the most interesting documents about the movie were located at the BNL historic archive in Pratica di Mare, Rome.

It is noteworthy, that Teatri della Farnesina and Eduardo De Filippo requested a 55 million lire loan to produce the comedy *Napoli milionaria* – one of the year's top films at the box office,¹⁹⁵ grossing 447,000,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 286). Considering the box office median in 1949 was 129,750,000 lire, the movie was an indisputable triumph. For its filming, the bank granted a 50 million lire loan, through “promissory notes given to the bank by Enic company (in the name of the two production companies), as well as having dr. Agostino De Laurentiis' signature as guarantor for 45 million lire” (*BCMM, minutes n. 18*, 1949). In 1952, Eduardo De Filippo alone asked for a 5,000,000 lire loan at the BNL, giving as guarantee 50% of the *contributi governativi* (government contribution) and foreign incomes (*BEBM, minutes n. 27*, 1952). The same happened in 1953, with a 4 million lire loan, with the exception that this time the guarantee was represented only by government contributions (*BEBM, minutes n. 36*, 1953). Unfortunately, it is impossible to know why the actor and director applied for financial support, given *Napoli Milionaria* was already finished, and, supposedly had its expenses covered, considered its box office success. But it can be hypothesised that he needed to finance some other productions, and considering the dates, presumably this was used for *Questi fantasmi*.

In order to produce *Filumena Marturano* during the period under analysis, De Filippo founded a production company in 1951 together with Luigi De Laurentiis called Arco Film S.r.l.. This was founded with a 100,000 lire corporation stock, and was therefore a small firm, particularly when considering the median stock for companies established that year was 500,000 lire. This was the first film company founded in this period by the actor and director, who went on to release the comedy *Filumena Marturano*. Despite Arco Film S.r.l.'s central location in Rome, which suggests it is not a decentralised production,¹⁹⁶ the firm is an

¹⁹⁵ Better than *Napoli Milionaria* at the box office that year, there were: *Totò cerca casa* (Monicelli, Steno) – comic movie, 515,300,000 lire; *Il ladro di Venezia* (Brahm) – adventure, 553,700,000 lire; *Catene* (Matarazzo) – drama, 735,000,000 lire; and finally, *Domani è troppo tardi* (Leonide) – a drama that, with 783,000,000 lire, was the best result at the box office.

¹⁹⁶ According to Bernardini (2000), the address was via Bocca di Leone, 4, Rome. Probably, the company changed its address in time, and this difference may be related to the fact that the documents analysed, report two different addresses because they belonged to different periods.

important case to analyse, as it illustrates De Filippo's thought process of founding a production company to finance his theatre in Naples (discussed in further detail below). Therefore, the fact that Arco Film S.r.l. was financing a Neapolitan theatre, makes it a decentralised firm. This is due to the many insights offered, when examining the modes of production producers outside Rome employed, and whose vision was that city contexts were their only opportunity for doing cinema. Naples, a city tightly connected to De Filippo, was more important for its actors and personalities than its production departments.

Both Eduardo De Filippo and Luigi De Laurentiis took on many roles. For *Filumena Marturano*, De Filippo was producer, director and actor, while De Laurentiis was producer and production manager. In order to realise the film, the company asked for a 45 million lire loan (30 million on the *fondo speciale*). The BNL agreed on a 40 million loan, divided into 20 million on ordinary capital, and the other 20 million on the *fondo speciale*. 30 million lire were promissory notes released by S.r.l. Variety Film, a distribution company, and its agencies in the name of Arco Film, and according to their *minimo garantito*;¹⁹⁷ the last 10 million lire were granted directly by Eduardo De Filippo and Luigi De Laurentiis. The guarantees were all the rights of *Filumena Marturano* together with the previously mentioned securities (*BEBM, minutes n. 19, 1951*). It is important to mention the financing procedures as this shows the collaboration with the distribution company and its agencies around the country, as well as the inclusion of film rights before the film itself was concluded. This demonstrates how the movies were trade goods necessary for the conclusion of the project and for the realisation of future films.

In March 1952, Arco Film applied for a second loan (5,000,000 lire) (*BEBM, minutes n. 25, 1952*), and a third in August 1952. Their applications were supposed to cover costs of 30,000,000 lire. The guarantees were the State contribution of *Filumena Marturano*, which were warranties the company was supposed to transfer directly to the bank; however, BNL provided half of the loan (*BEBM, minutes n. 29, 1952*). A few months later, on January 1953, the production company asked for an increase of this loan (from 15 to 25 million lire), and the BNL agreed to a 5 million lire increase (*BEBM, minutes n. 32, 1953*). These last two loans

¹⁹⁷ The agencies, and their amount for the *minimo garantito*, were: Leo Cevenini's and Adolfo Merchiori's Milano Film (Milan): L. 4,500,000; S.r.l. Diva Film (attorneys Alessandro Abrioni and Francesco Granata Vigo) (Padua): L. 3,000,000; Eleonori Eugenio's Ditta Tiger Film (Genoa): L. 1,500,000; S.r.l. Noleggio Indipendente Piemonte "N.I.P." (attorney Ventovoli Bruno) (Turin): L. 2,500,000; S.r.l. Vittoria Film (attorney Accarsi Olindo) (Bologna): L. 3,000,000; Momi Umberto (Florence): L. 2,500,000; Cevenini Martino (Castelli – Rome): L. 5,000,000; Antonio Ferrigno's Aurora Film (Caserta – Naples): L. 3,000,000; Guglielmo Luisalchi's Ditta Commerciale Film (Bari): L. 2,500,000; Longo Alfredo (Catania): L. 2,500,000 (*BEBM, minutes n. 19, 1951*).

(15 and 5 million lire) were settled on November 1953 (*BCMM, minutes n. 395, 1953*), and all guarantees the company gave were officially released in 1962,¹⁹⁸ after the company's closure on January 24th, 1961.¹⁹⁹ More interestingly, Arco Film applied for all these loans after the movie was already finished and released:²⁰⁰ in 1951, *Filumena Marturano* totalled 238,600,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 184) at the box office, surpassing the general box office median value of 196,500,000 lire, as shown in the second chapter, but remaining quite far from the top grossing title for that year, which exceeded one billion.²⁰¹ *Filumena Marturano's* box office success was not paralleled by the company's production output, since this is the only film released by the firm. Indeed, most of the loans were requested after the film's release, which suggests the money collected at the box office was not sufficient for covering the film's costs. This discordance can be interpreted as evidence of Eduardo De Filippo's intentional strategy of creating a production company solely for the purpose of producing this film.

Finally, Eduardo De Filippo founded San Ferdinando Film S.r.l.²⁰² to produce *Questi fantasmi*. He was the only manager, and the company was based in Naples, Piazza del Teatro San Ferdinando, 1. It is impossible to know if the actor decided to found another company because the previous one experienced financial hardships, or to proceed without De Laurentiis on this project.²⁰³ Or, if he did not want to tie this film to the previous one in order

¹⁹⁸ "The Executive Director of the Autonomous Section for Film Credit of Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, dr. Imbriani Longo;

Being the 40,000,000 lire debt, helped by the transfer of, agreed to Arco Film completely paid, the transfer of "Filumena Marturano" rights given as guarantees for the loan cannot exist anymore. It is necessary to renounce to the above-mentioned rights" (*BCMM, minutes n. 286, 1962*).

¹⁹⁹ The procedure (n. 162629) was closed in the courthouse of Rome.

Documents stored in Fondo De Filippo, Eredi Eduardo e Luca De Filippo.

²⁰⁰ For a better analysis of the phenomenon, the examination could have gone more in depth regarding De Filippo's company, and extended to all the movies released at the time that applied for a loan like the one mentioned here. However, it has not been possible to study the event more in depth due to the lack of documents regarding the company, or to expand the research and look for other examples like this one due to the great number of movies produced in this period. Among the case studies examined, Eduardo De Filippo's represents the only one who applied for loans after the movie was released.

²⁰¹ As already mentioned, it was *Don Camillo*, that collected 1,500,000,000 lire.

²⁰² The new company was founded on June 24th, 1954.

"With the act dated June 24th, 1954 company "San Ferdinando Film" was founded, with a 100,000 lire corporation stock – 80,000 lire deposited by Mr. Eduardo De Filippo, and 20,000 lire deposited by Mrs. Teresa Prandi [...] The location was Naples, Piazza del Teatro S. Ferdinando, and the corporate purpose was the film organisation and production on their own and on behalf of third parties, commerce and rent of Italian and foreign movies, purchase and management of studios and dubbing offices" (Procino, 2003, pp. 142-143).

²⁰³ The same discourse can be done for all the producers that founded more than one company: we cannot know if the companies closed due to lack of money, or if the new ones received more financing. We can even hypothesise that the bigger ones used to hide behind some of these small companies.

to receive more financing. We do know that small companies were supported by the government,²⁰⁴ thus it can be argued that De Filippo tried to take advantage of the events for working in production too and releasing another of his works. The film was a coproduction between San Ferdinando Film and Titanus S.p.A.,²⁰⁵ and was shot in Titanus studios. The financial plan considered a 130 million lire loan (ACS, en. 113 CF 2016), that the BNL reduced to 100 million (45 million lire on the special fund). The guarantees were all the rights regarding the film, and Goffredo Lombardo and Eduardo De Filippo as guarantors (*BBD, Council Meeting, minutes n. 40, 1954*). The loan was extinguished in 1957 (*BBD, minutes n. 639, 1957*), but unfortunately, the movie did not result in a box office triumph.²⁰⁶

Eduardo De Filippo decided to focus on the production of one genre, comedy, which was the second most produced and one of the most successful of the period. To release his films, he founded two small production companies, which differed in their financial and productive composition. Although both had 100,000 lire corporation stock, the amount of money must be valued differently due to the years in which they were founded. Indeed, Arco Film, founded in 1951, had a minor investment gain in comparison to San Ferdinando Film, created three years later. In 1951, as mentioned, the median corporation stock value was 500,000 lire and the films released were 122 (84 in the previous year), while in 1954 the median was 200,000 lire and the number of movies produced were 155 (160 in 1953). What separates these two companies is the year 1952, which represented a significant break in the industry.²⁰⁷ Therefore, Arco Film belongs to the first part of the 1950s production, the rising period, while San Ferdinando Film falls into the depressive years of the decade, as the film industry was already registering a decrease. Even though the companies had the same corporation stock, their value, therefore, differed significantly.

Looking at the dates during which De Filippo's dedicated himself to film production, from 1950-1954, it is interesting to notice they cover both specific and limited years. It is widely

²⁰⁴ For an overview of the phenomenon, see Chapter 2. For an extensive analysis of the events, see: Felice (2015); Amatori and Colli (2016); Ciocca (2020).

For providing a general idea of the situation, it can be said that after WWII the Italian government decided to allocate funds for the agrarian industry, and it earmarked different contributions according to the dimension of the agrarian company: 35% of the manpower cost in big companies, 52% in medium companies, and 67% in small ones. This inversely proportional contribution clearly supports and promotes small properties to the detriment of big companies.

It can be hypothesised that this reform was operated in several other industrial areas, favouring small activities and, for this reason, it engendered the proliferation of many new small companies, even in the cinema field (Fanfani, 2004, pp. 125-154).

²⁰⁵ The company had its residence in Naples, too.

²⁰⁶ It collected 150,700,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 353).

²⁰⁷ For a study of 1952 and the events that influenced the industry in that period, see Chapter 2.

known that the actor and director dedicated himself primarily to theatre. Moreover, right after WWII, in 1948, De Filippo purchased a very important theatre in Naples, the San Ferdinando Theatre, investing almost all his money in doing so. The theatre was almost completely destroyed during the war, but he wanted to restore it to its former glory. Given all this information, it can be argued that in order to pursue his theatrical dream, he looked for funds in other areas of the entertainment industry, and so became a film producer and founder of some companies. Indeed, the film's revenues were used for financing the theatre's restoration.²⁰⁸ This interpretation is endorsed by the fact that the first movie produced was in 1950 (*Napoli Milionaria*), and the last one in 1954 (*Questi Fantasmi*), the same year the San Ferdinando Theatre reopened. All of De Filippo's production activity was designed to support the theatre's restoration, and this consideration can be supported by the closure of his companies that subsequently followed: San Ferdinando Film closed in 1954 – becoming Il Teatro San Ferdinando s.r.l. in 1956 (Procino, 2003, p. 145); while Arco Film ended in 1961, without producing a single film in its 10-year life-span. 1961 is also the same year of the San Ferdinando Theatre closure. As stated above, all his companies were designed to finance his theatre in Naples (therefore, even if Arco Film was located in Rome, it is considered a decentralised company given its specific link to the city of Naples).

It is clear that De Filippo's cinema experience was forced to his theatrical ambitions, and depended on a lack of financial resources. Hence, he must be considered in the middle between a producer and a venture capitalist: he was a producer because he invested in the industry more than once, trying to survive in this fragmented, disorganised and fragile environment, planning his productions and following patterns of behaviour throughout his projects; but at the same time he can be also considered a venture capitalist, being he arrived at this industry looking for some financial luck and capitals for his theatre. Eduardo De Filippo is a hybrid figure of the period, who played an important part in two industries, in two cities, in several roles, and in multiple firms at the same time. Not only with his production companies, but also in his persona, he is representative of the era and of the industry in which he was living.

²⁰⁸ "Eduardo invests his cinema profits [for supporting the restoration of the San Ferdinando Theatre], then he is forced to ask for help from the banks, and cedes his film royalties and theatre royalties to the banks" (Procino, 2003, p. 140) for repaying his debts.

4.4 Case study: Turin, and Taurus Film

As mentioned earlier, between 1945 and 1959 in Turin, 25 new production companies were born. Since the 1910s, this city has always been significant for Italian cinema and hosted many important producers, studios and production companies throughout the years. Moreover, Turin claims Italy's first real film producer, Arturo Ambrosio, who dedicated his life to cinema and understood the importance and the commercial possibilities of the medium. He started the production model that allowed local production to establish itself on a national and international basis for at least a decade. He also developed a model based on a closed cycle mode of production and commercial exploitation of the movie, involving the planning, production, distribution and projection of films.²⁰⁹ Working in the same area was Stefano Pittaluga, owner of SASP, Società Anonima Stefano Pittaluga and Cines-Pittaluga, a production company that had its own studios and designed the rebirth of Italian cinema through its production of *La Canzone dell'Amore* (Righelli, 1930), the first spoken Italian movie (Corsi, 2012).

During the period analysed in this thesis, Turin was the hometown of Taurus Film S.r.l, a company that had a noteworthy production strategy and a branch in Rome (ACS, en. 99 CF 1871). Founded in 1948 and according to Bernardini, its corporation stock was 200,000 lire,²¹⁰ it produced four movies and was managed by Gianni Castagneto and Vittorio Zumaglino. According to the corporation stock, this company is part of the large group of 236 enterprises, whose stock went from 50,000 to 500,000 lire. The company's initial investment was quite low, especially when considering the median value, in 1948 shows corporations investing 750,000 lire. However, the low value of the initial investment changes if we consider the foundation date in 1947, the year of the first movie produced. According to Bernardini, the company was founded in 1948, and its first film was released in the same year. Marinucci's list anticipates movie production at one film per year, in 1947. If we consider 1947 the foundation date of the company, its dimensions and its investment take on a completely new perspective. In that year, median corporation stock was 370,000 lire, and the movies produced were 66. The industry, therefore, was still experiencing growth following the war

²⁰⁹ Ambrosio had a studio and also his own theatre where he used to project his movies.

For a brief description of Ambrosio's work and of the role Turin had for the history of cinema, see: Rondolino (2000).

²¹⁰ It was then increased to 500,000 lire.

years, even if investments were decreasing.²¹¹ Furthermore, when comparing Taurus Film stocks to the median stocks, it becomes apparent that the company invested a lot of money for its foundation, even if this was under the median value.

The first movie it produced was *Che tempi!* (G. Bianchi, 1947), a comedy with Gilberto Govi and Lea Padovani, that collected 106,250,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 108). The Archivio Centrale dello Stato holds no documentation about the film, but documents stored at the Archivio Storico of BNL, provide evidence of loans requested from the company for the production of the movie. According to documentation, Taurus Film asked for an initial 15 million lire loan. This was comprised of promissory notes by Fincine company, endorsements by Mr. Oscar Rocchi, together with Mr. Gianni Castagneto and Giuseppe Falonari as guarantors. As assurances, the company gave the bank all the film royalties together with the above-named signatures (*Book of the College of Chief for the Autonomous Section for Cinema Loans, minutes n. 23, 1947*). The following year, Taurus Film asked for a second loan²¹² of 10,000,000 lire, providing as guarantees Castagneto and Falonari's signature and the government contribution related to the movie (*BCMM, minutes n. 8, 1948*). By the beginning of 1950, both loans were paid off, perhaps thanks to the box office success (*Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations, deliberation n. 93, 1950*).

The second film produced by the company was *Il diavolo in convento* (N. Malasomma, 1950), featuring Gilberto Govi again. This comedy, partly shot in the ICET studios in Turin, was distributed by Artisti Associati, which provided a 40 million lire of *minimo garantito* (ACS, en. 19 CF 1034), and collected 274,627,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 133). In order to finance the film, Taurus Film applied for a 60 million loan to BNL (35 million on the *fondo speciale*). However, the bank agreed to finance 45 million, 25 of which was on the *fondo speciale*. In this case, the conditions of use and guarantees are unusual, as there is a noticeable intervention from the rental company through the minimum guarantee system, and a series of warranties subdivided into several grades. This is broken down as follows:

Use: 40,000,000 through promissory notes given by the renter S.p.A. Artisti Associati for the S.r.l. Taurus Film; 5,000,000 lire through promissory notes signed by the company's representatives;

Warranties: a) transfer of the film "Il diavolo in convento" rights to be divided as follows:

- for the loan to be worth on the "ordinary fund":

in 1st grade – profits from rent in Italy, free territory of Trieste, Malta, Libya, Eritrea and Somalia; government awards;

²¹¹ For an analysis of the median corporation stocks of companies founded between 1945 and 1959, see Chapter 2.

²¹² Asking for different loans in different years was not an unusual practice in the film industry.

in 2nd grade – profits from exploitation in foreign countries
- for the loan to be worth on the “special fund”:
in 1st grade - profits from exploitation in foreign countries
in 2nd grade - profits from rent in Italy, free territory of Trieste, Malta, Libya, Eritrea
and Somalia; government awards;
b) Mr. Ferruccio Caramelli’s surety for the success of the approval by S.p.A. Artisti
Associati, and Mr. Giovanni Castagneto’s and Mr. Giuseppe Falonari’s surety for the
success of the entire project.
(*BEBM, minutes n. 8, 1950*)

Falonari’s bank guarantee was then replaced by a new bond signed by Rubino De Giovanni
and Vittorio Zumaglino (*BEBM, minutes n. 10, 1950*), and the loan was cancelled at the
beginning of 1952 (*Book of the Executive Director’s Deliberations, deliberation n. 209, 1952*).

There is another peculiarity related to this production, concerning the additional 8% share
award given by the State. Indeed, *Il diavolo in convento*, was admitted to the compulsory
schedule and the 10% contribution, but it did not receive the additional 8% grant given to
films considered as having a particular artistic value. As a sign of the importance this
additional grant had for every film produced, there is a letter from Taurus Film dated
February 19th, 1951, expressing the production company's anger and frustration, and claims
to have suffered a serious moral and financial loss due to this decision (ACS, en. 19 CF 1034).
In support of their request that the Commission go back on its decision, Taurus Film provides
box office figures from some cities,²¹³ as well as cut-outs on the film’s critiques. The appeal
by the production company was then approved by the General Direction of the Spectacle
(Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo), and communicated in a letter dated July 23rd, 1951
(ACS, en. 19 CF 1034).

The third film released by Taurus Film was *La contessa di Castiglione* (G. Combret, 1954),
a French-Italian historical co-production with Radius Productions (70% France, 30% Italy). The
movie was admitted to the mandatory scheduling list, to the 10% contribution and,
furthermore, to the additional 8% share award (ACS, en. 99 CF 1871). As a co-production, the
contract included a twin film to be shot in Italy (70% Italy – 30% France). It should have been
La regina dei Caraibi (ACS, en. 99 CF 1871), which was planned simultaneously with *La*

²¹³ “In the cities where the film has been released, during the first week of projection the box office
reported shows audience interest:

Milan L. 6,175,000
Turin L. 4,350,000 (still on the screens)
Genoa L. 11,435,000 (still on the screens)
Padua L. 1,660,000
Venice L. 1,013,000
Cagliari L. 1,119,000
Palermo L. 2,089,000”
(ACS, en. 19 CF 1034).

contessa di Castiglione.²¹⁴ Indeed, the contract states that both films should have started shooting no later than December 1954 (ACS, en. 102 CF 1900). However, *La regina dei Caraibi* was never produced, and the twin film became *La ladra* (M. Bonnard, 1955) by Rivo Film and Comptoir Français de Productions Cinématographique.²¹⁵ Co-productions generally included two main agreements: divisions and “exceptional” co-productions. In a “normal” co-production, there was a 50-50 division of the money invested and of the crew and cast nationality. However, in some cases, there was a 70-30 (or even 80-20) division, which indicates a major and a minor investor. This formula needed a contract signed by both companies and approved by the government bodies of both countries. It established that the two companies had exclusive international market shares, proportional to the financial commitment taken, and included the realisation of a “twin” co-production. That is, a movie where the roles of the major and the minor investors were inverted (Di Chiara, 2018).²¹⁶ It sometimes happened that the programmed twin movie was impossible to release, thus for honouring the contract between the countries involved, another film could become the twin movie, even if produced by another company. This was what happened with *La regina dei Caraibi* and *La ladra*, to allow a counterpart for *La contessa di Castiglione*, a co-production with Italy as major producer, as per contract 70% Italy and 30% France.

The last production in the period under analysis is *Silenzio... si spara!* (J. Berry, 1954).²¹⁷ This was also an Italian-French comedy co-production, between Taurus Film (30%) and Les

²¹⁴ The documents show the same dates: February 10th, 1954.

²¹⁵ In a note dated July 22nd, 1955:

“We get the chance to attach the following documents on completion for our dossier:

[...]

- A copy of the letter from Société RADIUS PRODUCTIONS, 85 Rue Lauriston, Paris, through which this company renounces its right to produce the twin movie “La Contessa di Castiglione”. Moreover, it authorises our French co-producer COMPTOIR FRANCAIS DE PRODUCTIONS CINEMATOGRAPHIQUE in Paris and ourselves to produce the already mentioned movie.

We also notify that our film started on July 4th, and that the production is in progress since that date without interruptions.

Rivo Film” (ACS, en. 133 CF 2218).

²¹⁶ During the research done, many twin movies have been encountered. Some of the production companies that followed this path were: Hermes Film and its *Stella di Rio* (1955) (with Germany), Sagittario Film and its *Siamo Tutti Necessari* (1956) (with Spain) (the Italian company decided to renounce the co-production rights, and asked for the consideration of twin films for *Siamo Tutti Necessari* by Yago Film and Sagittario Film the movie *Le Schiave di Cartagine*, produced by Cines and Yago Film in the same year), or Sveva Film and its *La Nostra Pelle* (1951) (with France).

²¹⁷ There is another file related to Taurus Film and the movie *Il ratto delle Sabine* located in the documents at ACS. However, the file contains only a couple of letters: one from the company to the General Direction; the other from De Pirro to Flaud, the principal of the Centre National de la Cinématographie. There are no traces of financial plans, notifications or any other document related to the beginning of filming. Moreover, in the cinematografo.it database a movie is listed with the same title, but it was by F.I.C.I.T. and Cinématographie Française de Production International and was released in 1961.

Films Dispa (70%). Its twin movie was *La donna del fiume* (M. Soldati, 1955) produced by Carlo Ponti S.p.A. and Excelsa Film.²¹⁸ From the documents found at Archivio Centrale dello Stato, in the notification at the beginning of shooting, Taurus Film mentioned another Italian company involved, revealing a collaboration and additional “domestic” co-production: DA.MA. Cinematografica S.r.l. According to Bernardini, this company was founded in 1953 with a 999.000 lire corporation stock by Marcello Danon, and was particularly active in minority shared co-produced movies contributing to a minority share of the budget with France (Bernardini, 2000, p. 123). Hence, it can be argued that the 30% Italian share belonging to the Italian partner was itself divided between Taurus and DA.MA. From the information given in the notification, this last production company covered 80% of the amount, and Taurus the remaining 20%. As shown, this was a common financial practice in the Italian film industry at the time. Even though the most common co-productions included a 70-30 distribution between the nationalities involved, this second distribution (80-20) was quite popular as well.

The other company in Turin was FILMEX S.r.l. Its case is quite peculiar due to its complex financial plans built without loans from the government. It was founded by Vittorio Nebiolo in 1955 with 900,000 lire corporation stock. This sum puts the company in the largest group of firms analysed, the ones whose stock included between 500,000 lire and 1 million (142 enterprises in total). However, given that in 1955 the median was 500,000 lire, FILMEX invested a substantial sum of money at its foundation. This was in line with the general increasing trend, which at the time saw median values moving from 200,000 lire in 1954 to 500,000 in 1955. Moreover, in order to have an idea of the film industry context in which the company was created, it should be also considered that there was a decrease in the number of new enterprises established. There were 53 new companies formed in 1955, which is 17 less than the previous year. Perhaps Vittorio Nebiolo thought it was a good investment to found a production company, given the great number of new companies founded, and

²¹⁸ The first film mentioned as a twin in a letter by Taurus Film on August 25th, 1954 was *Piovuto dal cielo* (L. De Mitri, 1954). However, a month later a note by Carlo Ponti S.p.A. (dated September 22nd, 1954) recognises *Silenzio... si spara!* (known at the time as *Via delle Bocche Pinte*) as twin film production of *La donna del fiume*.

