

## CHAPTER FIVE

# SPANISH CO-PRODUCTIONS: COMMERCIAL NEED OR COMMON CULTURE? AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS IN SPAIN FROM 2000 TO 2004

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Co-productions have been a typical formula in most of the European film industries since mid 1950s. With some ups (1960s) and downs (1980s), European countries have developed these collaborative efforts quite regularly, in a spirit of sharing costs and risks as well as multiplying the domestic market size. As globalization has multiplied the possibilities of trade and exchange between cultures, the European audiovisual policy has intended to draw tighter the ties among different countries. As a consequence, the number of international co-productions in Europe has increased annually. Nowadays, as much as 34.8% of the feature films produced in the main five Western European countries are internationally co-produced films.

In this sense, it is not a coincidence that recent times have witnessed a renewed interest in studying the “international co-production phenomenon” both as a competitive strategy to confront Hollywood domination as well as an issue related to “national identity” and “crossing-border” culture (Hoskins et al. 1997, 102-103; Eleftheriotis 2001, 47-53; Wayne 2002, 33-45; Jäckel 2003, 59-65; Everett 2005, 7-14; Miller et al. 2005, 173-212; Elsaesser 2005, 485-513). In other words, co-productions are a key confluence point between economic strategies and multicultural implications, as Miller et al. (2005) underlines:

Co-production marks an important axis of socio-spatial transformation in the audiovisual industries, a space where border-erasing free-trade economics meets border-defining cultural initiatives under the unstable sign of the nation (209).

On the one hand, from the economic and financial perspectives, co-productions have clear advantages for film producers in Europe, such as pooling or sharing of financial resources, access to a foreign government's incentives and subsidies or even to favorable tax schemes, access to a broader market (partners' ones and even to third-country markets), exploitation of comparative production cost advantages in different countries, learning from partners' know-how, access to foreign locations and even enriching from cultural exchange (Andersen 1996, 349; Hoskins et al. 1997, 104). On the other hand, some disadvantages must be taken into consideration as the need for wide appeal stories, increased cost incurred for co-ordinating the project, loss of control and cultural specificity, possible inflationary effects, use of different languages and some times irreconcilable cultural differences (Andersen 1996, 349; Hoskins et al. 1997, 105-106). Moreover, the co-producing formula can also have positive and negative effects as a multicultural platform. Since it helps to widely spread and share different cultural backgrounds, it can also endanger national identity. Using Miller et al.'s words,

International co-production policies simultaneously inscribe and destabilise national descriptors of cultural value. As a practice of international cultural collaboration, co-productions call into question national measures of cultural identity, but reinscribe them in treaty language that struggles to specify national cultural preservation. Co-production marks a site of transformation in cultural scale, from the local and national to the regional and global (Miller et al. 2005, 177).

Or as Santaolalla points out referring to the current new order, “globalization—or rather, transnationalization—it is the primary cause of the current crisis underlying the concept of national identity” (Santaolalla 2005, 1).

These inherent complexities are reflected by the difficulty to define the very concept of (international) co-production. For many years, the only valid co-producing formula for European countries was the full contribution—financial, creative, and artistic. Due to the necessity to make more flexible co-production agreements, the European Union has permitted the figure of the strictly financial co-producer—with some particularities (Györy 1995, 3)—and even the so-called equity co-production (with Hollywood) at a corporate level (Miller et al. 2005, 195-196). These preliminary questions affect Spanish international co-productions in a very significant way as we will see in the following pages.

## **Spain and the Co-Production Treaties**

Right after the end of the Second World War, European governments were obliged to intervene in multiple spheres in order to recover their “national

industries” and refloat their battered economies. The film industry was not an exception. For that reason, the European states created subsidy programmes and developed co-production treaties for the film industry. The American competition was high at that point, and the European film industries were obliged to produce films with higher budgets and production standards. This effort was much more affordable if shared among different countries, and relying on the public aids granted by the respective governments. In this sense, co-production agreements started to be signed, first on a bilateral basis and later on a multilateral basis, to create rules for collaborative projects to qualify for subsidies and fulfil quota restrictions. It is interesting to notice that co-production treaties in Europe, as legal frameworks for collaboration of different companies, were precedent in the European Union to other important agreements like the pool on Coal and Steel (Otero 1999, 20).