“The writing companies, that realised the Italian French co-production “LA DONNA DEL FIUME”, inform this honourable Presidency that the corresponding twin movie will be produced by TAURUS FILM (Turin) and NOUVELLE DES FILMS DISPA.

-The temporary title is: “VIA DELLE BOCCHE PINTE”.

[...] It should be noted that the companies CARLO PONTI S.p.A. and EXCELSA FILM S.p.A., producers of “LA DONNA DEL FIUME”, declare not to have any right nor obligation regarding the film that will be produced in France. From the other side, the companies TAURUS FILM and NOUVELLES DES FILMS DISPA (Paris) declare not to have any right nor obligation regarding the film produced in Italy” (ACS, en. 117 CF 2058).

movies released, following the previous years successes (for a time series graph of companies founded and movies released per year see chart 2). In its one-year activity, FILMEX produced two movies without requesting loans from the BNL. The first one produced was a drama, *Il piccolo vetraio* (G. Capitani, 1955), co-produced with Rome-based production company Franca Film S.r.l. The financial plan of the movie, which gives an idea of how the company decided to proceed, is also available at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato archive.

The financial plans list the film's estimated cost of 77,000,000 lire,²¹⁹ far below the average cost of a movie, that in the 1950s was around 150-200 million lire (Di Chiara and Noto, 2020). FILMEX covered it as follow: 35 million lire were covered by the *minimo garantito*, 15 million lire came from F.E.R.T.,²²⁰ a further 15 million lire from Franca Film, and the remaining 10 million lire from Cosmopolitan company.²²¹ *Il piccolo vetraio* was recognised as worthy of the 10% State contribution and, moreover, of the additional 8% share award. The last information accessible about the company is that it wound up during the 1960s and its liquidator was Giuseppe Gatti.²²²

The second known film produced was *La trovatella di Milano* (G. Capitani, 1956). In this case, FILMEX covered the film costs only through the *minimo garantito* and its own resources. The entire amount of money necessary to produce the movie was the same as *Il piccolo vetraio*, 77 million lire, as was the *minimo garantito*, which was 40 million lire. The film was guaranteed by ALCI Film – Alleanza Cinematografica Italiana S.r.l. (ACS, en. 126 CF 2156) The production ended without difficulties or delays (ACS, en. 126 CF 2156), and the movie was recognised worthy of the 10% State contribution and of the additional 8% share award, too (ACS, en. 126 CF 2156).

The above are FILMEX official releases, however, there are documents in the ACS that refer to *La rivolta dei Cosacchi* and *Sabbia*, two other films that the company tried to produce. With regards to *La rivolta dei Cosacchi* there is only a letter from Nebiolo dated March 30th, 1955 (ACS, en. 130 CF 2186), where he asks for prior permission from the authorities for authorisation to produce the film. It was a co-production with Halk Film, and the estimated

²¹⁹ The financial plan is dated April 3rd, 1955. However, in the note from the Revisione Cinematografica Preventiva, the cost increased a little bit: 77,460,000 lire (May 5th, 1955) (ACS, en. 132 CF 2206).

²²⁰ Film studios located in Turin.

²²¹ Unfortunately, there are no other references to this company, and it is impossible to know if it was a production company or a company involved in other businesses.

²²² Note dated October 6th, 1965:

“The undersigned prof. GIUSEPPE GATTI, liquidator of the no more active company FILMEX S.r.l., resident in Via Fra' Castoro 7 – Rome, on request of the General Direction of Dues and Direct Taxes on Business – 1° Office Register of Private Acts, Rome, Via Orazio 10, as it can be seen from the photostatic attached copy, asks to this Ministry the definitive certificate of Italian nationality of the movie “IL PICCOLO VETRAIO”, produced by FILMEX in 1955” (ACS, en. 132 CF 2206).

cost was around 200 million lire, that the company thought to take partly from the film profits in Turkey, partly from the distributor Alci Film²²³ (80 million lire as *minimo garantito*), and the rest from the company business partners and Nebiolo himself. However, there is no other information about *La rivolta dei Cosacchi*, nor traces elsewhere, so it is plausible that the permission was denied, and the film never made. There is little information about *Sabbia*, other than the film's financial plan, which consists of valuable information about the film. The estimated cost of the movie is 90,000,000 lire, and that is divided as follows: 55 million lire as *minimo garantito*; 17 million lire as theatrical participation technical means etc.; 6 million lire as income from the sale of Middle Eastern markets; and 12 million lire indicated as *commendatore* (knight commander) Antonio Criscuolo's financing (ACS, en. 141 CF 2288). In October 1955, just after the notification to begin the film's shooting on September 24th, 1955, SIAE wrote to the General Direction of Spectacle and FILMEX. This was to inform them that another film, titled *Sabbia* and produced by Fox, had been approved. FILMEX replied declaring it would have changed the title of the film. Nevertheless, there is no other information or communication about this change, nor about any other film produced by the company. For this reason, it can be assumed that the film was never completed.

The only two films that FILMEX completed were both directed by Giorgio Capitani, thus it can be assumed that the company was founded with the intention of producing primarily Capitani's films. This hypothesis is supported by Poppi (2007, p. 448) who describes the film *La trovatella di Milano* as "produced by Giorgio Capitani for Filmex".²²⁴ Examining whether Nebiolo is also involved in any of the production companies with which Capitani collaborated during the following years, could be an interesting starting point for a future analysis. However, space limitations prevent investigations of the relationship between the director and the producer Nebiolo in this thesis.

It could be possible that Nebiolo bet on Capitani, seeing him as promising for Italian cinema after the success of his previous musical *Piscatore 'e Posilleco* (1954), which grossed 240,726,000 Lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 333). A bet that was successful seeing as Capitani went on to direct many films after the ones produced by FILMEX, and from the 1960s onwards until the 2010s.²²⁵ According to cinematografo.it's database, Capitani's career in

²²³ It is the same distribution company of *La trovatella di Milano*, *Il piccolo vetraio* and even *Sabbia*.

²²⁴ The formula "produced by [name] for [company name]" usually means that the production company does not directly produce the film, but it is produced by the person's name state in the formula. They have a stable business relationship, but not dependent nor exclusive. Given the fact that Lux Film frequently used this formula, and that the specific language was coded and shared by the film industry and the people involved in it, we can assume that this definition can be applied also to Capitani and FILMEX.

²²⁵ For a list of Capitani's films, see his profile in www.cinematografo.it.

cinema began a few years before the release of *Il piccolo vetraio*. He then started to work as a director in 1953, and directed only two movies before *Il piccolo vetraio*. Unfortunately, both *Il piccolo vetraio* and *La trovatella di Milano* were not box office successes, the former grossing only 63,353,000 Lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 330), while the latter 146,600,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 448). Considering that the box office median value for drama in 1955 was 145 million Lire, it can be affirmed that *Il piccolo vetraio* was a complete loss for the company. Nevertheless, being strongly convinced of Capitani's abilities, FILMEX tried to gain the revenues with *La trovatella di Milano*, which aligned with 1956 box office median values for drama, thereby improving the previous film's result. This surely assisted the company, but it was unlikely to ensure FILMEX a future in the industry. This is confirmed by the following two films mentioned in the documents at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, *La rivolta dei Cosacchi* and *Sabbia*, which encountered some difficulties before their production, that resulted in the company's decision not to proceed in their realisation and eventually close down.

4.5 Conclusions

As demonstrated by this chapter, there were many companies that tried to access the film industry and make movies. But all of them encountered the same problems and similar difficulties, irrespective of their location. From the North to the South, the Italian peninsula was scattered with movie production companies, with some concentration in specific centres. However, in order to see if there were similar patterns among the players operating outside the most important film centre, Rome, some companies have been chosen and analysed in depth. The patterns analysed in this chapter are between medium and small sized companies, analogous investments, numbers of movies produced and their genres, as well as the film's financial plans.

The examples were chosen not only to trace comparable production behaviours among the companies all over Italy, but they also show how difficult it was to produce a movie in Italy at the time. Furthermore, evidence in this chapter highlights the fragmented nature of film financing. Just how willing, for instance, producers were to undercapitalise their companies in order to take minimum risks, and face the actual impossibility to cover

expenses. The production companies analysed in this chapter include Panaria Film, Panaria S.p.A., AL.MO. Film, Delphinus, Delta, Arco Film, San Ferdinando Film, Taurus, and Filmex. All of them present information on the composition and financial processes in the Italian film industry after the Second World War and during the 50s, that furthers understanding into the financial assemblage of the time. Many of the producers of these companies had to cut and divide their shares of their films in order to allow the shooting to proceed and finish. They had no guarantees about the end of production, nor the release of the film. They did not even have assurances of State funds and contributions. Moreover, they often used the success of one film to produce the next, along with the contacts they had made in Rome as many of their offices were based there. Being undercapitalised companies, they strongly relied on state and artistic contributions, and when this did not happen, they faced many problems in the realisation of their films, with probable delays in production plans and budget cuts. The consequences could have been disastrous without an appropriate financial plan, given the company's impossibility to finish the production or even to survive. However, as these firms demonstrate, this financial assemblage ensured the companies' completion of the film, not their survival. This fragmentation represented a vulnerability, a house of cards that rendered the company's life even more unstable. This created insecurity in single firms and, as a consequence, in the entire industrial structure.

This chapter was informed by my archival research, and documents located at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, and the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. All have provided invaluable information by way of promissory notes, loans, and contributions, as well as micro and macro financing. Each of these areas, as the documentation has demonstrated, was fundamental with regards to reaching the end of production, and allowing the film's release. Most of the time, the aspiration was to make productions that met government approval. In this way, companies were able to secure a state contribution, which then provided the necessary profits for allowing companies to continue their endeavours. On the surface, the data highlights that external financing and loans seem to be not proportional to the corporation stock of the companies, to the success of the films, or to the decentralisation of the company itself. The only distinguishing and influential aspects were the warranties a firm could provide. It would be interesting to verify with further analyses if there was a financing strategy based on the expected success of the film produced, or if loans and external investments followed other reasoning. Unfortunately, this type of investigation needs a separate examination that cannot be accurately pursued in this thesis, but it could be a starting point for future studies. What can be stated with the information already collected, is that neither State funds nor box office profits assured the

success of a film, or a company's survival. The only aspect that associates all of the companies examined here is their difficulties in finding funds, together with the necessity of consulting other sources external to the firms involved in the realisation of the film. Neither the cast nor the companies involved could prevent the involvement of other financing resources, independently from the importance of the players at stake.

And while many companies continued their attempts at remaining and surviving this market, the vast majority decided to conclude their film production phase. Nevertheless, the ability, resourcefulness and ingenuity of Italian production companies at the time is undeniable and without dispute. To be able to find the amount of money needed to conclude their projects, to release their product, and to show them to wide audiences is truly extraordinary. There was an uncompromisingly intense desire to produce, which in many ways, may have been helped by the State funding available. And while at times this was for the better, as it allowed some companies to survive, at others, it was for the worse, as it paved the way for numerous transitional companies trying their luck. Either way, the end result is an exceptional and remarkable production.

Chapter 5

Directors and Actors as Producers

As discussed in chapter 1, due to the strong impact and influence Hollywood had on the Italian cinema field, the first approach I used to study the Italian film industry, was to explore the cultural and industrial studies surrounding Hollywood's film industry. Two of the key investigations I drew from, were those of Thomas Schatz and Hortense Powdermaker, who adopted an anthropological approach, that concentrated on individual producers' careers, and their most important successes.²²⁶ This perspective inspired and led to an ulterior analysis in my research, where I adapted Schatz and Powdermaker's methods to the Italian context, so as to study the Italian film industry through the lens of the people who built it. Thus, when investigating production companies, I also examined the managers who ran them, while at the same time researching possible connections among firms, recurring names, and well-known personalities. It is also worth repeating that many people who entered the cinema field, did so with the hope of success. Many of them were sporadic producers, who occasionally released a movie but crowded the cinema industry with many short-lived enterprises (Nicoli, 2017; Corsi, 2001; Bizzarri and Solaroli, 1958). However, these small and medium companies with a short lifespan, were also founded by people already in

²²⁶ For an analysis of Powdermaker and Schatz's works, see Chapter 1.

the film industry. Among them were script writers, editors, and sometimes stage technicians. Nevertheless, the majority of these producers were directors and actors. A first analysis of the production companies founded between 1945 and 1959, has shown that 57 directors and 38 actors also worked as producers for newly founded enterprises.²²⁷ It has further been noted that the number of directors-producers is higher than that of actors-producers. Moreover, there are 15 producers-directors, in other words producers who also directed movies, while no producer worked as an actor.²²⁸ Furthermore, in some cases the same name appears in more than one production company under the manager section, revealing the presence of a hard core of recurring people in the industry, “a relatively small number of insiders,” to use B. Ortner’s words (2009, p. 176).

At first glance, some well-known names immediately stood out.²²⁹ Among the directors were: Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, one of the managers of Pincio Film;²³⁰ Luigi Comencini, producer for Emmepi Cinematografica and Morino Film; Federico Fellini for Fulco Film; Carmine Gallone for Cine Opera and Produzione Gallone; Pietro Germi, producer of R.P.A. – Registi Produttori Associati; Mario Mattoli for Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum; Gennaro Righelli for Domus Film; Roberto Rossellini for O.F.I. – Organizzazione Film Internazionali, Tevere Film, Aniene Film, Berit Film and Sveva Film; and Luchino Visconti, one of the producers of Ar.Te.As. Film. Among the actors are: Eduardo De Filippo for Arco Film and San Ferdinando Film, companies already studied in chapter 4; Aldo Fabrizi for Alfa Film XXXVII and Guaranteed Pictures Italia (sometimes misspelled “Guaranted” in documents, which will be examined in chapter 5); Flavio Focas Ducas C. de Curtis (aka Totò)²³¹ along with the managers of D.D.L.; Franco Franchi for Posa Film; Folco Lulli for Hermes Film and Sagittario Film; and Alberto Sordi for P.F.C. – Produzione Film Comici, together with actor and director Vittorio De Sica, who established several companies, such as P.F.C. – Produzione Film Comici, Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica, and Produzione De Sica (or P.D.S.).²³²

²²⁷ For a list of names, please see Appendix A.

²²⁸ The period under analysis is the same: 1945-1959. In this space, those figures who covered these roles before and after the years analysed have not been taken into consideration.

²²⁹ For a brief summary, please see Appendix A.

²³⁰ The name of the production companies refers to Bernardini’s list. It is important to specify this aspect because the research done at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (fund Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo (1941-1998)) underlined how sometimes information does not coincide. Some examples will be evidenced later.

²³¹ His birth name was Antonio Clemente. In 1928, he “renamed” himself Antonio Griffo Focas Flavio Angelo Ducas Comneno Porfirogenito Gagliardi De Curtis di Bisanzio.

²³² The analysis of directors-producers revealed the presence of another three names that can only be partially included in the category of director-producers discussed in chapter 5. Indeed, these three companies did not actually release any films during this time, even though they were founded

In order to analyse this phenomenon, I will identify some case studies, chosen from those among the above-mentioned companies, to show the types of firms these directors and actors ran. I analyse how they were distributed on the Italian territory in that particular period, and if they only produced their films or if they were involved in other projects too. After Thomas Schatz's *The Genius of the System*, I will draw behavioural patterns common among these producers, to determine if their companies were able to adjust to changing circumstances. Specific cases will be omitted here as they have already been discussed in other contexts, as per Roberto Rossellini, for instance.²³³

5.1 Case Studies – Directors as Producers

After the examination of the De Filippo and Fabrizi's cases, and production companies that were not located in Rome, several films emerged that had been produced by directors and actors. An initial analysis of the various production companies and their released productions showed that these directors and actors sometimes worked in the films their companies made, while others only produced them. What came to light, however, was the presence of several co-productions among these films, well beyond the general trend of the industry in the 1950s. Data from Gyory and Glas (1992) shows that, during the 1950s,²³⁴ Italy was one of the most productive European countries in terms of film production, and with regards to co-productions, between 1950 and 1959 there were 372 of them. The only country that released a similar number of co-productions in the same period was France, with 361.²³⁵ If the total number of co-productions in Italy is compared to the remaining Italian productions within the same timeframe, 28.9% of the films produced were co-productions

between 1945 and 1959. They are Fulco Film, R.P.A. – Registi Produttori Associati, and Edisonvolta – Cinema Branch, which will be briefly explored in Appendix C, due to the importance of the directors involved.

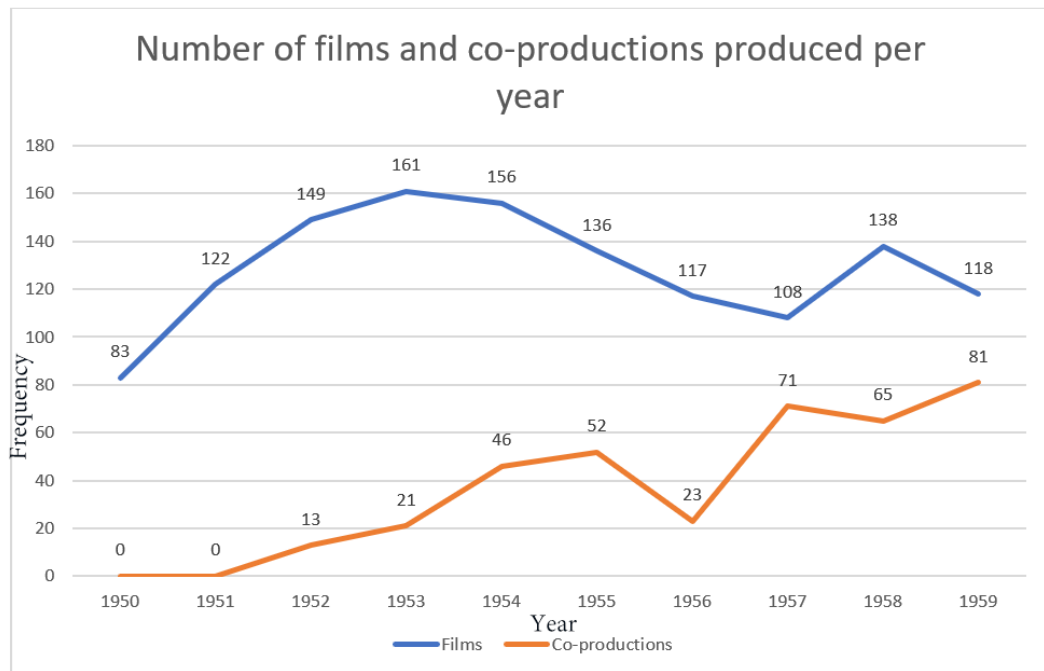
²³³ An example is Aprà (1988, 67-71).

²³⁴ In their analysis, Gyory and Glas consider only the decade 1950-1959 for all European countries. Thus, although the analysis is partially relevant to my context, it provides useful data for comparing films in co-production within the general context and the companies founded by actors and directors examined in this chapter.

²³⁵ Other relevant industries of which data are available about co-productions are: Austria, 94; Germany, 111; Spain, 122 (Gyory and Glas, 1992).

(see chart 26 for the annual distribution of co-productions in relation to the number of films produced per year). However, when referring to the co-productions released by the companies headed by directors and actors in the same period, the percentage rises to more than 42%.

Chart 26. Comparison between the total number of films produced and the co-productions between 1950 and 1959



Source: author's elaboration.

The presence of co-produced films in the industry is relevant in this context because it highlights the necessity of collaboration, due to the undercapitalisation of the companies.²³⁶ Italian producers adhered to “a logic of short- and medium-term capital investment, and initiatives with the lowest risks and the maximum possible profit” (Brunetta, 2009, p. 16). This calculated risk was a model of behaviour that could help in preventing the closure of the company if properly managed. The partial investment is not surprising given this period experienced great increases in the number of co-produced projects, beginning with such pioneering countries as Italy and France,²³⁷ followed by Germany, Spain, Great Britain and

²³⁶ Unfortunately, it was not possible to carry an in-depth analysis of co-productions in Italy at the time. My preference was to consider production as a whole. However, it could be a starting point for further studies in the future.

²³⁷ “In order to bring into focus the function co-production agreements have had over the last twenty years for the European cinema industry, it is necessary to think about the first Italian-French agreement. It is thanks to this if both industries were able to recover after the Second World War. The

Ireland.²³⁸ However, the opposite could also be true. In other words, because of the practice of partial investment becoming common, this allowed companies to work on multiple fronts. In order to analyse this production landscape as accurately as possible, this section will focus on specific case studies, that are investigated due to their emblematic nature, with regards to modes of production after the Second World War, and during the Fifties. Interestingly, most of these companies can be classified as small, sometimes medium firms, that produced a limited number of movies - often directed by the firm's producers. Sometimes only one film for each company was produced, proving their adherence to the industrial model outlined in chapters 2 and 3, and the trends of the period.

The first example, concerns Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia and Pincio Film. According to data collected by Aldo Bernardini (2000), the production company was founded in 1952, it released just one film within the same year. The working period of the firm happens to be the same year when an inverse tendency between the number of movies released and companies founded occurred (148 vs 53, against the increase of the previous and following year).²³⁹ In addition to this, its managers, Bragaglia and Francesco Genovese Labocetta, invested 500,000 lire in corporation stock, which was a considerable amount over the 300,000 lire median of the year. However, when compared to the territorial distribution of companies according to their stock within the entire 15-year period, Pincio Film can be considered a medium sized company.²⁴⁰

According to the documents related to the movie Pincio Film produced held at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome (ACS, 1952), the company was in 5, via San Martino della Battaglia, Rome. This document was dated July 17th, 1952. However, since then, the company moved to 31, via Cesare Balbo. The change of address is relevant as it proves the company did not have a stable place of management. The only production Pincio Film released was *Don Lorenzo* (1952), a film directed by Bragaglia, that cashed in 305,716,000 lire at the box office (Poppi 2007, p. 140).²⁴¹ After this film, the company went out of

same agreement had a crucial role in the triumph over the 1955-1957 crisis of the Italian cinema industry." (*La coproduzione cinematografica* 1966, p. 18).

²³⁸For detailed studies on co-productions, see: Baschiera and Di Chiara (2010, pp. 30-39); Corsi (1991, pp. 88-95); Corsi. (1996); Corsi (1999); Di Chiara (2013, pp. 37-49); De Pirro (1959); Giacci (2008); Gili and Tassone (1995); *Coproduzioni di film, 1950-1960* (1960).

²³⁹ For an analysis of 1952, see Chapter 2.

²⁴⁰ Through an analysis of the corporation stocks – when included – of the more than seven hundred companies established between 1945 and 1959, I have highlighted how 142 companies had stock between 500,000 lire and 1 million. Most of them, however, as already mentioned, had up to 500,000 lire in corporation stock. For an in-depth analysis of the companies, see chapter 2.

²⁴¹ Except where clearly mentioned, the box office refers to the information found in Roberto Poppi's *Dizionario del cinema italiano*.

business. Perhaps because the company was created for the production of this film only, or because the director chose to establish his company the year after the highest peak of enterprise foundations following the end of the War (62 firms in 1951), and as he invested well beyond the median value of the year, which was only 300,000 lire. Moreover, Bragaglia chose to produce a comedy, which belonged not only to the second most released genre during that specific time-frame, but was also registering an increase in production, as explored in chapter 2.²⁴² After WWII, the genre reached its peak in 1949 with 90 films. From 1950 to 1953 there was a growth registering more than five hundred movies released in just four years, 102 of which were comedies. However, in 1952, the year of the film's release, only 22 comedies out of a total of 148 films were produced. Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia may have chosen this genre because directors were aware of its success among audiences, and safely invested in comedies. However, the success of this film was not enough to convince Bragaglia to continue with production, or this company ended its lifespan because it was exclusively founded for the release of this film.

A similar mode of production (the creation of a company that produced one film only) was evident with Luchino Visconti and Alfredo Guarini's Ar.Te.As.. This company was founded in 1948, and produced *La Terra Trema* (1948), a film directed by Luchino Visconti that grossed 35,800,000 lire at the box office (Poppi 2007, p. 425). Ar.Te.As. had 1 million lire in corporation stock, and had its legal residence in Rome, with Visconti being referred to as president of the company, and Guarini as its administrator. The company changed its address several times, perhaps as there was no stable location from which it could manage its productions, and may have used one of the addresses its administrators had access to (a very good example of this is can be seen in the case study of Aldo Fabrizi, which will be analysed in depth in chapter 6).

Visconti and Guarini started a medium-sized enterprise in keeping with the trends of the industrial context.. That is to say, its foundation had the clear intention of supporting the production of *La Terra Trema*, which had a complex production history and influenced the genesis as well as the history of the company. The company lasted one year and produced just one film, *La Terra Trema*, which should have been a sort of propaganda documentary financed by PCI, the Italian Communist Party. However, their financing was insufficient in covering the entire cost of this "experimental film" (Brunetta, 2009, p. 243), so another producer, Salvo D'Angelo, supported the production through his company Universalialia. The film was shot in Sicily and was intended to be the first part of a trilogy concerned with rural

²⁴² The analysis of genres produced is examined in Chapter 2.

Italy. But the film was to be a standalone, as it was so thwarted by censorship, public opinion, and cinema owners, and Visconti was discouraged from filming of the remaining parts.²⁴³

Ar.Te.As. then, is an example of a company that perfectly fits into two categories, as it follows both the general productive dynamics of the time, and features directors as managers. This one-year firm also belonged to the numerically largest group of companies founded during this period, that is those with stock of between 500,000 lire and 1 million, and it was created after the peak of an emergence of newly formed companies during the second half of the 1940s. In fact, there were 41 new firms in 1947 (28 in 1945 and 33 in 1946), an increase that could have convinced and enticed people to access the film production business. Indeed, with his substantial initial financial investment of 1 million, the director went well beyond the median investment value of 750,000 lire for 1948, attempting perhaps to create a company with a promising future. Unfortunately for Visconti, Ar.Te.As. closed after only one movie.

The last company owned by a director which produced only one movie, is Gennaro Righelli's Domus Film. Righelli was Sole Administrator and the only owner of this company, which was founded in 1945, was active for three years, and held 50,000 lire in its corporation stock (Bernardini 2000, p. 137). It was also one of the 28 firms created in 1945, and belongs to the group of 53 companies with a restricted stock (up to 50,000 lire). With this in mind, Domus Film is classed as a small enterprise, primarily due to its capital-size, but also considering that the median stock for 1945 was 550,000 lire. According to Bernardini (2000), Righelli produced two movies with Domus Film. Unfortunately, he does not provide the titles of these films. It would have been intriguing to discuss this particular case study in more detail, as the company is one of those about which information found at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato does not match the data reported in Bernardini's book.

According to the archive's database, Domus Film produced only one film, *Le Rouge et le Noir (Il Corriere del Re, 1947)* (ACS, en. 6 CF 0649), which was a drama directed by Righelli himself. The movie was made in co-production with Fincine,²⁴⁴ and collected 208,750,000 lire at the box office (Poppi 2007, p. 121). The second movie released by the company as claimed by Marinucci's catalogue, was the comedy *Abbasso la miseria* (G. Righelli, 1945). Depending on the source, this film features different production companies. According to Marinucci, it

²⁴³ For a history of the film and its production, see Micchicè (1994); Rondolino (2006); Poppi (2007); Thomas (2008); Brunetta (2009); Giori and Subini (2014).

²⁴⁴ According to Bernardini (2000), Fincine s.r.l. was founded in 1947 by Enrico Pescatori and Oscar Rocchi with 10 million lire in corporation stock. It produced three films and went out of business in 1950.

was produced by Lux Film, whereas Poppi, on the contrary, claims it as a Domus Film production that was distributed by Lux Film.²⁴⁵ Database cinematografo.it, on the other hand, reports it as a co-production between Lux Film and Domus Film, and states it was distributed by Lux Film, while according to the initial credits of the film, Domus Film is referred to as its production company. *Abbasso la miseria* is an example of how difficult and challenging an historical research can be, above all when having several sources with different information and trying to know which one is most credible. This plurality of sources may have happened due to the plurality of financiers, and the consequent variety of documents. If the percentage of funding is not clearly specified, each company can declare the whole production on the document provided, and every source reports the information according to the document consulted.

Abbasso la miseria was produced in 1945 - the same year the company was founded - and directed by Righelli. Thus, if we consider that the firm was active from 1945 to 1947, both these films could be considered as not only being produced by Righelli's Domus Film, but also the company's first and last productions. The producer opted for the two most popular genres of the time, a comedy and a drama. When taking a closer look at the distribution of genres within the years the company was active, it is evident that Righelli diligently followed the trends of the industry and its consequent profits. In fact, the first film, *Abbasso la miseria* (1945), was one of the 9 comedies released in 1945, out of a total of 30 movies produced, that included 7 dramas. On the contrary, the second film released in 1947 was a drama. During that year, an inverse trend between the two genres occurred, where only 4 comedies were released, as opposed to 32 dramas. However, box office statistics demonstrate that Righelli's choices were not as financially rewarding as he may have liked. Box office figures show the median profit for comedies was 42 million lire in 1945, against drama's 54,6 million lire, while in 1947, and in spite of only 4 films being produced, comedies had a higher median of 106.25 million lire, in comparison to drama's (102.5 million lire).

Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum falls within the same category as most of the companies investigated in this chapter, by way of it featuring a director in the film who also produced it, Mario Mattoli. According to Aldo Bernardini (2000), Mattoli was sole owner of the company, which was founded in 1949, produced an "experimental-comic film", as defined by the company itself (ACS, en. 19 CF 0889), although it is catalogued as a romantic comedy, and had a corporation stock of 60,000 lire. All the data above is confirmed by the archival documentation located at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, within the file about the film //

²⁴⁵ The box office reported is 55,500,000 lire (Poppi 2007, p. 121).

Vedovo Allegro (Mattoli, 1950) (ACS, en. 19 CF 0889). This was a co-production between Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum and Teatri della Farnesina. Mattoli was sole administrator of Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum, as well as the film's director, and one of its screenwriters. The Ltd firm was one of the 52.34% of corporations that were only active for one year, almost certainly established and disbanded as a one-project enterprise. Particularly when considering Mattoli's initial investment of 60,000 lire in 1949, rendered Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum an undercapitalised company, at a time when median stocks were 500,000 lire. It could be argued then, that this was an experimental company, with an experimental project, represented by an experimental film. After all, films identified as romance, according to cinematografo.it, were only 64 out of 1595 in the period under analysis by the website.

Another self-financed director was Luigi Comencini. Together with Lucia Grifeo, Alfredo Mirabile and Massimo Patrizi, they started Morino Film in 1957, with 500,000 lire in corporation stock. The company ended in 1962 after having produced seven movies and increasing its stock to 30 million lire.²⁴⁶ At its foundation date, the enterprise was amongst the second most common group of companies, the 118 firms that had stocks of between 100,000 and 500,000 lire. The median stock in 1957 was 900,000 lire, thus Comencini invested quite a small amount of money compared to the median of the other 59 companies that emerged in the same year. According to archival documents, Morino Film produced four movies, two of which are not included in this analysis as they sit outside the years studied in this thesis. These two films are *Il Cittadino del Mondo*, a co-production with C.C.C. Film (ACS, en. 232 CF 3229), and *I Piaceri dello Scapolo*,²⁴⁷ directed by Giulio Petroni, and released in 1960. The other two films which are included here, are *Mariti in Città* (1957) (ACS, en. 186 CF 2716) and *Mogli Pericolose* (1958) (ACS, en. 208 CF 2900), both directed by Comencini. *Mariti in città* was a comedy co-produced with Oscar Film²⁴⁸ that grossed 689,200,000 lire (Poppi 2007, p. 259) at the box office. It is surprising that the name of the company does not appear in the documents as producer; however, there are several agreements for actors and

²⁴⁶ There was an intermediate increase of 10 million in 1960, and the company was declared insolvent in February 1963 (Bernardini 2000, p. 292).

²⁴⁷ In this folder there was a document dated June 6th, 1957 regarding the constitution of Morino Film. It reports that the company was supposed to end on December 31st, 1975, and that its corporation stock (500,000 lire) was divided into 50 shares of 10,000 lire each. The undersigned people were: Luigi Comencini (200,000 lire), Massimo Patrizi (100,000 lire), Alfredo Mirabile (100,000 lire) and Nicola Toraldo (100,000 lire) (ACS, 1957). In the same folder there is a paper dated March 7th, 1959 stating that Comencini resigned as Sole Administrator, and his replacement is Alfredo Mirabile (ACS, 255 CF 3229).

²⁴⁸ O.S.C.A.R. Film (Organizzazione Sociale Cinematografica Artistica Roma) srl was founded in Rome in 1953 with 100,000 lire in corporation stock by Pietro Cerboni and Federico Teti. It released 5 films and ended its activities in 1959 (Bernardini 2000, p. 315).

employees stipulated on Morino Film headed paper.²⁴⁹ *Mogli Pericolose* was another co-production,²⁵⁰ this time with Tempo Film.²⁵¹ The film's estimated cost of 187,136,125 lire, was divided as follows: Tempo Film and Morino Film investing 43,568,062 lire each, and 100,000,000 lire as a down payment by Lux Film. Lux Film acted as distributor of the movie and thus anticipated the *minimo garantito* (secured minimum), even if this is not specified. The movie collected 671,000,000 lire at the box office (Poppi 2007, p. 275). Both co-productions were comedies and they reached quite high places in box office rankings.²⁵²

Comencini's other company, founded in 1958 with the same managers as the previous firm and with the addition of Carlo and Giorgio Pescino, was Emmepi Cinematografica. Created in 1958, it had 50,000 lire in corporation stock, and ended in 1964. It was based at 21, via Federico Cesi, Rome and, according to Bernardini (2000), produced 3 films. Records at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato document just one movie relating to this production company, *Il pirata dello Sparviero Nero* (ACS, en. 207 CF 2892). This 1958 film, directed by Sergio Grieco, collected 312,350,000 lire in box office takings (Poppi 2007, p. 332), and according to the archival files, cost 107,575,000 lire. The financial sheet reported the following cost distribution: 40,000,000 lire were financed by the company itself; 30,000,000 as secured minimum profit (*minimo garantito*) by the independent regional charterer (in this case, Filmar); 10,000,000 from the foreign rental agreement; and 30,000,000 from the French co-production company Comptoir Français de Productions Cinematographique (30% of the amount). Emmepi Cinematografica realised a co-production being the main financier, and covered half of the Italian percentage of film cost. Thus, it felt confident about the success of the film, in the light of the previous successes of the films produced by Morino Film, such as *Mariti in città* (1957), and *Mogli pericolose* (1958).

Another interesting insight provided by these documents, is that Emmepi Cinematografica was located at both 1a, via Alessandro Farnese, Rome, and 6, via San Luca,

²⁴⁹ The agreements are with Eduardo Anton (dated June 10th, 1957) for transfer of rights as co-author for the cinema production of the film; with Franca Valeri (dated August 1st, 1957) as actress in the role of Olivetti; with Alfredo Mirabile (dated June 10th, 1957) as General Coordinator; with Massimo Patrizi (June 10th, 1957) as Production Manager; and with Luigi Comencini (undated) as director (ACS, 1957).

²⁵⁰ The film was produced for 50% of the total amount by Morino Film, and the papers reveal that, at the beginning, the address of the company was 9, Lungotevere Flaminio, Rome, but in March 1958 it was 62, Lungotevere Flaminio. Luigi Comencini was the Sole Administrator (ACS, 1958).

²⁵¹ The company (Tempo Film spa) was established in Milan in 1958 with 10,000,000 lire corporation stock by Giuseppe Luraghi, Aldo Palazzi and Arturo Tofanelli. It released 11 films and ended its activity in 1963. Its legal residence was transferred to Rome during the second half of 1958 (Bernardini 2000, p. 416).

²⁵² In 1957, the best film at the box office was *Belle ma povere* (D. Risi) with 808,500,000 lire, while in 1958 it was *La tempesta* (A. Lattuada) with 1,750,400,000 lire. In both cases, Comencini's films arrived in the 8th place.

Genoa. Furthermore, its sole administrator was Carlo Pescino, and its corporation stock increased from 50,000 to 990,000 lire on July 2nd, 1958. It is a very impressive increase made in the same year of foundation, that arouses the conviction that Emmepi Cinematografica rethought about its role and its goals, making it a bigger company with the intention of producing more films. The consideration is supported by the presence of a double address. As previously mentioned in chapter 3, some companies had a double address, often corresponding to a legal residence and a centre of operations, where all activities regarding the production of the movies were held. Therefore, it could be argued that Emmepi Cinematografica may have also belonged to those firms due to its double address, despite not having indisputable data to confirm this. Aside from the address, the increase in the company's stock also draws attention. Indeed, its growth moved the company from the smallest group of production companies created in the period (made up of 53 companies, whose stock was up to 50,000 lire), to the largest, made up of 142 firms with stocks of between 500,000 lire and 1 million. It was such a great improvement, that in 1958 Emmepi Cinematografica median corporation stock was valued at 985,000 lire. With his second firm, Comencini also changed genres to produce an adventure - the fourth most common film category in Italy at the time. It was produced in the year that saw the widest spreading of the adventure genre within the period analysed, with 24 movies out of 137 films released. In two years, he co-produced three films, one of which was with a company from another European country,²⁵³ while the other two were Italian co-productions. Comencini's good reputation as a director during the previous years of activity may have persuaded him to pursue the production path. So he began producing two of his own films, in which he was script writer and director. The extremely good box office results these films obtained,²⁵⁴ gave him the confidence to produce films written and directed by others, registering a good amount of profits even in this case.²⁵⁵

A further well-known international personality involved in the production chain is Carmine Gallone. His name appears in two production companies: Cine Opera and

²⁵³ “[...] co-production agreements made with the various foreign film industries helped the Italian industry to take off and play a leading role in European film production. [...] Between 1950 and 1965, Italy co-produced around 1150 films, including 764 with France, 190 with Spain, 46 with Germany, and 141 three-way productions. Exports rose at the same time” (Nicoli, 2016).

²⁵⁴ *Mogli pericolose* reported an expected cost of around 187,000,000 lire, and a box office of more than 670,000,000 lire with an investment of little more than 40,000,000 lire; *Mariti in città* (about which the film cost and the company investment were absent in the film file at the archive) collected almost 700,000,000 lire.

²⁵⁵ *Il pirata dello Sparviero Nero* reported an expected cost of around 110,000,000 lire, and a box office of more than 300,000,000 lire with an investment of 40,000,000 lire.

Produzione Gallone. Cine Opera was founded in 1947, a time experiencing the highest peak in the number of companies founded after the war, and declared 100,000 lire in foundation stock. This was a low investment when considering that the median stock in 1947 was 370,000 lire. As such, Cine Opera was one of the other hundreds of undercapitalised firms crowding the industry. Its managers were Carmine Gallone, Francesco Penotti, Gregor Rabinovitch and William Szekely, and together they produced three films. However, there are some inconsistencies in the data with regards to these films. According to Marinucci's list, the three films produced by Cinopera and directed by Gallone, are *Addio, Mimi* (1947) (box office: 58,750,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 18), *La signora delle Camelie* (1947)²⁵⁶ and *La leggenda di Faust* (1948) (box office: 31,200,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 239). On the other hand, according to the information at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the name of the company is Cinopera, not Cine Opera as claimed by Bernardini, and it produced only *Addio, Mimi* (1947) (ACS, en. 43 CF 1303). Moreover, in a letter dated July 21st, 1948, from Giulio Andreotti, undersecretary of the Presidenza del Consiglio – Direzione Generale dello Spettacolo (Council Presidency – General Direction for Spectacle), there is reference to a co-production with Columbia Pictures,²⁵⁷ information that is confirmed only by one other document, dated 1949,²⁵⁸ but not present in the film production information. Columbia Pictures' participation in the production would confirm the importance of Gallone at an international level, as well as the plausible success of the film. Ultimately though, it was Gallone's long, successful career that made him found this company to finance his own films, not only because the genre of

²⁵⁶ In co-production with the company Grandi Film Storici. The box office is unknown.

²⁵⁷ Extract from the letter:

"This partnership appears also (except for opposite evidences, never given) from the August 5th, 1948 request for film export (attachment 1), in which it is clearly declared that it was filmed by Columbia Pictures International Corporation, thus using purview American money, as it is confirmed by the note from the Currency Exchange Office dated January 18th, 1949 (attach. 2)" (ACS, 1948).

²⁵⁸ Extract from a document dated January 18th, 1949:

"Special (Cinema) transferable account: use

Columbia Pictures International Co. of New York, through the local office of American and Italian Bank, submitted two requests for the use of 15.000.000 lire sum – to be taken from its "Special (cinema) transferable account" with the following reasons:

14,000,000 lire – as additional deposit for its Delegation in Rome for the filming of the film "La Bohème" and

1,000,000 lire – as additional deposit for its already mentioned Delegation in Rome for the filming of the film "La Traviata".

For information, we communicate that for the production of the mentioned films, until now Columbia company has been authorised to withdraw the following amount from its special (cinema) transferable account:

170,000,000 lire for Bohème and

170,000,000 lire for Traviata" (ACS, 1949).

films he directed were unique, but also because he wanted to have more entrepreneurial freedom.

Regarding the company Produzione Gallone, Bernardini states that its activity covered a time frame of fourteen years (a very long period for a company at the time), from 1949 to 1962, and released a total of twelve films. Its managers were Carmine Gallone and Guido Luzzato, and the corporation stock was 90,000 lire, showing that Gallone opted for an initial investment that was even lower than that of the previous company. Compared to the median stock of companies founded in 1949, which was 500,000 lire, this investment appears to be even more prudent than the previous one, testifying Gallone's desire to tread carefully within the film industry. Marinucci refers to Produzione Gallone simply as "Gallone", and states that between 1949 and 1959 the company produced the following eight films: *La Forza del Destino* (1949) (box office: 272,700,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 187); *Il Trovatore* (1949) (246,250,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 449); *Taxi di Notte* (1950) (125,000,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 421); *Messalina* (1951) (456,100,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 265); *Senza Veli* (1952) (130,000,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 388); *Madame Butterfly* (1954) (322,470,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 247); *Michele Strogoff* (1956);²⁵⁹ and *Tosca* (1956) (161,000,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 435). Both Cine Opera and Produzione Gallone were small but prolific companies, and are part of the 118 companies created with corporation stock varying between 50,000 and 100,000 lire. Cine Opera was established in 1949, the year that registered a peak for newly founded companies in the 1940s. However, its corporation stock was far from the median value of those 41 firms registered – 100,000 lire against 370,000 lire, confirming the trend of the Italian film industry during the period studied, that a small enterprise could be created with a minor financial investment. For Produzione Gallone, the director invested less money, 90,000 lire, hence while it can be considered an even smaller investment than the previous one for Cine Opera, it was significantly more profitable and effective.

All the films released by these two enterprises guided by Carmine Gallone were unsurprisingly directed by Gallone himself, and most of them were operas or musicals. He remained tied to these very specific genres, which had alternating results at the box office. One interesting thing to note, is that according to Marinucci's catalogue, there are some co-productions featuring companies from around the world, which allowed him to source more financing and, above all, to benefit from the co-production agreements with several different countries. These films include *Il Trovatore* (Continentalcine and Gallone – both Italian firms), *Senza Veli* (Rizzoli-Gallone-Alfram – this last one from Munich), *Madame Butterfly* (Rizzoli-

²⁵⁹ It was a co-production. Thus, Poppi does not mention any information about the box office.

Gallone-Toho Film – a Japanese company), and *Michele Strogoff* (Gallone-Illiria Film-Les Films Modernes-Ufus – Italian, French and Yugoslavian corporations). However, my research at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato showed different results. According to the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the films are: *La Forza del Destino* (ACS, 1949), *Senza Veli* (ACS, 1952), *Madama Butterfly* (ACS, 1954), *Tosca* (ACS, 1956), *Polikuschka* (1958) (ACS, 1958), *Tarantella* (ACS, 1952) and *Michele Strogoff* (ACS, 1956).

Regarding *Senza Veli*, the file reveals it was an equally split Italian German co-production, between Produzione Gallone S.r.l. and Alfa Film GmbH Frankfurt/am Main. In other documents, such as the contract for the production – dated July 5th, 1952 – another company, the Turicop of Zurich,²⁶⁰ is mentioned. Rizzoli company, on the other hand, is not mentioned in this contract, but appears for the first time in the extract of the memorandum of the Technical Committee²⁶¹ meeting on May 4th, 1953. According to this document, S.p.A. Rizzoli Editore by Angelo Rizzoli is indicated as the film’s producer,²⁶² while Produzione Gallone is not mentioned. This is because, as stated in an undated document signed by Undersecretary Andreotti, Rizzoli Film (the cinema branch of the Rizzoli Editore S.p.A) replaced the original company Produzione Gallone during the making of the movie.²⁶³

Gallone’s other films in co-production were: *Madame Butterfly* (1954); *Michele Strogoff* (1956); *Polikuschka* (1958) and *Tarantella*. The documents at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato confirm that *Madame Butterfly* (ACS, 1954) was a co-production between Italy and Japan. The *Michele Strogoff* file (ACS, 1956) contains a statement declaring the movie an

²⁶⁰ The contract says:

“The undersigned Produzione Gallone, located in Rome, Via Lucullo 11, asks this Honourable Ministry to approve the series of agreements for the production of the film in the present document. They have been made among the writer, the ALFA FILM of Frankfurt, and the TURICOP of Zurich, everything without the prejudice of an eventual acknowledgment of the Italian nationality of the film, whose procedures are underway at the competent Offices” (ACS, 1952).

²⁶¹ The Technical Committee was established with Andreotti’s Law, in 1949. It was reunited when government contributions were denied to a film, and its producer contested the decision and asked for a second opinion. The Committee was nominated by the President of the Council of Ministers and composed by: the Undersecretary to the President of the Council of Ministers, the General Director of Cinematography, three cinema experts chosen among the exponents of the artistic, technical, and economical categories, a representative of the Ministry of Treasury, and an official from the General Direction of the Spectacle (§ 88.2.9 - Legge 29 dicembre 1949, n. 958. Disposizioni per la cinematografia., n.d.).

²⁶² The document says:

“[...] produced by S.p.A. Rizzoli Editore and presented to the Directorate General for Show Business for the authorization of public showing on February 2nd, 1953” (ACS, 1953).

²⁶³ “It is noted that the Rizzoli Editore Company replaced the Produzione Gallone Company, as shown in the note sent to this Ministry with document 10714/CE of May 18th, 1953, and, thus, the contract must be considered agreed upon Rizzoli Editore Company of Rome and Alfa Company of Frankfurt” (ACS, 1953).

Italian-French co-production (80% - 20%), with the participation of Germany and Yugoslavia (May 30th, 1956). The most interesting aspect about this film is a document revealing that Produzione Gallone and Illiria Film presented themselves officially as an “Italian group”, thus further dividing the Italian share, a common habit within Italian companies, as already shown. The same document also states the termination of the previous co-production agreement in favour of a new collaboration (June 4th, 1956).²⁶⁴ With regards to the production of *Polikuschka* (ACS, 1958), the Italian-French-German film had a German contribution covering 50% of the total amount, while the other half was equally divided between Italy and France (25% each). The Italian 25% was further divided between Lux Film (70%) and Produzione Gallone (30%). Thus, the companies involved were: Lux Film; Produzione Gallone; C.C.C. Film Arthur Brauner of Berlin; and Criterion S.A. of Paris (ACS, 1958). On the contrary, there is little information about *Tarantella*, with the exception of archival documents dated May 19th, 1952, stating it was an Italian-German co-production, between Produzione Gallone and Alfa Film GmbH, Frankfurt/am Main (ACS, 1952). Interestingly, this film does not appear within Marinucci’s list, nor the Bolaffi catalogue. All the above demonstrates that Gallone produced his films in co-production, which was another strategy that allowed his company to take less risks, and maintain his firms within the group of undercapitalised companies - a beloved category of the Italian film industry. When taking into consideration chart 28 at the beginning of this chapter 5, we know that almost 30% of films produced in the 1950s were co-productions. It would therefore be very interesting to examine in further analysis, if this formula is more prominent among the directors/actors producers or not.

The behaviour these companies adopted can be retraced in the patterns analysed in chapter 2. The involvement of so many firms within the production of the movie, reveals once again the undercapitalisation of the Italian film industry, which needed more firms, and the investment of more countries (through their national funding), so as to reach a more consistent financial plan. Thus, from the data collected, being already within the cinema system could have made it easier to involve other companies where co-productions are concerned. Another area worthy of investigation, may be the research into if this also applied to lesser-known directors, or if it applies only to more notable directors.

²⁶⁴ “The undersigned Produzione GALLONE and ILLIRIA FILM untie the stipulation presented by the Produzione Gallone in the document to the Authorities present in the address on May 5th, 1956, and preface this by saying that the co-production agreement with the Société Les Films Modernes for the film MICHELE STROGOFF on date April 6th, 1956, has been agreed upon the undersigned companies together as ‘Italian group’” (ACS, 1956).

The last producer analysed in this chapter is Vittorio De Sica. He was a famous Italian actor and director, but for the purposes of this analysis, is considered only as a director due to his intention of producing the films he directed between 1945 and 1959. According to the list of production companies extrapolated from Bernardini's book (2000), the first enterprise he founded between 1945 and 1959 was Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica in 1947, with a corporation stock of 50,000 lire. It was a small firm, one of those 53 with a stock of up to 50,000 lire, established in the most prolific year of the second half of the 1940s. The median stock value of 1947 was 370,000 lire, an aspect that confirms not only the small dimension of De Sica's enterprise, but also the undercapitalised trait of the industry. As sole company manager, the director worked with Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica until 1958, and made six films. However, there are only three films listed in the collection of movies produced between 1945 and 1959. This may have happened as there was another company founded in 1948, with a similar name: Produzione De Sica (or P.D.S.). As a result, many films are labelled simply as Vittorio De Sica.

According to both the list of films and archival material, Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica released three movies in the period under analysis, all of which were directed by De Sica. It is interesting to note that these films, which are *Stazione Termini* (1952) (ACS, 1952), *Il Tetto* (1956) (ACS, 1956), both starring Marcello Girosi, and *Pane, Amore e Andalusia* (1958) (ACS, 1958), were all shot several years after the company's foundation. Moreover, *Stazione Termini*,²⁶⁵ was a project in which De Sica was later involved, and not one of his own. It was a drama written by Cesare Zavattini²⁶⁶ whose script was bought by Selznick. It should have been directed by Autant-Lara instead of De Sica, and Marlon Brando should have been the star (Faldini and Fofi, 2011). *Stazione Termini* was born from a commercial compromise between USA and Italy, David O. Selznick and De Sica, after the agreements between Anica and MPAA (Brunetta, 2009),²⁶⁷ and it was a difficult film to shoot, according to the director (Faldini and Fofi, 2001). The film was released in the year that registered the highest peak of dramas within the entire period analysed (70 dramas), and it saw Marcello Girosi covering not only the role of actor, but also that of associate producer (for the Italian group). He worked together with the company Selznick Releasing Organization Inc., which took care of

²⁶⁵ For a study of the production history of the film, see for example: Kezich (1953); Castello (1953); Aristarco (1953); Brunetta (2009); Faldini and Fofi (2011)

²⁶⁶ Cesare Zavattini was an Italian script writer and writer, one of the most famous authors of Neorealism. He worked with De Sica in several of his films.

²⁶⁷ For an analysis of the effects the American agreements had on the Italian film industry, see chapter 2.

the distribution for the Western Hemisphere, as reported by ANSA,²⁶⁸ the first press agency in Italy. The distribution of the film in Italy was entrusted to Lux Film, which financed 75,000,000 lire as the film's *minimo garantito*. Even though *Stazione Termini* collected 343,000,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 347), the film did not reach the expected success, as De Sica revealed (Faldini and Fofi, 2001, p. 291): its double genesis, both American and Italian, created many problems during filming, and was accompanied by double censorship (with agreements not being made) and diverse expectations from the audiences, which were all disappointed. The double origin of the film did not satisfy neither of the audiences involved.

Other productions released by Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica were *Il Tetto* and *Pane, amore e Andalusia*. *Il Tetto* presented only Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica as the company responsible for the production of the film. It cost around 340,000,000 lire to make, but collected only 230,550,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 430). On the contrary, *Pane, amore e Andalusia* was an Italian-Spanish co-production between Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica and Producciones Benito Perojo. The film's cost (311,000,000 lire) was half covered by De Sica and half by Perojo (ACS, 1958), while its box office revenues were only 262,500,000 lire (Poppi 2007, p. 314). Both films were unsuccessful, and as such affected the future of Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica, which closed the same year.

De Sica's other company was Produzioni De Sica, or P.D.S.. Founded in 1948 with 100,000 lire in corporation stock (the median stock was 750,000 lire, thus significantly higher than the director's investment), it went out of business a few years later, in 1951, after having produced two movies. The below information regarding the films produced is confirmed by both the list of films and the archival documents. The first film released by the company was *Ladri di biciclette* in 1948 (ACS, 1948), which is also the first film produced by De Sica as manager of a firm which was actually founded for him. Known worldwide, and considered one of the masterpieces of cinema history, *Ladri di biciclette* was a very difficult film to produce,²⁶⁹ and was realised only because of P.D.S. - an ad hoc company founded for De Sica

²⁶⁸ The document reports the ANSA cinema news, and states: "The news was reported today by ANSA, when Marcello Giroli arrived in Rome. He will be associate producer. The film will be produced by De Sica himself, together with David O. Selznick, who will be responsible for the film's distribution in the western hemisphere" (ACS, 1952).

²⁶⁹ Unfortunately, it is not possible to dedicate an adequate section for the film's analysis in this thesis. I am providing only some data useful for the examination of the production company in relation to the more general context.

For a more in-depth analysis of the film's production history, see for example Gordon (2019); Faldini and Fodi (2011); Nuzzi and Iemma (1997).

and the film.²⁷⁰ Financed with 100,000,000 lire, the film collected a profitable 252,000,000 at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 202). What is worth mentioning is that the film production history reveals the essence of production at the time, in that it was “independent, but commercial film-making [...] a typical product of a precarious, but renascent Italian film industry” (Gordon, 2019, 14%). Notwithstanding all the problems the Italian film industry was confronting, and the difficulties the realisation of the film was dealing with, the primary aim of P.D.S. was pursued: *Ladri di biciclette* was finally produced and reached cinemas all over the world.

P.D.S. released another film after *Ladri di biciclette*, entitled *Miracolo a Milano* (1952) (ACS, en. 9 CF 0770). It was produced together with E.N.I.C.-distribution company for the previous film. The most interesting document in the archival file is the request for a second loan from the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro by E.N.I.C.. On June 7th, 1950, the company requested a 30 million lire loan (in addition to the one it had already obtained for 70 million loan), giving as warranty the film’s royalties, and also the revenue and prizes of the film *Yvonne la Nuit* (1949), which was the company’s exclusive property.²⁷¹ The film’s cost exceeded 230,000,000 lire, so clearer financial support from the bank was needed. Unfortunately, though, the film’s profits were very low, at only 180,600,000 lire (Poppi, 2007, p. 232). The documents about the production and the loan request provide important insights into how the company was able to circumvent the lack of money for investments, by

²⁷⁰ “De Sica was engaged in a somewhat desperate search for production funds. *Shoeshine* had failed financially and another film in the same vein was not an attractive proposition. With his international reputation as a director running ahead of his status at home, he made visits to London, Paris and Zurich in autumn 1947, meeting with Gabriel Pascal, among others. De Sica would act out the roles of the film himself, pitching with all his might before the moneymen. He famously had contact with David O. Selznick, who was keen to finance the film [...] but wanted to impose a bankable star such as Cary Grant. [...] In the end, a Milanese aristocrat Count Cicogna came together with lawyer Ercole Graziadei and financier Sergio Bernardi to set up and fund an ad hoc production company – P.D.S. (Produzioni De Sica) – and they funded the film to the rather generous tune of approximately 100 million lire (roughly five times the budget of *Shoeshine*). Distribution would be run by the state cinema body ENIC (Ente Nazionale Industrie Cinematografiche), for whom Graziadei worked” (Gordon, 2019, 19%).

²⁷¹ The document states:

“With reference to the 70 million financing already granted from the Autonomous Section for Cinema Financing of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro for the film mentioned in this document, we apply for the concession of one more loan. This 30 million lire loan should be applied at the expense of the Special Fund, mentioned in the article n. 3 of the law n. 448 of July 26th, 1949.

This loan will be guaranteed as follows:

- a) transfer of film royalties in the second degree to the Section in order to complete the transfer given for the first loan;
- b) transfer of profits and awards of the film “YVONNE LA NUIT”, which are now our exclusive property [...]

The film has a high artistic level, as can be seen from the viewing of the shot materials. The production cost exceeds 230 million lire, thus the total amount of the loans represents less than 50% of the total expenses” (ACS, 1952).

adopting a widespread practice in the Italian film industry at the time. However, despite all efforts, the second project released was a box office flop.

Ladri di biciclette was a huge international success, while *Miracolo a Milano* was not so appreciated by the audience. Nevertheless, the reasons why the production company ended its activity could conceivably be twofold. Firstly, the fact that it was only founded for the realisation of *Ladri di biciclette*, the first film released. And secondly, that *Miracolo a Milano* would have been an attempt at walking in the footsteps of the international success of the previous neorealism film, trying to bring “the neorealist style to all the forms of spectacle, from bourgeois comedy, to musical comedy, to fairy tale” (De Sica in Faldini and Fofi, 2011, p. 189). However, it was disliked among critics and audiences, and the money invested (a conspicuous amount by De Sica himself) resulted only in losses. The experiment of P.D.S. was not worth the effort anymore, and so the company reached its end.

Aside from the above two companies, De Sica also founded P.F.C. - Produzione Film Comici, with actor Alberto Sordi. With a 50,000 lire corporation stock when the median value of the first capital was 500,000 lire, the company produced just one film in 1951, *Mamma mia che impressione!*, starring Sordi. According to the archival documents (ACS, en. 13 CF 878) the production companies for this film were Flora Film in 1949 and P.F.C. in 1950. It can be presumed that the project started with Flora Film, but when it abandoned production, Sordi intervened and founded P.F.C. with De Sica for the completion of *Mamma mia che impressione!*. De Sica’s saviour role is confirmed by his active involvement in the project, as evidenced by the Preventive Cinematographic Revision, where the director, actor and producer is referred to as co-producer and supervisor.²⁷² With a budget of 63,285,000 lire, and box office figures of 90,000,000 lire, the film proved to be not a success (Poppi 2007, p. 255). The company, which was founded for the project, did not produce any other film and then closed.²⁷³ Founded in line with all De Sica’s other production experiences, it is the one of the many examples of firms created for the purpose of specific productions. Thus, these

²⁷² “Judgment: This work should be the launching film of Alberto Sordi as protagonist of a comic film. It should be built and adapted to his peculiar personality. Even though Sordi is not new to the difficulties of the screen, this can be considered his first and demanding test. Until now, he has been employed in secondary roles that scarcely affected the final result of the film. [...] Nevertheless, De Sica’s presence as co-producer and supervisor, Zavattini’s contribution as script writer, and Sordi’s dedication for this characterisation should be enough for a certain guarantee of success” (ACS, 1951).

²⁷³ It is confirmed by the La Rivista del cinematografo archive, which reports that P.F.C. was founded to produce the film and then dissolved (<https://www.cinematografo.it/cinedatabase/film/mamma-mia-che-impressione-/6267/>, 2021).

examples show that directors-producers were so eager to bring their projects to life, that they consciously undertook the production path with no guarantees of a film's success.

5.2 Case studies – actors as producers

This section of the chapter focuses on the analysis of actors that played the role of producers, with particular emphasis on Folco Lulli. The other relevant case, with regards to actors in production, is Eduardo De Filippo, who was examined in chapter 4 since he is strictly related to his hometown Naples, thus his case study is examined among the other decentralised companies. Given the data collected, it could be argued that Folco Lulli was a very prolific producer. He was the founder and manager of Hermes Film and Sagittario Film in the 1950s. Hermes Film was created in 1953 along with managers Mario De Bernardi and Pier Cesare Ochetto. It had a corporation stock of 300,000 lire, but went out of business in 1955. It was a medium-sized firm, founded during the first half of the decade, in a year that saw the birth of 69 companies, and it had a capital that perfectly matched the median stock, which was 300,000 lire. According to Bernardini, the company produced three movies, which is also confirmed by Marinucci's list and by archival documents.²⁷⁴ The films were: *Riscatto* (1953) (ACS, 82 CF 1686) directed by Marino Girolami; *Acque Amare* (1954) (ACS, en. 110 CF 1984) directed by Corbucci (which collected 136,312,000 lire in box office takings); and *Stella di Rio* (1955) directed by Neumann (an Italian-German co-production, with C.C.C.: 30% - 70%) (ACS, en. 125 CF 2145). After the first film, Lulli's company was transformed from an "s.r.l.", a limited liability company, to a S.p.A., a joint stock company, increasing its corporation stock from 300.000 lire to 8 million lire,²⁷⁵ a transformation that represented an incredible increase

²⁷⁴ In these documents a fourth film is mentioned: *Suprema Confessione* (1956) by Corbucci. This should have been realised in Italy within the framework of the Italian-German Agreement as twin of the film *Stella di Rio*, previously filmed in Germany from the Italian company Hermes Film. In December 1955 the film rights were left to another company, Gea Cinematografica.

²⁷⁵ An extract from a complaint presented by the Hermes Film:

"HERMES FILM, founded in 1953 as a limited liability company with 300,000 lire in corporation stock, started its production of "RISCATTO", directed by Marino Girolami and starring Folco Lulli, Franco Interlenghi, Franca Marzi, Piero Lulli, Umberto Spadato. The film, distributed by Diana Cinematografica, has been acknowledged with the 10% contribution and the other 8%. Although it obtained ample consensus among critics in all national newspapers, it did not obtain the expected success on the commercial side. Indeed, still today this company finds itself in overdraft for a large amount related to the film.

in the value of the company: from a small firm where the role of the business partner is more relevant than the corporation stock, to a company where the stock needs to be incremented due to its intention of making big investments. Lulli's plans changed perhaps due to his intention of production intensification, making his company more reliable and trustworthy.

The second company, Sagittario Film, was founded solely by Folco Lulli in 1956, and produced ten films over its twelve years. It is categorised as a small company, considering the actor invested 100,000 lire for its foundation in 1956, when the median stock at the time was 900,000 lire. According to the complete list of movies,²⁷⁶ the films released during the period under analysis, were: *Ritorno alla vita* (1956) directed by José Antonio Nieves Conde (box office: 37,100,000 lire) (Poppi 2007, p. 365); *L'eretico* (1958) directed by Francisco de Borja Moro; and *Lupi nell'abisso* (1959) directed by Silvio Amadio. A peculiar characteristic of this company is that all the films it produced in the 1950s were co-productions. This tells us that Sagittario Film did not have the necessary capital to cover the entire funding of the films produced alone, and that it sought support from other companies to cover the film's cost, and share the risk of a possible loss. *Ritorno alla vita* was a co-production with Yago Film of Madrid (70% Spain, 30% Italy) (ACS, 1956), *L'eretico* a collaboration with Osa Film (50% Spain, 50% Italy) (ACS, 1958), and *Lupi nell'abisso* an Italian-French co-production (70% Italy, 30% France) (ACS, 1959). This demonstrates how Lulli was a cautious producer, who can be easily inserted into the group of founders of undercapitalised companies being a perfect representation of the category. He went a step forward: in spite of being a small company trying to work on its own, he was able to make progress through the realisation of many co-productions, which allowed him to spread the risks of such an uncertain market as the cinematographic one.

The last actor encountered and mentioned in this section is Totò, who is also listed among the managers of D.D.L. production company. Other managers include Isidoro Broggi, Dino De Laurentiis, Alfredo De Laurentiis, and Renato Libassi, who along with Totò, founded the company in 1954. This was the year registering a peak (with 70 new firms) in terms of the number of companies created between 1945 and 1959. Active for eleven years, D.D.L. produced 24 movies, with a starting corporation stock of 1,000,000 lire that steadily

Although the results of this first cinematographic experience were not encouraging for the continuation of further production, and of complying to required commitments, thanks to the partners' personal sacrifice we have transformed Hermes Film from a limited liability company to a joint stock company increasing the stock to 8,000,000. In June 1954 the filming of "ACQUE AMARE" started, directed by Sergio Corbucci and starring Milly Vitale, Narciso Parigi, John Kitzmiller, Piero Lulli e Mirella Uberti" (ACS, en. 82 CF 1686).

²⁷⁶ For a complete list it is meant an integration between Marinucci's list and the Bolaffi catalogue.

increased over the years. Seeing as the initial investment was so high, D.D.L. can be considered as the only large company among those studied in this section. In 1954, the median stock was only 200,000 lire, thus the company operated on a completely different level than the firms managed by other actors and directors. This may have happened because the enterprise was not founded by Totò for producing his own films, but was initiated by two important Italian producers, Broggi and De Laurentiis, who intended to release many movies, of several genres, with different directors and various actors. D.D.L. might have been related to Totò because it produced several movies in which the actor starred. This hypothesis is confirmed by the fact that, although present among its managers, Totò's name does not officially appear in any documents at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, in respect of the films analysed. The movies taken into consideration are the ones in which Totò acted between 1945 and 1959, and were produced by D.D.L.. These films are: *Il coraggio* (D. Paoella, 1955); *Destinazione Piovarolo* (D. Paoella, 1955); *Totò, Peppino e i fuorilegge* (C. Mastrocinque, 1956); *Totò, Peppino e... la malafemmina* (C. Mastrocinque, 1956); *La banda degli onesti* (C. Mastrocinque, 1956); and *Totò, Peppino e le fanatiche* (M. Mattoli, 1958). Besides having one actor (Totò) and one genre (comedy) in common, five out of six of these movies are directed by either Paoella or Mastrocinque. Therefore, it can be said that the company followed a pattern common to the film industry of building certain types of relationships and collaborations, that not only appealed to audiences, but also guaranteed satisfying revenues, at least during the 1950s.

5.3 Conclusions

These analyses show how many directors and actors undertook production as an additional career, in order to release their movies. The data collected from the archives consulted evidences that there are many names that appear in the list of director-producers and actor-producers, demonstrating how the field was a lively one for those who wanted to involve themselves in personal projects. It is not clear if they decided to change their career

paths for a while in order to overcome the refusal of other production companies not wanting to produce their films. One motivation might have been that directors and actors had more control and power over projects by taking the role of producer, and, even if accompanied by higher risks, these projects could provide larger profit shares. Indeed, directors and actors like De Sica, Gallone, Visconti, or Lulli moved into another area of the film industry, to start and complete films. To do so, directors and actors examined in this chapter often founded their own production company which, albeit small or medium-sized, allowed them to follow the entire production chain of the film, from its conception through its realisation. They did so whilst also following the general trend of the industry. That is to say that all companies, with the exception of D.D.L. S.p.A., belong amongst the category of small and medium size firms that composed a vast majority of the Italian film industry after the Second World War and during the Fifties. Some of these undercapitalised firms were founded with the intention of producing a specific film and lasted one year; others were active for four or five years and released more films, many of which were co-productions, in line with the contextual operational habits.

However, it is interesting to notice is that although these companies followed the general industrial trends regarding the dimensions of the firms, the same cannot be said for the genres produced. The most important genres of the time were taken into account, although with proportionally different numbers if compared to the overall tendency of the industry. Surprisingly, the most produced genre was not drama, as one would expect due to the tendency of the market, but comic genre. Drama, in fact, was in third place. Producers instead preferred comic films, and released ten pictures, six of which were released by D.D.L. S.p.A. starring Totò, perhaps as they wanted to keep the risk low. The second category was comedies (with nine movies produced), then dramas (eight), musicals (five), operas (four) and adventure movies (three).

Some of these enterprises concentrated on one genre, while others preferred two typologies of movies. Nevertheless, all of them remained within the five most produced genres of the Italian film industry of the time, as has already been examined. These fifteen firms produced forty-two films in total between 1945 and 1959, and stayed within the average of three genres released during this period, according to Marina Nicoli (2016, p. 179) and as previously discussed in chapter 3.²⁷⁷ De Sica, for instance, released dramas and comedies with his two enterprises, and even a comic movie with P.F.C.. Another two examples are D.D.L., which made comic movies, and Comencini, who produced two comedies

²⁷⁷ For an analysis of the genres, see Chapter 3.

and an adventure movie with his two companies. Other producers were more experimental with genres: Lulli ranged from dramas to adventure and comedies without overlooking a religious or war film; Gallone first nine films were musicals and operas, but then went on to produce a comedy, a drama, and an adventure movie. Given all the above, it can be argued that these companies embody the Italian production style of the time. These director - producers and actor - producers, learned how to run film companies by carrying out their primary roles as directors and actors and, then, decided to step in as managers, playing different roles in the decision making process. They gained more productive independence and creative control over their own project, making each movie a very personal creation.

Moreover, it must be underlined that what emerges from all the data collected in this chapter demonstrates that, there are no large-scale differences in the *modus operandi* between directors-producers, actors-producers and all the other producers who founded small and medium size production companies in the period analysed. This might indicate that the aforementioned *modus operandi* was a very common approach which they, in fact, learnt while working as actors or directors during their careers.

On the contrary, a difference that may be noticed is that, from the data collected and analysed, at least within this decade, director-producers and actor-producers released more co-productions than other producers. A possible reason could have been that, even though they had undertaken the production path, they wanted to risk as little as possible. Taking less risks meant having more certainty of profits, and the result would have been a winning strategy: low risks, high profits, together with higher independence in the decisional sphere.

Another illuminating aspect emerges from the analysis of the production companies present in this chapter. Some of the firms belonging to the most influential directors studied, such as De Sica and Visconti, were founded exclusively for the realisation of a specific film. This confirms the fact that the main incentive that motivated them was not financial gain (as many other transient workers in the film industry), but the realisation of their creative project in the best way possible. Their personal ambition regarding the success of their artistic projects was much more relevant than the possible revenue from the role of the producer itself.

Chapter 6

The case study of Aldo Fabrizi producer and the “Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi” archive

There is a specific topic worth discussing in depth, concerning the phenomenon of actors and directors becoming producers in the Italian film industry, between 1945 and 1959. This is especially relevant with regards to the production history of some of Aldo Fabrizi’s movies. Aldo Fabrizi was an actor, director and also producer, and made several important films,²⁷⁸ for Italian and worldwide audiences alike. During my research, in fact, I discovered another facet of the artist’s career. Studying his attitude towards cinema, it appears clear that he had an articulate and critical vision of the field. He was an actor who learned to direct, to write a script, to produce movies, and could be found in front of and behind the camera, both hiding from viewers, and becoming the object of their attention at any occasion. As this chapter will go on to discuss, Aldo Fabrizi was connected to more than one production company after WWII and during the Fifties.

In this chapter, I will analyse Fabrizi’s production history by exploring the documents available at the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, the Archivio Centrale dello Stato and, above all, the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi (C.S.A.F.) archive. I have had access to unexplored material

²⁷⁸ Some of the most famous films he worked in were: *Roma città aperta* (Rossellini, 1945), *Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* (Lattuada, 1947), *Guardie e ladri* (Steno and Monicelli, 1951), *I tartassati* (Steno, 1959).

held at Aldo Fabrizi's personal archive thanks to the actor's granddaughter Mrs Cielo Pessione Fabrizi, who runs the archive. Such material includes handwritten messages, correspondence between Fabrizi and lawyers, friends, and family, as well as correspondence between the actor and several production and distribution companies, signed personally or on behalf of his company. This archive offered other additional material, such as stage costumes and films, that Fabrizi had kept. He stored many items, papers and objects, which allowed me to retrieve many documents that bear testimony to the actor's path throughout the years, in terms of how he used to work. They give the opportunity to read between the lines, and show the ability the actor had in building his own fortune.

This chapter will provide an analysis of the documentation available on the production companies Guaranteed Pictures Italia and Alfa Film XXXVII, and their movies (all involving Aldo Fabrizi as director and actor). Companies' statutes, meeting minutes and letters will also be studied in order to show how Fabrizi used to work, and the procedures adopted for the production of his movies, including the recurring hiring of particular working figures within the crew. This analysis is, therefore, associated with a series of questions that seek answers: was there a completely outlined industrial strategy supporting Fabrizi's enterprise? Why did he feel the need to produce his own movies? We have seen that there were many actors and directors that decided to enter the production field. But was he an actor-producer or a director-producer? Did he successfully manage to carry out the three roles – actor, director, producer – at the same time? This chapter offers a reassessment of the figure of Fabrizi between 1945 and 1959, and above all, of his role as producer. He was aware of the situation in the film industry and saw the possibility of being a protagonist of the entire film chain, creating what is identified as the “Fabrizi brand”. What follows is an interpretation of this system.

6.1 The “Fabrizi brand”: characteristics, strategies, and results

After studying over fifty films between 1945-1959 on which Fabrizi worked, two main noticeable characteristics emerge that define a pattern I would like to identify as the “Fabrizi brand.” In the films, there are several productions in which Aldo Fabrizi worked as screenwriter, director, and actor. They are *Emigrantes* (produced by Guaranteed Pictures

Italia in 1948), *Benvenuto, reverendo!* (1949), *La famiglia Passaguai* (1951), *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna* (1951), *Papà diventa mamma* (1952), *Una di quelle* (1952) (all produced by Alfa Film XXXVII), *Questa è la vita* (1954) (it is a four-episode film where Fabrizi starred in the last one, “Marsina stretta”; the movie was released by Fortunaria Film), *Hanno rubato un tram* (1954) (made by Imperial Film), and *Il maestro* (1958) (produced by Gladiator Film). In my opinion, this triple involvement can be considered the first feature that constitutes the Fabrizi brand. Among the case studies analysed throughout this dissertation, Fabrizi is the only person involved in the three roles in all the films produced in this period. The same roles were covered by Eduardo De Filippo, but not for all the movies he produced between 1945 and 1959.²⁷⁹ Secondly, there is another aspect that must be considered for inscribing a film under the tag “Fabrizi brand”: the genre. These movies are comic films (3);²⁸⁰ comedies (3);²⁸¹ social;²⁸² satirical;²⁸³ and fantasy productions.²⁸⁴ However, if we take a closer look at these films, we can see that, overall, they have comic implications, even if the character and the story are more dramatic (as, for example, in *Emigrantes*). This is unsurprising, as Monicelli states (Faldini and Fofi 2009, p. 91),

the most complete actors, with strong personalities, came from the curtain raiser, that, I think, was a filiation of the commedia dell’arte, the origin of Italian comedy, with its bitter roots, its taking laughs from painful basis like misery, hunger, the art of getting by. In cinema, all these transferred to the comic genre and after to the Italian style comedy.

Comedy is what connects Fabrizi to Totò, another famous Italian comic actor. They worked together on several movies, one of which, *Una di quelle* was produced by Alfa Film XXXVII. This was the last movie released by Alfa Film XXXVII, and while it collected

²⁷⁹ The movies in which Eduardo De Filippo was screenwriter, director and actor were *Napoli milionaria* (1950) and *Filumena Marturano* (1951).

²⁸⁰ The trilogy of the Passaguai family: *La famiglia Passaguai*, *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna*, and *Papà diventa mamma*.

²⁸¹ *Una di quelle*, *Questa è la vita* (episodic comedy, in which the last one – *Marsina stretta* (from a Pirandello’s novel) – was adapted, directed and acted by Fabrizi), and *Hanno rubato un tram*.

²⁸² *Emigrantes*. It is necessary to explain the social implications of this film. The movie tells the story of a Roman family that decided to emigrate to Argentina (a very common trope in Italian cinema after WWII).

Following a definition given by M. Landy (2016, p. 432) with regards to British cinema – a definition that fits in with this movie – the “social problem film was directed toward the dramatization of topical social issues – capital punishment, prison life, juvenile delinquency, poverty, marital conflict, family tension, and, to a larger degree, racism.”

More specifically, “the problem film combines social analysis and dramatic conflict within a coherent narrative structure. Social content is transformed into dramatic events and movie narrative adapted to accommodate social issues as story material through a particular set of movie conventions” (Roffman and Purdy, 1981, p. viii).

²⁸³ *Benvenuto, reverendo!* was considered satirical due to its criticism of the situation people in the countryside were living. To be more specific, it can be said that the movie is a satirical comedy.

²⁸⁴ *Il maestro*. It tackles the idea of the supernatural.

277,000,000 lire at the box office (Poppi, 2007, p. 457), it cost only 60,710,000 lire to make (ACS, envelope 69, CF 1554). However, its production history is what makes it worthy of attention. A co-production between Alfa Film XXXVII, which provided 50% of the movie's expenses together with Aldo Fabrizi's role as director and actor, and Rosa Film,²⁸⁵ providing the remaining 50%, along with a contribution that involved the participation of Prince Antonio De Curtis (Totò) (ACS, envelope 69, CF 1554). A fifty-fifty production, the most common kind of co-production we can find in Italy at the time, which underlines the central position of the two comic actors, both as performers and investors – in other words, certainly a secure recipe for success and popularity. For this reason, the discourse about Rosa Film deserves a specific section.

Even though this is not the place for extensive discussions surrounding Rosa Film and its connections with another important company of the time, Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A., it is worthwhile to provide an overview of how it worked, both to understand the production industry, and how firms could be related and working together behind an apparent competition between each other. Indeed, it seems that Rosa Film hid another company from the public view – Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A. Although officially founded by Antonio Altoviti, Vincenzo (Enzo) Cossa, Luigi De Laurentiis and Mario Perelli,²⁸⁶ the company had the same location as Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A. (via della Vasca Navale, 58, Rome), and produced many of Totò's movies. Another aspect that supports the theory that Rosa Film was actually a Ponti-De Laurentiis branch, is that during the first half of the 1950s Totò filmed five low budget, successful box office films, that belonged to Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A..²⁸⁷ Through the intensive exploitation of these types of movies, which guaranteed conspicuous profits, Ponti and De Laurentiis could afford investments in more challenging productions and higher budget movies (Vitella, 2011).

Some of the famous blockbusters they released, that made them famous all over the world were *Ulysses* (M. Camerini, 1954),²⁸⁸ and *War and Peace* (K. Vidor, 1956).²⁸⁹ During the

²⁸⁵ The company produced seven movies: *Totò e le donne* (Steno, Monicelli, 1952); *Una di quelle* (1952) with Alfa Film XXXVII; *Due notti con Cleopatra* (Mattoli, 1953) with Excelsa Film; *Il più comico spettacolo del mondo* (Mattoli, 1953); *Totò e Carolina* (Monicelli, 1953); *L'uomo, la bestia e la virtù* (Steno, 1953); *Totò cerca pace* (Mattoli, 1954) (Abruzzese 1979, p.499).

²⁸⁶ According to Bernardini (2000, p. 372), it was a joint-stock company founded in 1952 with a 5 million lire corporation stock. It was active until 1955 and produced eight movies.

²⁸⁷ The movies were: *Totò Terzo Uomo* (Mattoli, 1951), *Guardie e Ladri* (Monicelli, Steno, 1951), *Totò a Colori* (Steno, 1952), *L'Oro di Napoli* (De Sica, 1954), *Dov'è la Libertà...?* (Rossellini, 1954).

²⁸⁸ The movie box office was 1,800,000,000 lire, and it was the film that had the highest earnings in 1954 (Poppi, 2007, p. 452).

²⁸⁹ The film revenues were 2,370,000,000 lire. The movie was the film with the highest box office of 1956 (Poppi, 2007, p. 213).

same period, one of the intensive exploitation movies Ponti and De Laurentiis produced was *Guardie e Ladri* (Monicelli, Steno, 1951). This was a comedy with a “neorealist mould” (Monicelli, cited in Faldini and Fofi, 2009, p. 95), in which Totò’s performance with Aldo Fabrizi, gave a new face to Italian comedy, moving it from slapstick to *commedia di costume* (Faldini and Fofi 2009, 360). The two producers “really built their empire on Totò’s movies. [the films] had low budgets and collected a large amount of money, even seven or eight hundred million lire” (Monicelli, cited in Faldini and Fofi, 2009, p. 103). Federico Vitella (2011) agrees with this statement and sustains the thesis of Rosa Film being a branch of Ponti-De Laurentiis Cinematografica in his paper referring to another of Totò’s movie’s, *Il più comico spettacolo del mondo* (Mattoli, 1953). He writes that the two producers left the release of the film to the Rosa Film company, which they “expressly founded in 1952 to produce the movies of the Neapolitan comic actor [...]. The operation essentially consists of separating the production potentially intended for the international market, branded Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A, from the national popular one”, hence adopting a double production register (Vitella, 2011, p. 41).

It could be argued that Fabrizi’s intention to make a movie with Antonio De Curtis and Rosa Film, began during the filming of *Guardie e Ladri*, the first film the actors shot together. They worked well together, and were close friends, who according to Steno, used to go out at night together, have fun on the set while filming, and were like watching “a duet between two lions. Sometimes, when one of the two felt overwhelmed by the other, he used the tricks of the big actor. Totò fooled Fabrizi with an unexpected gag, and Fabrizi fooled Totò laughing and interrupting the filming” (Steno, cited in Faldini and Fofi 2009, p. 265). All this may have contributed to their interactions on set, as well as allowing them to build agreements between them and with other producers. In fact, it is during this same period that the collaboration with Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A. could have begun, which also explains several letters regarding *Una di quelle’s* royalties.

It is noted in the initial credits of movies directed by Fabrizi, that four of the films released by Alfa Film XXXVII were shot in Ponti-De Laurentiis studios in via della Vasca Navale, 58, with the exception of *Benvenuto, reverendo!*. This information helps in creating connections among Fabrizi, Rosa Film and Dino De Laurentiis. I am deliberately not including Carlo Ponti, because the duo split up during the second half of the 1950s. Their last film together was *War and Peace* by Vidor, released in 1956, and the following year Dino De Laurentiis founded his company Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica S.p.A. It is necessary to mention this as research done after the actor’s death in the 1990s by Fabrizi’s son-in-law Giorgio Pessione,

shows that all these companies (Alfa Film XXXVII, Rosa Film, Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A. and Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica) were connected chronologically to a history where the royalties of movies produced, were handed to several other companies. Unfortunately, this comes from a second-hand source (annotations),²⁹⁰ and there are no original sources or references.

However, these notes are highly accurate and confirm the suggestion of the correlation among the production firms. Pessione quotes people's names and firms in chronological order, mentioning every movement of royalties and ownerships, as well as connecting people and companies over the years of the company's operation. In his notes regarding the movie *Una di quelle*, he wrote that on December 18th 1952, Alfa Film and Rosa Film ceded 30% of all the renting profits for Italy, Trieste and the Republic of Saint Marino to Paramount of Italy Inc., and on that 30%, 70% of the royalties until 20 million lire. What follows in the notes is a list of royalty transfers, above all of the exploitation rights for several countries: to the Comptoir International pour le Commerce et l'Industrie (CINCO), to the Paramount, to the Istituto di Credito Casse di Risparmio Italiane (bank) etc. The most interesting transfers are the ones made in favour of the Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A. and Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica, which represent the relationship among people, and the links among companies, that have previously been explored and supported in chapters 3 and 4.

On April 1st 1954 Rosa Film ceded 50% of its governmental contributions to Ponti-De Laurentiis. The following day, this amount was transferred to the bank, Istituto di Credito Casse di Risparmio Italiane. A couple of years later, on July 4th 1959, the bank forwarded the acquired royalties to Dino De Laurentiis. Finally, on September 10th 1963, Rosa Film, which was in liquidation, transferred 50% of all the royalties, without exception, to Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica. This reconstruction of transfers is confirmed by two letters dated 1964. The first one, written in March, is a letter from Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica S.p.A. to Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica Distribuzione S.p.A. (De Laurentiis, 1964), designating them as distributor for three movies: *L'uomo, la bestia e la virtù* (Steno, 1952); *Il più comico spettacolo del mondo* (Mattoli, 1953); and *Una di quelle*. The distribution company would have 20% of the proceeds and the relative General Tax over the incomes. All three movies were produced by Rosa Film, confirming the link between this company and Dino De Laurentiis. The second letter, sent again from Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica S.p.A., is for Tecnostampa (De Laurentiis, 1964), the establishment where most film positives and negatives were printed out at the time. Fabrizi also used this firm for all Alfa Film XXXVII

²⁹⁰ This is part of Giorgio Pessione's research notes, stored in the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi.

movies. In this letter, Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica asked for a print of the positive copy of the movie, stating that it was the only owner of *Una di quelle*. According to the letter, Alfa Film had stopped all activity and its liquidator, Armando Franci, had died. For this reason, Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica was not able to obtain the authorisation Tecnostampa had requested ahead of printing the copies, and thus was demanding that the printing establishment did not refuse the re-printing. This draws attention to the fact that Alfa Film was not in possession of any royalties, as it was no longer an active company, even though it still formally existed. As a result, De Laurentiis *de facto* held all the royalties.

6.2 Alfa Film XXXVII

Una di quelle, along with many of the other films the actor and director produced with the company, is a perfect representation of a “Fabrizi brand” movie. The same can also be said for the company itself, Alfa Film XXXVII S.r.l., which in many respects can be considered Fabrizi’s personification.²⁹¹ According to Bernardini (2000, p.14), the company was managed by Aurelio De Laurentiis,²⁹² Aldo Fabrizi and Aurelio Serafinelli. However, according to the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, Aurelio De Laurentiis’s name does not appear. Indeed,

²⁹¹ The name of the company is made of the first two letters of the actor’s name and surname (Al and Fa) and the number XXXVII. According to his granddaughter Mrs. Cielo Pessione Fabrizi (1995, p. XV), who kindly reported the anecdote, this number is related to the superstitious side of the actor, and it is linked to several episodes of his life. When he was young, he was convinced he would have died at 37 years old. Even though he was 44 when the company was founded, he decided to add this number to the name of the company as a talismanic gesture. 37 was also the age at which his father died; the street number of the first house he bought for his family with the money earned as an artist (via Sannio, 37); and even the street number of the place in front of which a *brutus* (a light projector) fell down and crashed near the actor during the filming of *Marsina stretta* (via dei Panettieri, 37).

²⁹² There could have been an error here: Aurelio De Laurentiis was too young to be a producer, he was just a child. Considering that his father, Luigi De Laurentiis, was production manager for one of the movies of Alfa Film XXXVII, *Una di quelle*, and co-manager with Eduardo De Filippo for Arco Film, thus he was a well-known producer in the cinema environment, it could be possible that the Anica archives (from which Bernardini collected materials for his book) contains an error. Instead of Luigi De Laurentiis, the known producer, they wrote Aurelio. Was this by chance? Did they confuse the name of Serafinelli (Aurelio) with that of De Laurentiis? Is it possible that De Laurentiis assigned his shares to his son? We do not know the correct answer. However, even though all these questions highlight cross-interactions among people – underlining links among production companies – they meet an end when comparing the information from Bernardini’s book with the ones taken from the Chamber of Commerce in Rome.

according to the company statute and the meeting minutes, neither Aurelio nor Luigi De Laurentiis were ever present nor mentioned. It is possible then, that the name was erroneously reported under the name of the managers of Alfa Film XXXVII, but neither of them were officially administrators nor associates of the company.

When it was founded on May 6th 1949, the company was one of 37 firms founded that year, and was just called Alfa Film S.r.l.. With 60,000 lire corporation stock, it can be considered a small enterprise, whose initial capital was far from the median stock of the year, which was 500,000 lire. Instituted in a year that saw the recovery of the sector,²⁹³ the company was included within the group of 118 enterprises whose stock was between 50,000 lire and 1 million. With its four-year activity,²⁹⁴ the company is one of the 286 new firms out of 770 that were officially active between 2 and 10 years (only 33 out of the total lasted 4 years). When analysing the companies founded in the same year, only 35.1% of them survived for more than 2 years, putting Alfa Film s.r.l amongst those in this small percentage. Moreover, only 28 enterprises released 5 movies over the same period, with the majority producing only one or two films.²⁹⁵ Aldo Fabrizi's Alfa Film was thus an exceptional company for the time, a firm which worked hard and tried to build a film industry in Italy. As this chapter shows, Alfa Film distinguished itself, and tried to rise above that mass of companies with a short life-span and a very limited list of productions that were working in the country. Perhaps the secret of its success may have been the profound understanding of all the film creation and production steps, from the conception to its release.

Alfa Film's associates were Aurelio Serafinelli,²⁹⁶ identified as a private employee, and Armando Franci,²⁹⁷ the production manager. The company was located in Rome via Leutari, 35, which is worth mentioning as it is Serafinelli's residential address (Pessione, 1995, p. V), where Alfa Film remained active until the end of 1955. The company's shares were equally divided between Serafinelli and Franci (thirty shares for a total of 30,000 lire for each

²⁹³ As shown in chapter 2, chart 1, the number of new production companies increased from 1945 to 1947, then decreased in 1948 (from 41 to 34) and increased again in 1949 to 37), reaching the first peak of the 1950s with 62 companies in 1951.

²⁹⁴ Here, I am considering the dates of first and last film produced (1949 and 1952), and not the company's lifespan.

²⁹⁵ According to Bernardini (2000), out of the 770 companies founded between 1945 and 1959, those that produced 1 movie were 52,34%; 2 movies - 15,84%; 3 movies - 6,88%; 4 movies - 5,06%; 5 movies - 3,64%; between 6 and 10 movies - 5,97%; between 11 and 20 movies - 3,9%; more than 20 movies - 3,25%.

²⁹⁶ He was one of his friends, probably the closest one. They met during the 1930s, when Fabrizi performed in the curtain raiser (Pessione, 1995, p. V).

²⁹⁷ He had been production manager for *Emigrantes*, proving his professional honesty and obtaining Fabrizi's trust (Pessione, 1995, p. V).

producer), and Serafinelli was the sole administrator of the company until the end of December 1952 (*Company Statute*, 1950), having broad powers and uncontested authority (Pessione, 1995). However, just a few days later, there was an extraordinary meeting to change the name of the company that became Alfa Film XXXVII, in order to avoid the possibility of confusion. Again, the associates were Armando Franci and Aurelio Serafinelli, who was confirmed as sole administrator for another three-year mandate, from January 1st 1953 to December 31st 1955 (*Ordinary partners' meeting*, 1952) – which is the same date that Aldo Fabrizi's name appears for the first time in the company's official documents.

Unfortunately, there are no other papers concerning the company's meetings in the files at the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, for this period of time. Therefore, it is not possible to know the exact date of when the actor officially became part of the company associates. However, on December 30th 1955, during both an ordinary and extraordinary meeting (as it is defined in the papers), Aldo Fabrizi is referred to as one of the associates, together with Serafinelli. The shares are 50-50, and Armando Franci has disappeared from the documents. Moreover, Serafinelli, who was the sole administrator at the time, resigned and his role was assumed by Aldo Fabrizi until 1957. Information about this period 1955-1957 is provided from the documentation held at the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi archive, as mentioned by Mrs. Pessione Fabrizi. When the actor became sole administrator, he found some irregularities in the company documents and balance sheets. In an extraordinary meeting (Pessione, 1995, p. XV), Fabrizi recalled how:

[Alfa Film XXXVII] had not been involved in any production activity since 1952, but even that the Italian cinema industry was in crisis due to the difficulties in finding loans from banks or financing companies. He also added that, even though the situation in which the company found itself was not so worrying, the previous administrator's conduct was disgraceful, and he was thinking of beginning legal action against him.

Aurelio Serafinelli loved gambling on horse races, and due to this addiction, he adopted some unprofitable behaviours for the company that involved unsuccessful financial transactions. Even though Fabrizi did not start any legal action against his associate and friend, he felt betrayed and started to think about measures to circumvent this issue. However, before his decision of interrupting any production activity, some other changes happened in the company.

Through a report of an extraordinary meeting at the beginning of 1957, we learn that the names of the two associates have changed. The total number of shares was always sixty, but this time they are divided between Fabrizi and his son Massimo. Even though until now all shares were equally divided between the partners, from 1957 onwards 5 shares only were

Massimo's while 55 belonged to the sole administrator, Aldo Fabrizi, maybe as a sign of him trying to regain control. Furthermore, the address changed again from via Leutari, 35, to via Civitavecchia c.n.1 (*Extraordinary partners' meeting, 1957*). During the last ordinary partner's meeting (1957) available before the company's closure in December 1957, the associates were identified again as being Aldo and Massimo Fabrizi, with the same division of shares as mentioned above. The peculiarity, however, was the presence of Armando Franci, who on this occasion, was nominated by Aldo Fabrizi as the company's sole administrator, following Fabrizi's resignation from the role. Fabrizi left his company, in the same unexpected way as he entered it, after the release of the latest movie produced. These actions seem to indicate his distancing from Alfa Film.

Finally, the last document available at the Chamber of Commerce in Rome is the extraordinary meeting during which the company was wound up. The Fabrizi family had completely disappeared, and the only people present were Armando Franci, in the role of liquidator, who held 55 shares, and Italo Santoni,²⁹⁸ who had 5 shares. Evidently, in the time between this meeting and the previous ones, Aldo Fabrizi and his son Massimo ceded their shares. In the document of this extraordinary meeting, the address of the company is listed as via Tito Livio 179 (*Extraordinary partners' meeting, 1959*), which is the fourth known address and the fifth change of address, including the return to via Leutari. It would therefore be remiss not to question the many changes in address. One possibility could be that the offices were rented, and the costs were too high for the company to cover, which is why they moved to another address. Notwithstanding the economic challenges, the first three locations were situated within a 4 kilometres span from each other, in Rome's city centre. Only the last address was on the outskirts of Rome, thus showing a somewhat budgetary planning.²⁹⁹

The company's final meeting minutes, which is held in Rome's Chamber of Commerce archive, gives valuable insights into the company's liquidation. The report is written by the

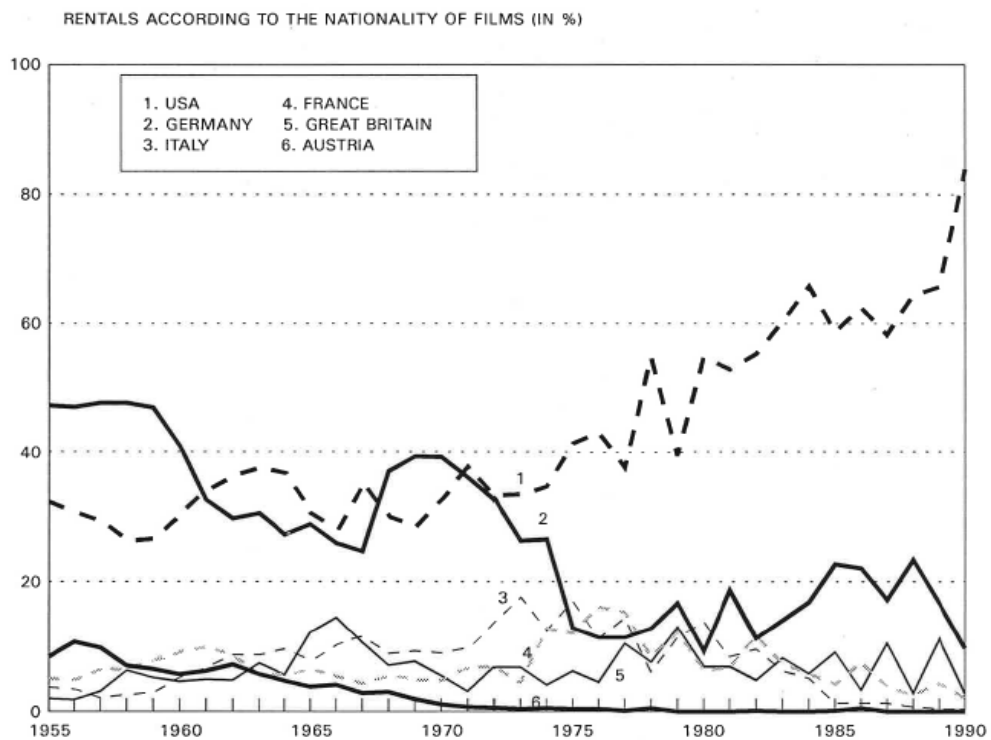
²⁹⁸ He appeared in the initial credits of the movie *Benvenuto, reverendo!*, in which he worked as a scene maker; in the document he is identified as stage technician (*Extraordinary partners' meeting, 1959*).

²⁹⁹ The last address is located in the Balduina area. This part of the city underwent popular growth at the end of the 1940s and 1950s. After WWII, the construction industry got out of stasis, and both governmental interventions and private initiatives took place. This second intervention acted according to two directions: the completion and saturation of pre-existing neighbourhoods and the urbanisation of peripheral areas. Roman outskirts began extensive colonisation, apartment blocks started to be built in and out of Rome, and the city began to expand increasing its urbanised areas by 293%.

For a study of the urbanistic growth of Rome after the Second World War, see Insolera (2011, pp. 190-244).

sole administrator, Armando Franci, in order to liquidate the company, and the financial statement is updated to December 1958. However, before analysing these last documents, it is worth pointing out an important statement Fabrizi made. According to Mrs. Pessione Fabrizi (1995), on November 21st 1958, Fabrizi the actor and sole administrator, stated that he wanted to stop all producing activity, because of the contingent crisis in the field, to concentrate on his acting and directing careers. Following this announcement, Fabrizi ceded his shares to Franci. The financial statement at the Chamber of Commerce confirms the problems the company had in justifying the reasons why the associates decided to wind up the firm. Franci wrote that, when he assumed the role of sole administrator, he thought the company could have been saved from liquidation through a more intense exploitation of the film royalties owned by the firm. In this way, the company could have started new ventures with the earnings. However, as he reported, all the movies owned had almost finished their exploitation cycle, an issue that, together with the crisis of the film industry, did not allow Alfa Film XXXVII to resurrect its fortunes. Under these conditions, Franci continued, he could not do anything other than to follow the film renting trends in Italy and abroad, which were improving at the time (to have an idea of the renting trends of the time, see figure 4 from Gyory and Glas' *Statistics of the Film Industry in Europe* (1992): it shows how the demand for Italian movies during the 1950s, particularly during the second half of the decade, was low, giving the curve a descending arch that represents a very stationary market regarding renting. It also portrays the conditions Franci explained in his report). Nevertheless, revenue was considerably low, to the point where general expenses and arrears were not being covered as movies were approaching the end of their exploitation cycle. Franci intervened personally by advancing some of his own funds, but this was insufficient in paying the taxes accumulated from August 1958. For this reason, he suggested the dissolution of the company and its settlement (*Sole administrator's report*, 1959).

Figure 4. Rentals according to the nationality of films (Gyory and Glas)



The image was taken from Michel Gyory and Gabriele Glas' *Statistics of the Film Industry in Europe* (CERICA ed., Brussels, 1992, p.36).

What followed in the meeting report was the firm's financial statement, as shown in footnote 304 was presented at this last meeting, and contains details of Alfa Film XXXVII's financial state of affairs at the end of 1958. This was divided into two parts, a balance sheet with a list of the company's assets and liabilities,³⁰⁰ and an income statement.³⁰¹ Under the asset column, two important categories are listed: "Residuo Perdite Esercizi Precedenti" (residual losses incurred in previous years) and "Perdite Esercizio 1958" (losses incurred in 1958).³⁰² When adding the amount of these two categories together, the difficulties the

³⁰⁰ It is a photograph of the situation of the company at a specific date, usually the end of a month or a year (Horngren and Harrison, 2007, p. 19).

³⁰¹ It is a summary of the revenues, expenses, and net income (excess of total revenues over total expenses) or net loss (excess of total expenses over total revenues) of the company for a specific period of time (Horngren and Harrison, 2007, p. 26).

³⁰² "Assets:

Cash	2669
Property deeds	475,000
Liabilities to be amortised	1
Residual losses of previous years	16,708,202
1958 losses	17,185,872
	592,081

company was facing become very evident. For instance, in 1958 the company's residual losses totalled 16,708,202 lire, while the year's deficits were 592,081 lire.³⁰³ The income statement, on the other hand, shows profits from film rentals in Italy of 773,241 lire, and abroad of 60,678 lire (*Extraordinary partners' meeting*, 1959). However, this confirms Franci's claims that the exploitation cycle of movies produced was almost at its end, and could not guarantee enough profits to save the company. Therefore, given that there were no profits that could justify the continuity in production, the company was running at a loss.

Before trying to survive solely through renting, Alfa Film XXXVII produced five movies between 1949 and 1952 (Bernardini, 2000), which was a large number of movies that put the company over the average. This is confirmed by the documents available at the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi archive and the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, which attribute the firm's production of *Benvenuto, reverendo!* (1949) (ACS, envelope 11 CF 0819), *La famiglia Passaguai* (1951) (ACS, envelope 38 CF 1256), *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna* (1951) (ACS, envelope 43 CF 1303), *Papà diventa mamma* (1952) (ACS, envelope 49 CF 148), and *Una di quelle* (1952) (ACS, envelope 69 CF 1554). In all these films, Fabrizi was both director and actor, with *Una di quelle*, being the only coproduction released, as discussed earlier in this chapter. All these movies had a different result at the box office, and were differently received by the audience (see chart 16). According to a cross analysis of the information available at the ACS and Roberto Poppi's text, the public appreciated these films especially part 1 of the Passaguai trilogy.³⁰⁴ A 1952 cinema news bulletin declared that all three films were the most profitable movies at the time (table 8 shows a comparison between films cost and box office, underlining the undeniable success of these films among the audiences). According to the bulletin, they grossed much more than one hundred million lire each

	17,777,953	
Depositor Asset Market		500,000
	17,277,953	
Liabilities:		
Corporation stock		60,000
Fondo R.O.		12,000
Creditors: RANK Film		4,046,001
Comm. Tax Collector		9,753,952
Franci Armando (Sole Administrator)	3,900,000	
Depositor Asset Market		500,000"

(1958 financial statement, 1959).

³⁰³ This is probably what happened for most of the companies that produced one movie and then ended their activity. Unfortunately, to support this thesis, it would be necessary to analyse all the companies that produced one film and the box office of these movies. This could be the beginning of future investigations about the Italian film industry of the time.

³⁰⁴ The trilogy includes includes *La famiglia Passaguai*, *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna*, and *Papà diventa mamma*.

including government prizes and exploitation royalties, and the gross receipts for the five movies was between one billion and two hundred million lire (Pessione, 1995). In spite of the fact that three movies were big successes, they could not save the company from Serafinelli's negligent and risky administration. Although the good results at the box office and the strength spent for its working, the first official production experience for Fabrizi was not worth his effort anymore, and the only solution available seemed to be its closure. What convinced him to found Alfa Film XXXVII was his previous (limited) experience in film production, which was complicated and unsuccessful, as shown in the following section.

Table 8. Alfa Film XXXVII films: cost and box office

	Film cost (lire)	Box office (lire)
<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> ³⁰⁵	(unavailable)	170,000,000
<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i>	120,000,000	378,000,000
<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i>	115,950,000	192,250,000
<i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	63,600,000	229,256,000
<i>Una di quelle</i>	60,710,000	277,000,000

The films cost was taken from the documents of the ACS (see location of envelope and CF for each film in the previous paragraph), while the box office from Poppi (2007, pp. 68; 170; 315; 457). Source: author's elaboration.

6.3 Guaranteed Pictures Italia and *Emigrantes*

According to Bernardini, before Alfa Film XXXVII there was another company connected to Aldo Fabrizi, called Guaranteed Pictures Italia,³⁰⁶ which is sometimes misspelled as "Guaranted" in some documents and in Bernardini's book. It was a very important experience for Fabrizi, to the extent that he firmly decided to step into the production field to reach the fulfilment of his creative ambitions. Founded in 1949, Guaranteed Pictures Italia had a stock

³⁰⁵ The estimated cost was absent in the ACS's file of the movie.

³⁰⁶ As mentioned by Bernardini (2000), the company was located in Rome (piazza Montecitorio, 115), it lasted only one year and produced one movie.

of 100,000 lire, which made it a small firm considering that the median investment for the year was 500,000 lire. As with Alfa Film XXXVII, it is one of those companies included in the substantial group of small firms with a stock within 100,000 lire, even though it is bigger than Alfa Film, but less productive. Due to its one-year activity, Guaranteed Pictures Italia is part of the 52.34% of new enterprises that composed the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959, and also one of the 427 that produced one movie. Bernardini mentions Fabrizi as one of the firm's managers, together with Renzo Brunori, then, in a note Bernardini (2000, p. 209) specifies that the company was run by Brunori, but tied to Fabrizi. This assertion erroneously led me to think that Fabrizi was one of the managers of the company, so I began researching the role Fabrizi had as producer of Guaranteed Pictures Italia. This investigation led to consulting the company's statute, where I discovered the following errors. First of all, the company name was Guaranteed Pictures Italia, not Guaranteed, and secondly, Aldo Fabrizi has never been one of its managers. However, he did hold some royalties for *Emigrantes*, the first film directed by Fabrizi and the only one released by the production company. This information then changed the perspective of the research, as the focus shifted to how Fabrizi was involved in the company, given his desire to redefine his participation in film production.

According to the documents in the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, the company was founded on February 13th 1948, with 100,000 lire in corporation stock, and was supposed to last until the end of 1952 with the possibility of extending its life. It is important to mention this new data because the foundation year implies some changes in the general considerations and the relationship the company had with the context. By referring to the median corporation stock time series in chapter 2 (chart 8), a sizeable difference in median is apparent between 1948 and 1949, in 1948 it is 750,000 lire, while in 1949 it is 500,000 lire. When considering the median stock on the value of 2014 euros (chart 9), with allowances for inflation, it becomes apparent that 1948 is the last peak of the entire period, with a median stock that will not be equalled by any other year in the period analysed, as in 1948 the median stock was more than 14,000 euros, and the highest median of the following years is 13,300 euros in 1958.

Other data on Guaranteed Pictures Italia found at Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi, regards the people who worked in the company, providing important information on how roles were distributed within the firm itself, and demonstrating Fabrizi's (hidden) involvement in the production structure. According to CSAF documents, the president of Guaranteed Pictures was Renzo Brunori (identified as a business owner) and the CEOs were Manlio Cavallari, a set designer and Vicente Vigo, a business owner born in Buenos Aires. The stock was divided

equally between Brunori and Cavallari, with both having 50 shares of one-thousand-lire each. However, in the provisional deposit receipt released by the Banca d'Italia for an establishing company, a fourth name, Romeo Cavallari appears, who together with Brunori and Cavallari, are the signing business partners that paid for the first step in having the company listed on the registry of businesses.³⁰⁷ The company was located in Rome, and the statute considered the possibility to open secondary offices, and branches, but only in Italy. They would have been separate offices (but not independent legal entities) that could manage the business of the principal office, perhaps in relation to the distribution of the films produced. The objective of the company was the "production, distribution, rental, import and export of films" (*Guaranteed Pictures Italia statute*, 1949), thus strategic hubs were necessary for allowing the films to circulate,³⁰⁸ demonstrating also the fact that the company intended to continue its work after the production of *Emigrantes*. However, the case of Guaranteed Pictures Italia is peculiar, in that most of the statutes found specified that new offices, branches and agencies could have been opened anywhere, both in Italy and abroad. This is also the case, for Allia's Delta Film (with some variations),³⁰⁹ Filmex in Turin, Roberta Film, Morino Film, Sagittario Film, and even Fabrizi's Alfa Film XXXVII. These new findings, therefore, asked for a re-evaluation of the real role and nature of the company.

Part of this re-evaluation was carried out during my research at the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi archive, where I discovered documentation regarding a Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina.³¹⁰ The president, or CEO³¹¹ was Jaimie Cabouli, and while the company was a production firm, it mostly operated as a distributor, possibly for the Argentinian-Latin American market, and it has a strict relationship with the Guaranteed Pictures Italia. Was the Italian company a branch of the one based in Argentina? Did they belong to the same corporation? Or did they collaborate in the production of Fabrizi's films? I will attempt to offer possible answers to these questions, after a cross analysis of the data collected during the research.

³⁰⁷ As seen in attachment n.2 of the company statute, Brunori deposited lire 34.000, Manlio Cavallari lire 33,000 and Romeo Cavallari lire 33,000 (*Guaranteed Pictures Italia statute*, 1949).

³⁰⁸ The cities in which agencies and branches were located were those with prime vision cinemas. They could guarantee a first and more profitable exploitation stage.

For an in-depth analysis of the role of distribution in Italy after WWII, see: Di Chiara and Noto (2021).

³⁰⁹ In Delta Film statute it is specified that the new offices can have only administrative purposes (ACS, envelope 136 CF 2243).

³¹⁰ The company distributed many movies during the 1950s. According to IMDb, it produced four movies and distributed seven films, among which was *I Vitelloni* (F. Fellini, 1953) and *La dolce vita* (F. Fellini, 1960) (*pro.imdb*, 2021).

³¹¹ Seeing as the company was located in Buenos Aires, I could not access any archives. The only known data, is where it was located, and who was communicating with Guaranteed Pictures Italia.

Based on my initial investigations of Bernardini's book, I considered Aldo Fabrizi as one of the managers of the Italian company, which produced just one film, the social drama *Emigrantes* (Fabrizi, 1949). However, at the CSAF archive I found many letters regarding the production of this film, in which Fabrizi is neither mentioned nor referred to as producer. In the initial credits of the movie, moreover, the production company appears as only Guaranteed Pictures Italia, with Renzo Brunori listed as production coordinator, and Manlio Cavallari as architect. Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina is not credited at all yet its manager Jamie Cabouli, is listed as the film's producer on a Motion Pictures Association screening invitation, dated May 9th 1951, that is held at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS, en. 11 CF 0819).

It could be argued that Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina was involved with the Italian company, owing to the many letters Fabrizi wrote during the filming, which were addressed to both companies, and also because financial issues were postponed until Jamie Cabouli's arrival in Italy.³¹² The hypothesis that the companies were connected is confirmed in another letter by Aldo Fabrizi (1948) concerning the filming of *Emigrantes*. *Emigrantes* was filmed in both Italy and Argentina, and, aside from his directing and acting obligations in Buenos Aires, also had an agreement with the Astral Theatre's producer and manager Francisco Gallo, to appear in some of his Compagnia Aldo Fabrizi shows. Fabrizi was uncertain of when he would be leaving Italy for Argentina, and asked Gallo in his letter to inform the representatives of Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina, while referring to Guaranteed Pictures Italia as the "partners of [the company in] Rome".

Although Fabrizi was not involved in the production process (at least not officially), he did have some rights concerning *Emigrantes's* distribution. According to a letter Fabrizi sent to his lawyer Francesco Soro, he states having royalties in some territories,³¹³ but does not specify exactly where. While this may suggest he was in a position to distribute the film on Italian territory, two letters addressed to Fabrizi from Franco Di Martino and Malatesta further confirm his role in the film's distribution. The two letters were probably part of an exchange, but unfortunately Fabrizi's replies to these letters were not reachable. However, we know that Fabrizi confirmed his distribution rights himself, when stating "That [man]

³¹² See the letter by Aldo Fabrizi to Guaranteed Pictures Italia and to Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina for reference (1948).

³¹³ In a letter dated June 3rd, 1948, Fabrizi wrote (stored in Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi): "[...] I take note of your advice of deleting any relationship with the company. However, I have to know precisely how I have to act to arrive at this result. Which deeds and documents I have to give back, in order to exclude any interference from Guaranteed Pictures Italia in the exploitation of the film's royalties in the territories that pertain me?"

[Jaime Cabouli] did not have the money to pay me, but at the last moment he granted me the film's distribution rights for Italy, the Italian colonies (sure, which colonies...), the countries of the European Common Market" (Faldini and Fofi, 2009, p. 253).

Chronologically speaking, the first one was written by Franco Di Martino³¹⁴ and refers to the prizes the film would have received mentioning its presentation at the Venice Festival, which, according to Di Martino, would have been positive. An interesting change in subject is then made when Di Martino addresses the mechanism of film distribution in Italy after the war, and indicates the pervasive spread of American films in Italian theatres. He writes (1948) "About the purchase of American movies to combine [the purchase of *Emigrantes*], it is an idea that must be rejected. At the moment in Italy there are 540 movies imported, and the market is saturated as never before." He then suggested not to sacrifice the possible success of *Emigrantes* matching it with other American movies, which could have had a limited distribution due to the saturation of the film market with American products. The Italo-Argentinian movie was supposed to be sold to the Italian market together with a pack of American films, a very common practice at the time.³¹⁵

The second letter, dated August 1948, is written just a couple of months after the previous one by Malatesta.³¹⁶ He is interested in his friend Morielli³¹⁷ distributing the movie in Italy, and writes that Morielli founded a big production company called Union Film,³¹⁸ that he

³¹⁴ I have not found information about this person, but I suspect he is involved in the decisions of the movies that had to be presented at the Venice Festival. Moreover, he was possibly in charge of the film's advertising campaign (at least unofficially), as in the letter, he writes (1948): "During this week I will begin the advertising campaign, so that you will have the way paved."

³¹⁵ It was common at the time for distribution companies which wanted to distribute a film from another country, to also import a group of other movies which could have been included to the group of movies rented to cinema theatres together with the first film. In this case, Di Martino is talking about the impossibility of importing other American films (which could have been given to theatres together with *Emigrantes*) due to the saturation of the Italian market.

For an analysis of the Italian film market situation after the WWII, see: Bizzarri and Solaroli (1958), or Quaglietti (1980).

³¹⁶ Unfortunately, no first name is given, just his surname. It can be argued that he is Guido Malatesta who, according to Bernardini, was one of the managers of Cima International Film, a company founded in 1959 by Dante Ender, Guido Malatesta and Guido Robuschi with 200,000 lire in corporation stock. It lasted one year, produced one movie and was located in Campione d'Italia, in the province of Como. However, there was another Malatesta involved in Fabrizi's life: Marcello, his lawyer. Presumably, the one interested in distribution is the producer. Nevertheless, it is important to mention all the possible connections.

³¹⁷ Again, there is just the surname, but he could be Dino Secondo Morielli, who was one of the managers of the Continentalcine, together with Luciano Calanchi, Ottavio Poggi and Nazzareno Sturano. The company, founded in 1948 with 1 million lire in corporation stock, produced three movies and was active until 1951.

³¹⁸ According to Bernardini (2000, p. 435), the company was run by Ottavio Poggi (who was one of the managers of Continentalcine, as we have already seen). Founded in 1947, it was located in Rome and during its three-year activity produced one movie. Even though the name of Morielli does not appear

trusts his friend Morielli, and that he thinks he could do a great job in Italy for the distribution of *Emigrantes* (Malatesta, 1948). It is not known who distributed the movie, and this information is also absent on the initial credits of the film, though according to cinematografo.it database, the movie had a regional distribution.³¹⁹ The lack of a more organised coordination in the distribution, with the inclusion of more important big cities (and consequently prime vision cinemas), could be one of the reasons why the movie did not have success and collected only 73,750,000 lire at the box office (Poppi 2007, p.157).

Returning back to the production company, there are a couple of other findings that must be mentioned in order to have an idea of the condition the firm was facing, and the relationship it had with the company in Argentina. When answering a letter from Fabrizi's lawyer, in which he informed the actor that Guaranteed Pictures Italia was completely insolvent, Fabrizi writes that the situation is the same for Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina, and that they would have some money (for settling the lawyer's bill), but only after the release of the film. This demonstrates how they were able to collect some revenue in order to cope with their financial responsibilities (Fabrizi, 1948). However, when the movie was finally released, the money it collected was not enough to allow the production company to continue its activities.

As Fabrizi had part of the movie royalties, he used them as a warranty at the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. In 1949 the actor requested a loan of 30,000,000 lire to produce *Emigrantes*, of which 15,000,000 lire were approved. The promissory notes the bank released were in the name of Fabrizi, but they were signed by S.A. Scalera Film and endorsed by lawyer Michele Scalera and Mr. Salvatore Scalera. The warranties for the bank were the royalties of the movie in Italy, its colonies and the Italian ships, the government awards, and profits from the movie's exploitation cycle and sale in France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and territories of the French-speaking Switzerland (*BCMM, minutes n. 12, 1949*). This means that Fabrizi was part the owner of the film, but that he did not have enough warranties for the bank, and needed the support of other influential people in the field, to act as his guarantor. This first alternative, suggests the actor knew the owners of Scalera Film, who did in fact help the actor. However, there is a second alternative that must be considered, as it is indeed possible that, at some point in the movie's history, Scalera Film was involved in the distribution of

in the Anica documents, he could have been one of the partners: he and Poggi knew each other, they had a business (and probably a personal) relationship, so it can be easily hypothesised that Morielli was involved in the institution of Union Film.

³¹⁹ The regional distribution was made of rental agencies present in one or more cities with prime vision cinemas. They do not have a national structure of coordination. For an analysis of the independent regional distributors, see: Di Chiara and Noto (2021).

Emigrantes.³²⁰ This last theory is the most probable, especially when considering that the warranties included in the loan, were the exploitation royalties of the movie in the French-speaking territories of Europe. Scalera Film, thus, was probably responsible for the distribution of *Emigrantes* in those countries. Finally, after an extension for the refund agreed by the bank (*BEEM, minutes n. 10, 1950*), the loan was then extinguished and all the rights the bank had on the royalties were cancelled (*BEDD, deliberation n. 155, 1951*).³²¹ The movie royalties on the Italian territory were again in Fabrizi's hands, who could collect the profits until the end of the film's exploitation cycle.

The difficult experience of Guaranteed Pictures and the production of *Emigrantes* shows how many troubles Fabrizi confronted with during this project. It was such a frustrating circumstance that from that moment onwards he wanted to be more independent and autonomous in the realisation of his films, and likewise benefit economically more from them. This is evident in a letter he wrote to Piero Tinelli³²² from Argentina in 1948 (CSAF), where he clearly states being offered many work opportunities, but chose to return to Italy to pursue his own endeavours. Nevertheless, the only reason for continuing his work overseas was to "collect the money to film 'the priest',³²³ because after the painful experiences made, I realised that collaborations, co-productions or third part's interference are at the end just a pain in the ass, and you don't see a penny." Due to the difficult events he had encountered in the filming of *Emigrantes*, he decided to follow his own route, trying to control most of the film realisation chain.

³²⁰ Bernardini (2000) writes that Scalera Film was active in the production, rental, and distribution fields. It was founded in 1938 with 1 million lire corporation stock, was active till 1951, and produced 72 movies.

³²¹ Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations, deliberation n. 155, March 5th, 1951 session. Archivio Storico – BNL.

³²² It is a letter Fabrizi wrote to Piero Tellini, scriptwriter with whom Fabrizi worked several times. For example, they both worked in *There's Room Up Ahead (Avanti, c'è posto..., M. Bonnard, 1942)*; *The Peddler and the Lady (Campo de' fiori, M. Bonnard, 1943)*; *To Live in Peace (Vivere in pace, L. Zampa, 1947)*; *Flesh Will Surrender (Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo, A. Lattuada, 1947)*; and also *Emigrantes*.

³²³ It is not clearly stated, but the movie presumably was *Benvenuto, reverendo!* The timing corresponds with the movie shot after *Emigrantes*.

6.4 Fabrizi as a silent brand: hidden presence in other productions

Another circumstance in which Fabrizi's involvement within the production process is not official but extremely plausible is the case of Gladiator Film, production company of *// maestro* (1958), another film to which the label of "Fabrizi brand" can be applied.³²⁴ According to Bernardini (2000, p. 203), Gladiator Film was established with 990,000 lire in corporation stock, had a five-year life-span and released two films. Founded in the first year after the lowest peak of production in the 1950s (which saw 50 films produced in 1956), it was one of 59 new enterprises of 1957, and belongs to the largest group of companies in the period - with stock between 500,000 lire and 1 million. The first investment too renders it part of the medium firms of the time: in 1957 the median stock was indeed 900,000 lire. With its 990,000 lire capital, Gladiator Film is a little above the average. The most interesting aspect about the company, however, is its manager.

Giorgio Pessione, Fabrizi's son-in-law, officially created the firm. According to some of his hand notes, at the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi archive, on January 5th 1957, he founded Capitolium Film and was its sole administrator. Twenty days after this company's foundation, the name was changed to Gladiator Film, and was supposed to last until the end of 1963, but as Pessione stated, in the financial statement of December 1962 the liquidation of Gladiator Films was suggested. At the following extraordinary partner's meeting, called to dismiss the company and wind it up on July 31st 1963, the list of associates included Aldo Fabrizi, Mario Villa and lawyer Mario Marino - who was representing other associates (not mentioned). In 1965 Sebastiano Piattoli, identified by Pessione as sole administrator of Gladiator Film at the time, sent a 333,000 lire cheque to lawyer Principato (Fabrizi's attorney), which corresponds to the 33% belonging to the actor. From this we can presume that there were three associates and, using the letter from Principato to Fabrizi (1967) as a reference point, it is clear that the sum corresponds to the profits from the sale of the movie to television. So while Fabrizi may not have been present on the official documentation, his correspondence with Principato attests to the fact that he controlled the operations of the company. This demonstrates Fabrizi's attempt to use his decision making power to accomplish his creative project with enough independence while presumably avoiding production duties and bureaucracy.

³²⁴ The film was not taken into extensive consideration here, in terms of its production history because it was not realised by a company that officially bears the actor's name.

Finally, two other movies, *Questa è la Vita* (1954), and *Hanno Rubato un Tram* (1954), also follow “the rule” of Fabrizi as screenwriter, director, and actor. Both are comedies (in the first one, Fabrizi directed and performed in one of the four episodes of the movie, “Marsina stretta”), and were produced by two companies, Fortunia Film³²⁵ and Imperial Film.³²⁶ This second company produced another of the films in which Fabrizi acted, *Guardia, Guardia Scelta, Brigadiere e Maresciallo* (M. Bolognini, 1956), a comedy with many important names among its cast, including Alberto Sordi, Peppino De Filippo, Gino Cervi, and Nino Manfredi. However, even though *Questa è la vita*, and *Hanno rubato un tram* are part of the “Fabrizi brand” of films, there is no evidence that the actor and director was part of the production companies. He could have been part of the production process, and may have proposed the idea to the company, which was the case for the second film, *Hanno rubato un tram*. According to the scriptwriter Luciano Vincenzoni, after writing the script and presenting it to Fabrizi, Fabrizi bought it a few days after their meeting (Faldini and Fofi 2009, p.254). Hence, it can be argued that Fabrizi proposed the script directly to Luigi Rovere, who was founder of Imperial Film, or that Fabrizi contacted some producers and then found Rovere, the one who decided to finance it. In spite of the fact that Fabrizi did not directly produce these two films, their bitter comedy vein, and the recurring presence of some of the crew members, firmly secure their place among the “Fabrizi brand” of films.

6.5 Fabrizi’s crew: recurring collaborations in movies

After analysing the connections between crucial people and different companies, the next inevitable step was to check for possible collaborations between Fabrizi and other actors and workers. This was relevant in order to ascertain if Aldo Fabrizi had recurring collaborators that formed part of the Fabrizi brand. This recurrence of collaboration is true when referring to melodramas, as Pierre Sorlin (1995, p. 350) notes that in melodrama, the “actors,

³²⁵ It was founded in 1954 with 100,000 lire corporation stock by Ignazio Balsamo and Felice Zappulla. The last production was released in 1958, and in this 5-year period, the company produced 9 movies (Bernardini, 2000, p. 189).

³²⁶ Founded in 1953 by Luigi Rovere, the company had 980,000 lire in corporation stock and produced 7 movies between 1953 and 1956 (Bernardini, 2000, p. 221).

directors, producers, and technicians were generally the same".³²⁷ But this also extends to Aldo Fabrizi's films, as several names appear more than once in the initial credits of the nine movies analysed. Not only actors' names, which would be expected for films such as the Passaguai family trilogy, but also the names of many people working behind the scenes. The films Alfa Film XXXVII produced are where most of the recurring names appear, as well as in the film *Emigrantes, Questa è la vita, Hanno rubato un tram, and Il maestro*. This connection among film creatives was not an exclusive feature of Fabrizi's brand, but what also underpinned the Hollywood production system, as both H. Powdermaker (1951) and T. Schatz (1989) have pointed out. Hollywood saw many of its creatives and crew not just connected to each other through different projects, but also covering different positions at several different companies. However, it is important to note that Italian cinema at the time was not a well-structured industry as a whole, with permanent structures and personnel. Instead, there were some independent, self-sufficient production companies, with limited permanent staff and people were hired for each project. There were also a few studios, in which producers such as Fabrizi were able to present their film projects to professional cinematographers or production managers, that the companies could hire for single productions, or on a more regular basis.

Furthermore, considering the fact that many Italian firms produced one movie, the kind of continuity seen in places like in Hollywood was not always possible in Italy. Some larger companies and groups such as Lux Film³²⁸ and Ponti-De Laurentiis S.p.A.,³²⁹ attempted this continuity, but it was not very common. Indeed, Italy's industrial instability and short-term production companies contributed to the emergence of external collaborations among people,³³⁰ creating relationships that connected several firms. The impossibility of most of the companies in establishing production continuity, forced people to form personal contacts, relationships that were continued in other productions and with other companies. The film industry can be considered a sort of flow made of continuous interaction among people (in front of and behind the camera), regardless of the firms.

³²⁷ For a better understanding of Sorlin's ideas, see chapter 1.

³²⁸ For an extensive analysis of Lux Film and its structure, see Farassino and Sanguineti (1984).

³²⁹ While this company was in operation, Ponti and De Laurentiis collaborated several times with actors Totò, Silvana Mangano, Vittorio Gassman among others.

³³⁰ An example is represented by Luigi De Laurentiis and Enzo Cossa. The first one was production manager in *Filumena Marturano* (De Filippo, 1951) and *Una di quelle*, and Enzo Cossa was production manager for *Filumena Marturano* and producer for *Una di quelle* (he is one of the managers of Rosa Film).

This was certainly the case for Alfa Film XXXVII, given the company had a long life-span for the standards at the time, which therefore provided the opportunity of building up its “own” team. The team of Alfa Film XXXVII’s recurringly hired actors,³³¹ will not be focussed on in this thesis, instead the emphasis is concentrated on the crew. As one of Fabrizi’s most trusted colleagues, it comes as no surprise that Armando Franci was production manager for six of the nine movies Fabrizi directed, and for all the movies Alfa Film XXXVII produced, with the exception of *Papà diventa mamma* and *Una di quelle*. 1952 is a quite crucial year: releasing year of *Una di quelle*, the last films produced by the company, it is also the last year in which Franci’s name appears in the company meetings. From the report following the firm meeting, in 1952 Franci was substituted by Fabrizi, even though he reappeared in 1957, as it was already discussed. Franci probably decided, or was forced (due to external reasons),³³² to leave the company, and the role of director manager for the last Alfa Film XXXVII movie was given to Luigi De Laurentiis and Lello Serafinelli. His name will reappear in the same role a few years later, in *Il maestro*. Undoubtedly, Franci is a very important person and associate for Fabrizi, and periodically reappears in his productions.

Another recurring name was that of Emimmo Salvi. Manager of Transfilm Importazione Esportazione Produzione Film S.r.l.³³³ and Standard Film S.r.l.,³³⁴ he worked with Fabrizi from *La famiglia Passaguai onwards*. He was production assistant for the first two Passaguai family movies, and production inspector for *Papà diventa mamma* and *Una di quelle*. The Passaguai family trilogy is the production that features most of the recurring names among the workers, and this is not surprising. Most of the time, these kinds of movies have similar troupes also because the various scenes of the films were filmed almost simultaneously.³³⁵ The three films, in fact, were released within two years, so it can be presumed that they were filmed over the same time.

Finally, there are workers who collaborated with Aldo Fabrizi on different occasions, both for Alfa Film XXXVII (within and outside the trilogy), *Emigrantes*, and other productions. Among the credits of Fabrizi’s films, also some family surnames reappear in different

³³¹ For a complete list of actors’ recurring names, see Appendix E.

³³² If the reason was something internal to the company, Fabrizi probably did not call him back in 1957, and elected him as the firm’s liquidator.

³³³ The company was founded in 1958 with 900,000 lire in corporation stock. It had a one-year life-span and produced two movies.

³³⁴ The firm was founded in 1959 with 300,000 lire in corporation stock, produced one film and lasted one year.

³³⁵ We have already seen this happening with other companies, as for the examples in chapter 2 *Il segreto delle tre punte* and *A fil di spada*, directed by Bragaglia in 1952 and produced by Panaria Film S.r.l.

productions, such as: Nucci,³³⁶ Fava,³³⁷ Rizzo,³³⁸ De Vico.³³⁹ It is probable that some workers involved many of their relatives in other jobs within the production process. This comes as no surprise, seeing as the film industry always needed extras or last-minute workers, and because in Italy, family-run companies were quite widespread, particularly small and medium size businesses.³⁴⁰ The recurrence of collaborators makes it evident that it is within the core of the Fabrizi brand.

6.6 Conclusions

After this brief analysis of all the films in which Fabrizi worked as script writer, director, and actor, which would not have been possible were it not for the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi archive, one is able to appreciate the independent and intense contribution Fabrizi made to the production of his own films. It is not known if he produced these films because no other investor was willing to do so, but what is known is that he wanted to be more independent and autonomous in the realisation of his projects, as this proved more economically profitable, like the aforementioned letter to Pinelli demonstrates. As we know from this letter, despite the work opportunities offered to Fabrizi in Argentina, shooting *Emigrantes* was not useful for realising other films abroad. Third parts interferences, difficulties in finding materials and funds, the Argentinian staff way of operating on set and the general management carried on by the Guaranteed Pictures de la Argentina, made *Emigrantes* a nightmare for Fabrizi. The complex path that emerges from the data collected in this chapter regarding Guaranteed Pictures Italia and *Emigrantes* demonstrates the problems Fabrizi met during this experience, and legitimises his wish for independence. Although the film did not

³³⁶ Assunta (actress in *Emigrantes*), Mara and Alberto (actors in *Una di quelle*).

³³⁷ Franco (technician in *Emigrantes*), and Ernesta (makeup artist in *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna* and *Papà diventa mamma*). Moreover, there is a Ditta Fava (Fava enterprise) under the tag technical facilities in *Benvenuto, Reverendo!*

³³⁸ Alfredo (actor in *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna* and *Papà diventa mamma*) and Mimma (actress in *Papà diventa mamma*).

³³⁹ Pietro (actor in *La Famiglia Passaguai fa Fortuna*) and Adolfo (actor in *Papà Diventa Mamma*).

³⁴⁰ It was common in Italy to find an industry run by a family. For some detailed studies, see: Bianco (2010); Yanagisako (2002); Zamagni (1993).

register a big success at the box office (Poppi, 2009), it surely was a personal success for Fabrizi.

Indeed, these difficulties provided him the final thrust for founding his own production company: when he returned to Rome, he established Alfa Film XXXVII and produced many successful films with it. As it was for De Sica and Visconti, gaining more independence and control over his projects allowed Fabrizi to fulfil his personal creative ambitions, which were his most leading force.

This is also confirmed by Gladiator Film's case study, another company he was related to. Fabrizi's name does not appear on any of the company's official documentation, revealing two main issues. The first one concerns Fabrizi trying to pursue his artistic fulfilment without dealing with the complications related to the production chain. The intention of taking production choices is clear if we also consider the "Fabrizi brand" tag, which has characterised all the film Fabrizi produced, and that it can also be applied to *Il maestro*. The second issue is related to how production firms can be linked to a collection of Chinese boxes, which conceal connections, bonds and, above all, interests. Yet, a recurring pattern and common practice was the establishment of completely new companies. This was partly because many directors and actors decided, at a certain point in their careers, to produce their own movies, and also because people changed roles, tried other routes, and experimented in other fields.

Unfortunately, at this point of the research it is not possible to properly take under consideration aspects that could reveal Fabrizi's possible intervention within the marketing sphere. The reception area of his films was not studied in this thesis due to reasons of space but it would for sure add one more feature to the "Fabrizi brand" tag, providing other important information to the actor's behaviour within the production sphere. It can be presumed that turning Fabrizi himself into a brand also meant influencing the marketing of his films. Evidences could be found in the ever present portrayal of the actor throughout the film posters, as well as in the dimension and position of his name on them. He surely had a strong influence on the audience because he was well known by his public: when he founded his companies, Fabrizi had gone through more than twenty years of activity as an actor, half of which in cinema.³⁴¹ Thus, he guaranteed the film success, as demonstrated by the box office data.

³⁴¹ The first film in which Aldo Fabrizi worked was *There's Room Up Ahead* (*Avanti, c'è posto...*, M. Bonnard) in 1942.

Aldo Fabrizi is one of the most famous actors and directors of the time, and was also able to understand the entire production chain, thus having the necessary knowledge to make the best of each of his projects. His movies are known all over the world and he had a very successful and fruitful career, demonstrating great managerial capacity and continuous positive outcomes. He was capable of integrating acting, directing and producing, as well as releasing important movies for the history of Italian cinema, a factor that also indicates a high level of critical and artistic awareness. He was connected to more than one production company after the WWII and during the Fifties, two small enterprises, founded with a minor (if not minimum) initial capital right before the 1950s, and a medium and more relevant firm, with a bigger corporation stock, created in the second half of the decade. He invested more into Gladiator Film, which indicates the acquisition of managerial confidence and growth, as an actor, director, and hidden producer. He learned to take more risks, both in terms of capital invested and the genres produced, moving from comic movies to fantasy films, and produced several pictures that will not only always be remembered, but also serve as fine examples of how the knowledge of the entire production process was vital for the creation of remarkable pieces.

As the documents studied reveal, Fabrizi had structured and complex production plans, and even a brand strategy that he wanted to make popular. His career as a producer was neither accidental, nor a diversion from acting and directing, and resulted in his inclusion among the major film producers in Italy after WWII. He discovered his own system that allowed him to build up a personal fortune with the passing of time, together with the realisation of personal projects, thus being remembered as one of the protagonists of the Italian cinema, contributing to it from his first performance on stage and screen to the last of his production projects. With his companies, Fabrizi was capable of following the realisation of a film project from its beginning to its end, integrating his competence as actor, director, and producer. He also followed the general industrial trends of the time, establishing and working within small and medium size companies that released only a few movies.

Nevertheless, if the total number of films released by Alfa Film XXXVII and Gladiator Film are counted, this amounts to above the average number of films produced for that period. What is more, his companies lasted for four and five years when more than half the companies at the time were active for just one year. As for the genres released, Fabrizi's productions were predominantly comedies and comic movies, the second and third most common genres of the time, so there was a strong coherence with popular and commercial tastes. The fact that he produced five movies with one production company, however, is

what makes him stand out as exceptional given this, falls within just 3% of Italian firms that released the same amount of pictures.

The analysis of Fabrizi's production experiences between 1945 and 1959 demonstrate that he set a strategy to centralise all the creative and productive forces within his own hands to be as independent as possible in his decisions and their realisation. He clearly founded those companies with the intention of producing his own films. He cannot be considered a producer strictly speaking, but he modelled the role of the producer on his necessities as director. He pursued his "brand" with all his companies, and in these occasions, he must be considered more a director-producer than an actor-producer, being the director his main role in the films mentioned. Certainly, the influence and value this role could have had in the industry was higher than his role as actor. Being the producer helped Fabrizi in his stylistic choices, and being a well-known script writer, director and actor helped him in the economic aspects of cinema thanks to his recognition within film industry. Looking at the films he released, Fabrizi managed to successfully carry out all the roles he covered at the same time.

The combination of documents held at Archivio Centrale dello Stato, the Chamber of Commerce in Rome, and especially those at the Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi, offer opportunities to study the businessman behind the artist, and the producer that systematically bet on himself by transforming his artistic skills into assets. Fabrizi was capable of adapting to the general economic context by founding two companies, one small, the other medium, but he was also progressive in his approach to build a unique brand, connected to his production activities. In light of the above, the finest example of Fabrizi as producer can be found in the films produced through his company Alfa Film XXXVII with particular reference to the Passaguai trilogy, as the most successful example of the Fabrizi brand.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to study the Italian film industry after the Second World War and during the 1950s, from a socio-cultural, historical, economical and geographical point of view. It was aimed at acknowledging the complexity of the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959, and tracing the structure of the field, and made of small and medium, undercapitalised companies, together with their evolution and the genres produced. Given the nature of the archival research, the exceptional quantity of materials consulted and the fragmentation of the film industry, I proceeded with a hermeneutical perspective, that tried to understand the leitmotif beyond the data, and to reconstruct suitable and evidence-based explanations to fulfil the scope of this research. Therefore, my research questions involved not only the examination of the structure of the field and the role of small and medium size companies, but also the role the American model had in it, how the film industry in Italy was geographically structured, and if common models of behaviours can be traced in its functioning.

Moreover, throughout the data collecting process, some other questions emerged, including: why do so many production companies founded between 1945-1959 have such a short life-span? Was this short life-span directly related to the company's corporation stock and/or the number of films it produced? Were the genres of films produced aligned with the most common genres of the period? And, how did these companies contribute to one of the most influential times of film history?

To investigate these aspects, I explored the Italian film industry following two lines of research, one horizontal (concentrating on the historical, cultural and economic context, and on the depiction of the general characteristics of the film industry of the time), and one vertical (analysing in depth some case studies and production companies' features). It allowed to highlight some of the common models of behaviour the firms under scrutiny followed. This was possible owing to the examination of documents collected from the various archives consulted, together with the analyses of new companies founded, and the genres of the film released. This background was then used to thoroughly investigate some of the companies founded between 1945 and 1959, inspect their characteristics, and explore the films they released.

The analysis of the Italian film industry examined in chapter 2 identified certain modes of production that resembled the overall European context (Forbes and Street, 2000; Nicoli,

2017) and were followed by the general industry in Italy (Bizzarri and Solaroli, 1958; Quaglietti, 1980; Corsi, 2001): the predominance of small and medium size companies, which were located in specific areas of the country. In Italy for instance, this concentration was registered in areas such as Rome (main geographical centre), Milan, Turin, Naples, and Palermo.

The multitude of firms present in Italy resulted in an overflowing market. 770 new production companies were founded throughout this period, hundreds were still active, and almost 1600 films were produced, many of which were not a box office success having also a limited distribution. Moreover, most of the companies that crowded the field, regardless of their location or foundation, had a short life-span of one year, in more than 50% of cases. This shows a certain similarity between films and firms: both of them had a rapid life cycle in this period, revealing a line of continuity in their history and behavioural patterns. This demonstrates the power of the Italian film industry at the time, despite its fragmentation and definite lack of stability. This is a very different model than the American one, that Italy demonstrated to be unable to follow (except for some of the biggest firms already active in this period, as Lux Film and Titanus). The growth and development that eventually led to the 1960s golden age of Italian cinema, was based on the profusion of newly established firms which, albeit fragile and in turmoil, were ready to confront, adapt to and take on new challenges.

The study of these companies, together with the close investigation of some case studies, revealed certain patterns of production behaviour many companies followed, and some strategies they used to create their own production system. One of them was the use of the same actors or crew throughout several projects. Since Italy was not a structured industry, the majority of companies did not have a stable crew, organisations and studios. The firms tried to examine what worked, what did not; what was better for them; which structures and patterns worked better proceeding step by step, film after film. This is the case of the Fabrizi brand and his behaviour behind his companies, such as the use of the same crew within several projects. Another hidden aspect emerged: the secret relation among several companies, often between small and bigger firms, as for example Rosa Film and Ponti-De Laurentis Cinematografica. Sometimes this relation is represented only by the presence of the same producer in several companies, other times an interconnection of the firm's films emerged. In order to have a greater understanding of the phenomenon, it would be necessary examining in depth in future studies more companies and producers of the Italian

film industry. What was presented in this thesis is a first direction this line of research can pursue.

The investigation of the entire landscape of companies between 1945 and 1959 revealed that the industry of the period was run both by adventurers and well-known producers, the only ones that had been able to guide the most enduring firms. This analysis also exposed another trait of this industry: many of the companies (with and without a short life-span) were often founded by people with plentiful financial resources. This should not surprise given the amount of capital needed for an industry like this. Moreover, rich people had more reliability when asking for loans and had the possibility to build a background of knowledge and skills that could help them in managing their firms. There were also producers who had humble origins and became important producers, like Dino De Laurentiis (Kezich, 2001), but they were very few. Most of the biggest companies were guided by educated people, like for example Carlo Ponti and Riccardo Gualino, who both came from a wealthy family of industrialists; or even Francesco Alliata di Villafranca, who had noble origins. All of them had financial resources, were considered more reliable by banks and investors, and had managerial skills. This was the necessary set of factors that could facilitate success in the field, together with business acumen, intuition and also a little luck.

Deleting one or more of these aspects could result in unfortunate outcomes. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the percentage of firms founded between 1945 and 1959 that lasted only one or two years is so high: the lack of financial resources led to an impossibility of supporting the company when economic difficulties occurred, even if the producer(s) had managerial skills. Moreover, the presence of many adventurers, who clearly lacked both financial resources and management skills, worsened the unstable and difficult situation of the Italian film industry.

This enormous amount of firms was determined primarily by the fact that the cinema field was seen as a profitable source of income. After the ruins of WWII, Italy was experiencing a florid period, a sort of Renaissance. People began to have more financial means and considered film industry a possibility for investing their money and becoming rich with just one film. This consideration led to many venture capitalists trying to find their fortune in the Italian film industry, investing their money in the foundation of new production companies. An analysis of the firms' corporation stock done in chapter 2 showed that the investments made at the foundation of the corporations had little impact on the evolution of the firm itself and, consequently, on the number of films it released, demonstrating an absence of a direct and clear correlation between the number of companies founded, and corporation

stocks. On the contrary, the number of new firms is related to the number of films produced revealing a direct relation and influence, as shown in the chapter.

Most of the time, the aforementioned improvised producers had limited financial resources, and this constraint exacerbated the inadequacy of the entire system. In fact, at the end of the 1940s and in the middle of the 1950s, the Italian cinema industry registered two main crises that deeply affected it, both of which were connected to a lack of legislative intervention by the Government, and monetary inflation. Between these two periods, 1952 stood out as particularly significant within the analysis. This year, in fact, represented a convergence of contributing factors that had their impact on the Italian cinema industry, the most important being the consequences of Andreotti's Law and the Italian-American agreements. This resulted in an increase of power in the Government, especially with regards to decisions concerning the production of films, and the favouritism of the American industry over the Italian one. These circumstances also directly affected the longevity of Italian production firms, as their median life-span in 1952 was, in fact, the shortest recorded in the period under consideration.

In regards to the film genres produced between 1945 and 1959 the data presented in chapter 3 confirms just how diversified the offering of films released was. It also illustrates that the distribution of genres reflects the transformation of popular culture. What is more, the range of genres produced, and the huge number of films released were all necessary to direct the Italian film industry throughout the 1950s, towards the great successes of the 1960s, both internally and on foreign markets. The industry followed the same mainstream European trends - united against the 'American domination' of the film market, as it was primarily dominated by dramas and comedies, while comic and adventure films were in third and fourth place. This diversification provided Italian audiences with a vast offering of films, that ranged from low profile movies, aimed at spectators on the outskirts, to upper-middle products, and high-budget films created for attracting audience's attention in the city centres (Di Chiara, 2013). Nevertheless, even though this diversity increased the generalised growth of the industry - which was helped by the new legislative framework, especially the Andreotti Law - this did not correspond to similar increases in revenue. Indeed, very few movies made a significant profit, perhaps because the cinema economy was saturated with many foreign films from various countries (U.S.A., France, Spain, etc.), which caused challenges in the distribution of Italian films.

The hypothesis of an interrelationship between genre popularity and production decision-making drove the analysis of the genre box office. The unavailable data determines a

disproportion of effect upon genre shares, providing misrepresented results. Nevertheless, the analysis was carried out to see if those small and medium companies decided to produce the most popular genre and follow the mainstream. The results revealed that the majority of these companies decided in fact to produce the most widespread genre, which was drama, while others decided to try other routes, through for example the comic movies, another very common genre at the time.

In order to have a much more complete and reliable representation of the period, an important and necessary further line of research would be finding the material about the films' box office from primary sources throughout archives on the entire Italian territory: most of the missing information was determined by the fact that the films had regional distributors and/or were co-productions, making it very difficult tracing their box office results.

The study about film genre and box office is consistent to the data collected but a groundwork, because it cannot be applied to the entire production of the period due to the partial information available. The source consulted for this data, *Poppi's Dizionario* (2007), did not report the box office for 329 films. The investigation revealed an unequal distribution of film successes, with a very small number of top films. Using the median for the box office study, an analysis that must be contextualised to the available data, was representative of the industry outside of the big production companies. Furthermore, it has revealed that most of the observations of the analysed companies fall in or around the median. In further analysis, with the contribution of scholars and experts in the field with a background of historical and economics studies, the context of the population and audiences can be taken into account in order to contextualise the data collected in this research within the population of the data.

Moreover, this data should be combined with the audience and distribution information in cinemas, lines of research unexplored in this thesis, but necessary for future development of this investigation. I think that it is important to study the development of the industry from this point of view in order to have an idea of how people decided to make their choices within the industry. To properly investigate this aspect, evidence from the consumption side of these genres and films is really necessary.

This study, in fact, has revealed that it was very complicated to release films in Italy without external help. In order to produce their films, production companies needed the help of the government, loans from the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, and/or contributions from

co-productions. Perhaps the firms did not want to undertake conspicuous risks, given the uncertainty of the field and its unpredictable profits. This was the case both for production companies in Rome - where 613 out of 770 companies were located, confirming the effective centralization of the industry in Rome (Brunetta, 2009; Pitassio, 2019) - and also for the decentralised companies. Decentralisation, which represents the geographical dissemination of the industry, as illustrated in chapter 4, showed, in fact, other production boroughs, often related to one or two people, like, for example, the Sicily region and Prince Francesco Alliata di Villafranca.

Most of the decentralised firms were small and medium companies (133 out of 157), following the trend of the Italian industry in general. However, in order to have a greater understanding of how they worked, I analysed the production companies whose documents provided enough information to investigate their modes of production. All ten of which were eligible and included, presented the same two behavioural patterns: the genres produced were fully aligned with the European trend; and they presented an analogous, fragmented method of funding. Such methods of funding included the transfer of a films' royalties (even those films still in their distribution process) to the bank as guarantees for the loans, and the collection of micro financing from several sources. These sources of financing were often intrinsically related to one another, creating a dangerous funding chain that was ready to collapse at the fall of one financier. The fragmentation of the industry as a whole, is in many ways reflected in the way producers financed their projects.

In search of more control over decision-making and artistic independence and profits, even actors and directors decided to turn their efforts to producing, as outlined in chapter 5. They were usually from small and medium size companies, interested in producing movies in which they took part. These films often were co-productions (both among Italian companies and between European and Italian firms), a characteristic that can be read firstly, as an additional attempt at incrementing revenue through the funds and financing from all the companies and countries involved, and secondly, as a strategy to spread risk among undercapitalised companies. Moreover, some of these companies would focus on one genre during their activity, while others preferred experimenting with more categories. Although all the companies examined remained within the five most produced genres of the Italian film industry at the time – drama, comedy, comic movie, adventure film, and musicals - their division according to the number of films produced per genre is different. In first place is comic movies instead of dramas, then comedies in second place, and finally dramas.

This strategic behaviour was followed in the hope of surviving for more than one year, and in collecting significant earnings. Often the same team of artists were used, with a proven formula that would guarantee success with audiences. This trend was also followed by Aldo Fabrizi. His case study, as explored in chapter 6, allowed me to identify models of conduct and specific production activities that can be traced back to the context of the Italian film industry, as the use of the same crew within several projects or the concentration on one genre. It would be another interesting line of research combining this information together with the analysis of Fabrizi's films reception. Exploring how he and his films were perceived by the audience would provide a more complete depiction that could help for a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon of the Fabrizi brand and its underlying marketing strategies.

The analyses carried out in the last two chapters, chapter 5 and chapter 6, demonstrate the importance of case studies, in order to better comprehend the general framework within which people and companies behaved. Moreover, they provide practical examples of what has been outlined throughout the general analysis of the field. For instance, the fragmentation of the industry, the desire for growth, and the impossibility of overcoming specific difficulties are all present. These examples are all evident in the film's financial plans, the succession of managers within the companies, and the yearning for being present in every step of the film's realisation, sometimes as writers, actors, directors, and producers. The American model, which the Italian cinema industry has always aimed to adhere to, was clearly impossible to reach, but this did not prevent the development of a vital productive environment. This included small and medium size companies often interchanging crew members, managerial figures, or repeating similar industrial routines. This procedure shows the development of some degree of continuity and specialism within the production teams underneath the surface of the apparently disorganised post-war film industry environment. The aforementioned system has been highlighted in particular to the case of Aldo Fabrizi, and his "brand," but was also linked to other factors, such as the specialisation around one genre, such in the case of Carmine Gallone.

As stated in the introduction, when investigating the development of small and medium size companies in the Italian film industry between 1945 and 1959, I was confronted with many possible research paths. What emerged was a scenario from which many roads unfolded, and many lines of research remain not investigated, predominantly for reasons of time and space. However, this research could make a fascinating and engaging starting point for many further analyses, such as those briefly mentioned below.

Starting from archive data, it would be interesting, to analyse in depth and individually, all the companies that produced one single film, and to investigate the films' box office success. This could provide a complete and accurate picture of the companies' behaviours, and thus the development of the film industry of that period. This data can be used to infer additional information, such as, to deduce with greater precision overall trends. Moreover, it would assist in verifying if there was a financing strategy based on the expected success of the films produced, or if loans and external investments followed other entrepreneurial mindsets.

With regards to co-productions, the data showed that the presence of this type of collaboration is relevant among small and medium companies. It would be noteworthy to analyse this section separately, providing an investigation concentrated only on the co-productions between 1945 and 1959. Questions to explore might include which countries were involved, how many companies collaborated in the production in terms of percentages, and what was the median of investments etc. Furthermore, it would be really interesting to examine whether this formula is more prominent among directors and actor producers or not.

Finally, but no less important, a line of inquiry that I consider crucial for future further research, is the role of women within the production of this period. From my first analysis, it emerged that, as expected, almost all the companies founded between 1945 and 1959 were run by men. Nevertheless, there are few examples that officially break with tradition. Thirty-one companies included women among their administrators (that is 4% of companies), for a total of forty-five women involved in film production. Several women appear as managers in some companies, alongside men, who were often their relatives. Yet, three of them (0.4%) appear as single administrators of their own companies without having had a background in the film industry. These women are Fulvia Faretra, Rita Farinelli and Antonietta Montanari Bianchi, for Faretra Film, N.A.R. Film, and Roberta Film respectively. These three women produced three films in total, one for each company.

It would have been interesting to be able to check, if, for example, the percentage of female managers in the production field was the same, higher, or lower than in other fields of work and compared to the general trend of Italian industry. Any differences could have represented the different perception that the film industry had in regards to women working in the production field. Unfortunately, it was not possible to pursue this type of research not only due to lack of information, but also because, in order to investigate this not as a single case study but in relation to the trend of the overall Italian film industry, it would have been

necessary to conduct this investigation in synergy with professionals from the economic and social field. Only in this way would it have been possible to give this analysis the contextual complexity it needs, and not just a descriptive significance within the film production industry.

These are only some examples of further analyses that could draw from the data proposed in this thesis, as their point of departure. Therefore, the research pursued herein wishes to provide background information and insights into the complex area of the Italian film industry, in the post-war period and the 1950s.

Furthermore, this thesis has also shed light on the modes of production behind the production company, and the production company behind the film industry. This outlined a common thread that paved a road, albeit a fragmented one, making the Italian film industry remarkable, robust and resilient, in spite of its fragility.

Appendix A

List of directors-producers

Gaetano Amata	Luigi M. Giachino	Silvestro Prestafilippo
Alberto Ancilotto	Marino Girolami	Gennaro Righelli
Marcello Baldi	Giuseppe Guarino	Roberto Rossellini
Renato Barroccetti	Franco Lattanzi	Aldo Rossi
Ottorino Franco Bertolini	Silvio Laurenti Rosa	Elio Ruffo
Giuliano Biagetti	Giuseppe Lipartiti	Renzo Giuseppe Russo
Adelchi Bianchi	Nunzio Malasomma	Virgilio Sabel
Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia	Guido Malatesta	Guido Salvini
Giampaolo Callegari	Antonio Margheriti	Giuseppe M. Scotese
Severino Casara	Raffaello Matarazzo	Mario Sequi
Luigi Comencini	Mario Mattoli	Silvio Siano
Sergio Corbucci	Pietro Moncada	Giorgio C. Simonelli
Emilio Cordero	Giorgio Moser	Vincenzo (Enzo) Trapani
Angelo Dorigo	Ermanno Olmi	Giuseppe Vari
Federico Fellini	Nino Pagot	Salvatore (Turi) Vasile
Rate Furlan	Toni Pagot	Gianni Vernucci
Carmine Gallone	Oreste Palella	Antonio Leone Viola
Giacomo Gentilomo	Domenico Paoella	Luchino Visconti
Pietro Germi	Bruno Paolinelli	Mario Volpe

List of producers-directors

Francesco Alliata	Luis Emile Galej
Giuseppe Amato	Alfredo Guarini
Roberto Amoroso	Guglielmo (Mino) Loy Donà
Enrico Bomba	Maleno Malenotti
Leonardo Bonzi	Aldo Quinti
Aldo Colombo	Bruno Vailati
Golfiero Colonna	Vittorio Vassarotti
Alfredo Curti	Giorgio Venturini
Clemente Fracassi	

List of actors/actresses-producers

Antonio Amendola	Renato Lupi
Giuseppe Angelini	Erminio Macario
Ignazio Balsamo	Andrea (André) Mattoni
Rossano Brazzi	Renzo Merusi
Adelaide Brignone	Giovanni (Gianni) Minervini
Newton Canovi	Luciana Momigliano
Franco Caruso	Natale Montillo
Mario Castellani	Vittorio Mottini
Mario Conti	Vincenzo Musolino
Ettore Nino Crisman	Franco Navarra Viggiani
Eduardo De Filippo	Luigi De Simone Niguesa
Vittorio De Sica	Mario Perelli
Francesco (Checco) Durante	Albino Principe
Vittorio Duse	Ruggero Ruggeri
Aldo Fabrizi	Tino Scotti
Mario Ferrari	Mirko Skofic
Luciano Giachetti	Alberto Sordi
Mariella Lotti	Totò
Folco Lulli	Renato (Marco) Vicario

Appendix B

Directors

- 1) Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia (63 films, 1932-1963; produced: 2, 1938, 1952):³⁴²
 - a) **Pincio Film srl** (1952, 1 film) (stock: 500,000) producers: Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, Francesco Genovese Labocchetta
 - Don Lorenzo (1952) (comedy) (b.o.: 305,716,000) – Bragaglia director³⁴³
 - 2) Luigi Comencini (53 films, 1937-1991; produced: 0)
 - a) **Morino Film** (1957-1962, 7 films) (stock: 500,000) producers: Luigi Comencini, Lucia Grifeo, Alfredo Mirabile, Massimo Patrizi
 - Mariti in città (1957) (comedy) (with Oscar Film) (b.o.: 689,200,000) – Comencini director
 - Mogli pericolose (1958) (comedy) (b.o.: 671,000,000) (with Tempo Film) – Comencini director
 - b) **Emmepi Cinematografica** (1958-1964, 3 films) (stock: 50,000) producers: Luigi Comencini, Lucia Grifeo, Alfredo Mirabile, Massimo Patrizi, Carlo Pescino, Giorgio Pescino
 - Il pirata dello Sparviero Nero (1958) (adventure) (b.o.: 312,350,000)
- 3) Federico Fellini (27 films, 1950-1991; produced: 1, 1950)
 - a) **Fulco Film** (1958-1970, 4 films) (stock: 500,000) producers: Fausto Aphel, Giovanni Caprì, Sergio Cortona Savini, Federico Fellini, Felice Fulchignoni, Luigi Leopizzi
 - no movies in 1950s (production in 1964-1970)
- 4) Carmine Gallone (125 films, 1913-1962; produced: 10, 1933-1962)
 - a) **Cine Opera** (1947-1949, 3 films) (stock: 100,000) producers: Carmine Gallone, Francesco Penotti, Gregor Rabinovitch, William Szekely
 - Addio, Mimì (1947) (musical, drama) (with Gregor Rabinovitch) (b.o.: 58,750,000) – Gallone director
 - La signora delle camelie (La Traviata) (1947) (musical, drama) (with Gregor Rabinovitch) (b.o.: unknown) – Gallone director
 - La leggenda di Faust (1948) (musical) (b.o.: 31,200,000) – Gallone director
 - b) **Produzione Gallone** (1949-1962, 12 films) (stock: 90,000) producers: Carmine Gallone, Guido Luzzato
 - La forza del destino (1949) (musical, opera) (b.o.: 272,700,000) – Gallone director
 - Il trovatore (1949) (musical, opera) (with Continentalcine) (b.o.: 246,250,000) – Gallone director
 - Taxi di notte (1950) (comedy, musical) (b.o.: 125,000,000) – Gallone director
 - Messalina (1951) (drama, history) (b.o.: 456,100,000) – Gallone director

³⁴² This general information for a quick report was taken from the website IMDb.

³⁴³ The following information was taken from the lists obtained from the author's elaboration of Bernardini's, Marinucci's, Bolaffi's and Poppi's texts.

- *Senza veli* (1952) (musical) (with Rizzoli, Afram) (b.o.: 130,000,000) – Gallone director
 - *Madame Butterfly* (1954) (musical, opera) (with Rizzoli, Toho Film) (b.o.: 322,470,000) – Gallone director
 - *Michele Strogoff* (1956) (adventure) (with Illiria Film, Les Films Modernes, Ufus) (b.o.: not mentioned) – Gallone director
 - *Tosca* (1956) (musical, opera) (b.o.: 161,000,000) – Gallone director
- 5) Pietro Germi (19 films, 1946-1972; produced: 4, 1966-1970)
- a) **R.P.A. – Registi Produttori Associati** (1956-1975) (20 films) [many producers] (stock: 900,000)
- no movies in 1950s (production in 1966-1975)
- 6) Mario Mattoli (88 films, 1934-1968; produced: 1, 1933)
- a) **Marina Film-Spettacoli Zabum** (1949, 1 film) (stock: 60,000) producers: Pietro Germi, Massimo Marciano, Carlo Nebiolo, Renato Pieri
- *Il vedovo allegro* (1950) (romance) (with Dino De Laurentiis for Teatri della Farnesina) (b.o.: not mentioned) – Mattoli director
- 7) Ermanno Olmi (92 films, 1953-2017; produced: 7, 1973-2017)
- a) **Edisonvolta – Sezione Cinematografica** (1955-1959, 1 film) (stock: not present) producers: Ugo Franchini, Ermanno Olmi
- no movies in 1950s
- 8) Gennaro Righelli (105 films, 1910-1947; produced: 2, 1922, 1934)
- a) **Domus Film** (1945-1947, 2 films) (stock: 50,000) producer: Gennaro Righelli
- *Il corriere del re (Le rouge et le noir)* (1947) (drama) (with Fincine) (b.o.: 208,750,000) – Righelli director
- 9) Roberto Rossellini (51 films, 1935-1977; produced: 11, 1945-1970)
- a) **O.F.I. – Organizzazione Film Internazionali** (1946-1952, 2 films) (stock: 200,000) producers: Mario Conti, Roberto Rossellini
- *Paisà* (1946) (drama) (b.o.: 100,300,000) – Rossellini director
- b) **Tevere Film** (1948-1952, 3 films) (stock: 25,000) producers: Roberto Rossellini, Luigi Rovere, Giuseppe Zanolla
- *Germania, anno zero* (1947) (drama) (b.o.: 52,500,000) – Rossellini director
 - *Amore* (1948) (romance) (b.o.: 27,500,000) – Rossellini director
 - *La macchina ammazzacattivi* (1948) (comedy) (b.o.: 3,200,000) – Rossellini director
- c) **Aniene Film** (1948-1959, 2 films) (stock: 100,000) producers: Pietro Benedetti, Oreste De Cola, Maurio Giulio, Giuseppe Ravasini, Roberto Rossellini, Antonio Tonni Balza
- *La paura (Non credo più all'amore)* (1954) (drama) (with Arison Film [Monaco]) (b.o.: 36,000,000) – Rossellini director
- d) **Berit Film** (1950, 1 film) (stock: 1,000,000) producers: Giuseppe Orcel, Roberto Rossellini
- *Stromboli (Terra di Dio)* (1949) (drama) (b.o.: 313,000,000) – Rossellini director
- e) **Sveva Film** (1954, 1 film) (stock: not present) producer: Roberto Rossellini
- *Viaggio in Italia* (1953) (drama) (with Italia Produzione Junior, Soc. Gen. Cinematographique) (b.o.: 62,450,000) – Rossellini director
- 10) Luchino Visconti (21 films, 1943-1976; produced: 1, 1971)
- a) **Ar.Te.As. Film** (1948, 1 film) (stock: 1,000,000) producers: Alfredo Guarini, Luchino Visconti

- La terra trema (1947) (drama) (b.o.: 35,800,000) – Visconti director
- 11) Clemente Fracassi (4 films, 1949-1955; produced: 9, 1946-1967)
 - a) **Carlo Ponti Spa** (1956-1962, 9 films) (stock: 1,000,000) producers: Clemente Fracassi, Carlo Ponti
 - Femmine tre volte (1957) (comic) (with Maxima Film, Jesus Saiz) (b.o.: 255,563,000) (Clemente Fracassi per Carlo Ponti Cin.ca [Dizionario])
 - Camping (1958) (comic) (b.o.: 331,000,000) (Clemente Fracassi per Ponti Cin.ca [Dizionario])
 - Vita da cani (1950) (comedy) (ATA) (b.o.: 255,600,000) (Clemente Fracassi per Ponti Cin.ca [1949])
 - 12) Vittorio De Sica (161 films, 1917-1976; produced: 8, 1948-1958)
 - a) **P.F.C. – Produzione Film Comici** (1951, 1 film) (stock: 50,000) producers: Vittorio De Sica, Alberto Sordi
 - Mamma mia che impressione! (1950) (comic, comedy) (b.o.: 90,000,000)
 - b) **Produzione Films Vittorio De Sica** (1947-1958, 6 films) (stock: 50,000) producer: Vittorio De Sica
 - no films in the list
 - c) **Produzioni De Sica** (also: P.D.S.) (1948-1951, 2 films) (stock: 100,000) producer: Vittorio De Sica
 - Ladri di biciclette (1948) (drama) (b.o.: 252,000,000) – De Sica director
 - Miracolo a Milano (1950) (comedy) (with ENIC) (b.o.: 180,600,000) – De Sica director
 - Stazione Termini (1952) (drama) (with Girosi) (b.o.: 343,000,000) – De Sica director
 - Il tetto (1956) (drama) (with Marcello Girosi) (b.o.: 230,550,000) – De Sica director
 - Pane amore e Andalusia (1958) (with Benito Perojo) (b.o.: 262,500,000) – De Sica director and actor

Actors

- 1) Eduardo De Filippo (72 films, 1933-1984; produced: 1, 1950)
 - a) **Arco Film** (1951, 1 film) (stock: 100,000) producers: Eduardo De Filippo, Luigi De Laurentiis
 - Filumena Marturano (1951) (comedy) (Luigi De Laurentiis per Arco Film) (b.o.: 238,600,000) – De Filippo director and actor
 - b) **San Ferdinando Film** (1954, 1 film) (100,000) producer: Eduardo De Filippo
 - Questi fantasmi (1954) (comedy) (b.o.: 150,700,000) – De Filippo director
- 2) Aldo Fabrizi (83 films, 1942-1986; produced: 4, 1950-1953)
 - a) **Fabrizi, A.** (1947, 1 film) (stock: not present)
 - no film mentioned in the list
 - b) **Guaranted Pictures Italia** (1949, 1 film) (stock: 100,000) producers: Renzo Brunori, Aldo Fabrizi
 - Emigrantes (social) (b.o.: 73,750,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
 - c) **Alfa Film XXXVII** (1950-1953, 5 films) (stock: 60,000) producers: Aurelio De Laurentiis, Aldo Fabrizi, Aurelio Serafinelli

- *Benvenuto, reverendo!* (1949) (satirical) (Aldo Fabrizi per l'Alfa) (b.o.: 170,000,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
 - *La famiglia Passaguai* (1951) (comic) (b.o.: 378,000,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
 - *La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna* (1951) (comic) (b.o.: 192,250,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
 - *Papà diventa mamma* (1952) (comic) (b.o.: 229,256,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
 - *Una di quelle* (1952) (comedy) (with Rosa Film) (b.o.: 277,000,000) – Fabrizi director and actor
- 3) Flavio Focas Ducas C. de Curtis (110 films, 1937-1968; produced: 0)
- a) **D.D.L.** (1954-1964, 24 films) (stock: 1,000,000) producers: Isidoro Broggi, Dino De Laurentiis, Alfredo De Laurentiis, Flavio Focas Ducas C. de Curtis, Renato Libassi
- *Il coraggio* (1955) (comic, comedy) (b.o.: 288,300,000) – Totò actor
 - *La banda degli onesti* (1956) (comedy) (b.o.: 370,533,000) – Totò actor
 - *Totò, Peppino e i... fuorilegge* (1956) (comic, comedy) (with Manenti Film) (b.o.: 452,500,000) – Totò actor
 - *Totò, Peppino e la malafemmina* (1956) (comic, comedy) (b.o.: 682,700,000) – Totò actor
 - *Malafemmina* (1957) (comic) (b.o.: 145,000,000)
 - *Peppino, le modelle e «chella lla»* (1957) (romance) (with Manenti Film) (b.o.: 220,000,000) – Totò actor
 - *Totò, Peppino e le fanatiche* (1958) (comic) (b.o.: 481,158,000) – Totò actor
- 4) Folco Lulli (105 films, 1946-1971; produced: 2, 1958, 1964)
- a) **Hermes Film** (1953-1955, 3 films) (stock: 300,000) producers: Mario De Bernardi, Folco Lulli, Pier Cesare Ochetto
- *Riscatto (Tu sei il mio giudice)* (1953) (drama) (b.o.: not mentioned) – Lulli actor
 - *Acque amare* (1954) (drama) (Folco Lulli for Hermes Film) (b.o.: 136,312,000)
 - *Stella di Rio* (1955) (adventure) (with C.C.C Film Artur Brauner) (b.o.: not mentioned) – Lulli actor
- b) **Sagittario Film** (1956-1967, 10 films) (stock: 100,000) producer: Folco Lulli
- *Quattro mogli* (1948) (comedy) (with Excelsa) (b.o.: not mentioned)
 - *Siamo tutti necessari* (1956) (comedy, drama) (with Yago Film) (b.o.: 37,100,000)
 - *L'eretico* (1958) (religious) (b.o.: unknown) – Lulli actor
- 5) Alberto Sordi (155 films, 1937-1998; produced: 2, 1951, 1980)
- a) **P.F.C. – Produzione Film Comici** (1951, 1 film) (stock: 50,000) producers: Vittorio De Sica, Alberto Sordi
- *Mamma mia che impressione!* (1950) (comic, comedy) (b.o.: 90,000,000) – Sordi actor

Appendix C

This section includes three unusual cases, Fulco Film, R.P.A. – Registi Produttori Associati, and Edisonvolta – Cinema Branch, that will be only briefly mentioned due to the fact that they can only be partially included in the category of director-producers discussed above, and will therefore not be explored in detail. However, it is important that these companies are mentioned, albeit briefly, due to the names of important directors involved. Although founded between 1945 and 1959, these three companies did not actually release any movies during this time. Fulco Film was established in 1958, produced 4 films before 1970, and released its first film in 1964. It is one of the many companies whose stock is not mentioned in Bernardini's research. Federico Fellini is among some of its many managers, and according to Bernardini, the company was located in Rome. A file relating to this company, available at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, refers to an unspecified film (whose title was not mentioned) that began filming in 1959 but was released several years later, when Fulco Film replaced a company that had previously been involved in the production process.³⁴⁴ Similarly, R.P.A. was created in 1956 but did not release its first film until 1966. Its corporation stock was 900,000 lire (completely in line with the median stock of the time), it produced eight films in total, and its managers were director Pietro Germi, Massimo Marciano, Carlo Nebiolo, and Renato Pieri. However, just one file was found that included R.P.A in the archival documents, and that was in connection to its production of the film *Signore e Signori* (1966),³⁴⁵ which was directed by Germi. Finally, Edisonvolta – Cinema Branch was founded in 1955, located in Milan, and managed by Ugo Franchini and director Ermanno Olmi. It ended its activity in 1959, when the only film produced was released, however, no film title is associated with this company in the list of movies produced, nor does it appear in the archival files in connection with the time frame under investigation. It could have changed its name or have produced any movie, closing due to a lack of activity. These three cases show that the practice of founding a company and waiting some time before realising a film was used by the companies. It is impossible to know if this behaviour actually affected the company and its lifespan, however, within the cases studied it did not allow the possibility to deepen their analysis. It would be interesting for further studies to be conducted using this as a

³⁴⁴ In this file, there is a reference to Fulco Film: the location is changed from via Torino 40, Rome (Bernardini) to via Flaminia 167, Rome. The Sole Administrator is Felice Fulchignoni, one of the managers together with Fausto Aphel, Giovanni Capri, Sergio Cortona Savini, Federico Fellini, and Luigi Leopizzi (Bernardini) (ACS, 1959).

³⁴⁵ The film has not been analysed because it was released after the period under examination.

starting point for the specific analysis of companies that released movies some years after their foundation.

Appendix D

Recurring names among actors

Actor/Actress	Movie title
Nando Bruno	<i>Emigrantes</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>
Peppino De Filippo	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>
Pietro De Vico	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i>
Carlo Delle Piane	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Paolo Ferrara	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Eugenio Galadini	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>Hanno rubato un tram</i>
Lia Grani	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i>
Giovanni Grasso	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai</i>
Mara Landi	<i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>

Source: author's elaboration

Actor/Actress	Movie title
Enrico Luzzi	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Ave Ninchi	<i>Emigrantes</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Luigi Pavese	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Lia Rainer	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Hanno rubato un tram</i>
Giovanna Ralli	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Virgilio Riento	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Alfredo Rizzo	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>
Giancarlo Zarfati	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>

Source: author's elaboration

Appendix E

Recurring names in the crews

Name	Movie title	Role
Adolfo Alessandrini	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Sound technician
Mario Amendola	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Il maestro</i>	Script writer
Luigi Anastasi	<i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>	Production assistant
Corrado Bartoloni	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Hanno rubato un tram</i>	Camera operator
Mario Bava	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Hanno rubato un tram</i>	Cinematographer
Mario Bonetti	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai</i>	Editing
Ezio Carabella	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>Una di quelle</i> <i>Questa è la vita</i>	Orchestra leader
Ernesta Fava	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Makeup artist
Franco Fava	<i>Emigrantes</i> <i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i>	Technician Actor (extra)

Name	Movie title	Role
Carlo Innocenzi	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Una di quelle</i> <i>Questa è la vita</i> <i>Il maestro</i>	Music
Sergio Leone	<i>Hanno rubato un tram</i> <i>Il maestro</i>	Assistant director
Ruggero Maccari	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Hanno rubato un tram</i>	Script writer
Gianna Modiano	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Script supervisor
Nella Nannuzzi	<i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Editing
Alberto Paoletti	<i>Hanno rubato un tram</i> <i>Il maestro</i>	Orchestra leader
Lello Serafinelli	<i>Papà diventa mamma</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>	Production manager
Rico Simeone	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Una di quelle</i>	Music
Piero Tellini	<i>Benvenuto, reverendo!</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Script writer
Ubaldo Terzano	<i>La famiglia Passaguai</i> <i>La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna</i> <i>Papà diventa mamma</i>	Camera assistant

Abbreviations

en. = envelope

BCMM = Book of Council Meeting Minutes

BEBM = Book of the Executive Board Minutes

BCC = Book of the College of Chief for the Autonomous Section for Cinema Loans

BEDD = Book of the Executive Director's Deliberations

BBD = Book of Board of Directors

FST = Report on annual Financial Statement

ACS = Archivio Centrale dello Stato di Roma

BNL = Banca Nazionale del Lavoro

CSAF = Centro Studi Aldo Fabrizi

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Filmography

A fil di spada (1952) directed by Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia

Abbasso la miseria (1945) directed by Gennaro Righelli

Acque Amare (1954) directed by Sergio Corbucci

Addio, Mimì (1947) directed by Carmine Gallone

Avanti, c'è posto... (1942) directed by Mario Bonnard

Benvenuto, reverendo! (1949) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

Bianche Eolie (1947) directed by Quintino Napoli, Pietro Moncada and Francesco Alliata

Cacciatori Sottomarini (1946) directed by Francesco Alliata, Renzo Avanzo, Quintino di Napoli, Pietro Moncada and Giovanni Mazza

Campo de' fiori (1943) directed by Mario Bonnard

Che tempi! (1947) directed by Giorgio Bianchi

Destinazione Piovarolo (1955) directed by Domenico Paoletta

Don Camillo (1952) directed by Julien Duvivier

Dov'è la Libertà...? (1954) directed by Roberto Rossellini

Due notti con Cleopatra (1953) directed by Mario Mattoli

Emigrantes (1948) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

Filumena Marturano (1951) directed by Eduardo De Filippo

Guardia, Guardia Scelta, Brigadiere e Maresciallo (1956) directed by Mauro Bolognini

Guardie e Ladri (1951) directed by Mario Monicelli and Steno

Hanno rubato un tram (1954) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

I Piaceri dello Scapolo (1960) directed by Giulio Petroni

I tartassati (1959) directed by Steno

I Vitelloni (1953) directed by Federico Fellini

Il Cittadino del Mondo (1958) directed by Giulio Petroni

Il coraggio (1955) directed by Domenico Paolella

Il delitto di Giovanni Episcopo (1947) directed by Alberto Lattuada

Il diavolo in convento (1950) directed by Nunzio Malasomma

Il maestro... (1957) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

Il piccolo vetraio (1955) directed by Giorgio Capitani

Il pirata dello Sparviero Nero (1958) directed by Sergio Grieco

Il più comico spettacolo del mondo (1953) directed by Mario Mattoli

Il segreto delle tre punte (1952) directed by Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia

Il Tetto (1956) directed by Vittorio De Sica

Il Trovatore (1949) directed by Carmine Gallone

Il Vedovo Allegro (1950) directed by Mario Mattoli

Isole di cenere (1947) directed by Quintino Napoli, Pietro Moncada and Francesco Alliata

L'eretico (1958) directed by Francisco de Borja Moro

L'Oro di Napoli (1954) directed by Vittorio De Sica

L'uomo, le bestia, la virtù (1952) directed by Steno

La banda degli onesti (1956) directed by Camillo Mastrocinque

La Canzone dell'Amore (1930) directed by Gennaro Righelli

La carrozza d'oro (1952) directed by Jean Renoir

La contessa di Castiglione (1954) directed by Georges Combret

La dame de Monsoreau (1913) directed by Emile Chautard

La dolce vita (1960) directed by Federico Fellini

La donna del fiume (1955) directed by Mario Soldati

La famiglia Passaguai (1951) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

La famiglia Passaguai fa fortuna (1951) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

La Forza del Destino (1949) directed by Carmine Gallone

La ladra (1955) directed by Mario Bonnard

La leggenda di Faust (1948) directed by Carmine Gallone

La regina dei Caraibi (1921) directed by Vitale Di Stefano

La rivolta dei Cosacchi (1947) directed by Max Calandri

La signora delle Camelie (1947) directed by Fernand Rivers

La trovatella di Milano (1956) directed by Giorgio Capitani

Ladri di biciclette (1948) directed by Vittorio De Sica

Le Rouge et le Noir (Il Corriere del Re) (1947) directed by Gennaro Righelli

Lupi nell'abisso (1959) directed by Silvio Amadio

Madame Butterfly (1954) directed by Carmine Gallone

Mamma mia che impressione! (1951) directed by Roberto Savarese

Mariti in Città (1957) directed by Luigi Comencini

Messalina (1951) directed by Carmine Gallone

Michele Strogoff (1956) directed by Carmine Gallone

Miracolo a Milano (1952) directed by Vittorio De Sica

Mogli Pericolose (1958) directed by Luigi Comencini

Napoli milionaria (1950) directed by Eduardo De Filippo

Pane, Amore e Andalusia (1958) directed by Javier Setò

Papà diventa mamma (1952) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

Piscatore 'e Posilleco (1954) directed by Javier Setò

Polikuschka (1958) directed by Carmine Gallone

La Terra Trema (1948) directed by Luchino Visconti

Questa è la vita (1954) directed by Giorgio Pàstina, Mario Soldati, Luigi Zampa and Aldo Fabrizi

Questi fantasmi (1954) directed by Eduardo De Filippo

Riscatto (1953) directed by Marino Girolami

Ritorno alla vita (1956) directed by José Antonio Nieves Conde

Roma città aperta (1945) directed by Roberto Rossellini

Sabbia (1949) directed by Louis King

Senza Veli (1952) directed by Carmine Gallone and Arthur Maria Rabenalt

Sesto continente (1954) directed by Folco Quilici

Silenzio... si spara! (1954) directed by John Berry

Stazione Termini (1952) directed by Vittorio De Sica

Stella di Rio (1955) directed by Kurt Neumann

Suprema Confessione (1956) directed by Sergio Corbucci

Taxi di Notte (1950) directed by Carmine Gallone

Vivere in pace (1947) directed by Luigi Zampa

Tonnara (1947) directed by Quintino Napoli, Pietro Moncada and Francesco Alliata

Tosca (1956) directed by Carmine Gallone

Totò a Colori (1952) directed by Steno

Totò Cerca pace (1954) directed by Mario Mattoli

Totò e Carolina (Monicelli, 1953)

Totò e le donne (Steno, Monicelli, 1952)

Totò Terzo Uomo (1951) directed by Mario Mattoli

Totò, Peppino e i fuorilegge (1956) directed by Camillo Mastrocinque

Totò, Peppino e le fanatiche (1958) directed by Mario Mattoli

Totò, Peppino e... la malafemmina (1956) directed by Camillo Mastrocinque

Tra Scilla e Cariddi (1948) directed by Quintino Napoli, Pietro Moncada and Francesco Alliata

Ulysses (1654) directed by Mario Camerini

War and Peace (1956) directed by King Vidor

Una di quelle (1952) directed by Aldo Fabrizi

Vacanze d'amore (1954) directed by Jean-Paul Le Chanois

Vulcano (1950) directed by Willia