In the case of Spain, the first co-production treaties were those signed with Italy (16 March 1953) and France (31 March 1955). From then onwards, the number of co-production agreements have increased substantially. The following chart shows the currently valid co-productions agreements signed by Spain (See Chart 1 in Appendix).

In relation to this chart, it is important to notice that the existence of this agreement does not imply the actual existence of co-productions. In addition, Spain ratified in 1996 the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production (Strasbourg, 1992) as well as the Ibero-American Cinema Co-production Treaty (Convenio de Integración de la Cinematografía Iberoamericana, Caracas, 11 October 1989) (Otero 1999, 20).

European countries realised the importance of co-productions and the necessity of developing common legal rules to produce motion pictures in a collaborative way. For this reason they promoted the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production, approved at Strasbourg in 1992. The main advantages of this agreement are four: a) More flexibility in requirements, balance of contributions, and conditions of reciprocity among partners; b) Point-rating system to evaluate the different contributions (each creative or artistic talent, as well as the top crew talent are valued in points; in order to be considered as European, 15 out of the total 19 points must be referred to European talents; c) Possibility of non-European co-producers (no more than 30%), from third countries or even the US.; d) Language must be from any of the European Union countries, therefore the English language can be also used (a very interesting issue, as we will see) (Otero, 24).

In a similar move, the Latin American countries aware of the importance of cooperation in film productions also created an organism to facilitate the integration of the Latin American market. In 1988 the Conferencia de Autoridades Cinematográficas de Iberoamérica (CACI) was

created—Conference for Latin American Cinematic Authorities—, who led to the establishment of the Latin American Integration Treaty. This last agreement propelled in the first few years the number of co-productions. After a brief period of impasse, the initiative was taken up again in 1997 under a new scheme named Ibermedia.

As a final thought focused on co-production treaties, it must be pointed out their role regarding the preservation of national identity. This idea is very well explained by Miller et al.:

As legacies of nation-state formations under modernity, treaties measure cultural specificity by way of national borders, a demarcation that necessitates folding intra-national cultural affiliations across borders. So, although national audiovisual industries have used co-productions to stall Hollywood dominance by pooling resources to create audiovisual products with greater international appeal, co-production treaties also inscribe boundaries that distinguish a product of national cultural expression from one that is not. Such treaties institutionalise normative and static conceptions of national culture in the very process of international collaboration (Miller et al. 2005, 184).

### **Bridging between European and Ibero-American Co-Production Initiatives**

As it has been mentioned before, European cinematographic co-productions started off in the 1950s, grew steadily throughout the 1960s and fell off sharply at the end of the 1970s to such an extent that international co-production was barely dead in some countries by the 1980s (Györy 1995, 3). Fortunately enough, the new European audiovisual policy positively affected the co-operation among the different national film industries, and co-productions rose again from the end of the 1980s onwards. In this sense, it is important to recognise the role played by several European initiatives designed to strengthen the industry and create a climate of closer co-operation: Eurimages and the MEDIA Programme in its subsequent editions.

Eurimages, created as a pan-European fund for direct investment in European multilateral co-productions, was established in 1989 within the Council of Europe in Strasbourg—in fact, it is the largest public-sector film financier. The fund comes from the subscription which member countries pay to join, according to their economic status. From the beginning, members included not only countries inside the European Union but also outside, (such as Turkey, Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary).

Eurimages exists to facilitate new co-production networks, aiming in particular to bring companies from smaller film-producing countries into contact with larger producer countries in order to foster audiovisual production in small

markets. Although it began with a required trilateral scheme, it has recently adopted the bilateral formula, more attractive to bigger producers (Wayne 2002, 13-14; Jäckel 2003, 76-80).<sup>1</sup>

The MEDIA Programme consists on a series of initiatives aimed to stimulate the European audio-visual sector, especially, cross-border projects. It started in 1987 and, after a three-year experimental period, has been renewed every five years. Its current edition (MEDIA Plus: 2001-2005) is equipped with a budget of 400 million euro and brings support both before and after production. It provides seeding capital (co-financing) across three areas: training initiatives for audiovisual industry professionals, the development of production projects (feature films, television drama, documentaries, animation and new media), as well as the distribution and promotion of European audiovisual works (Jäckel 2003, 68-76; Wayne 2002, 13)<sup>2</sup>.

Generally speaking, these programmes have favoured film production, distribution and exhibition in Europe at any level, although they have been also criticised for having “failed to address the structural inequalities and vested interests that have squeezed European cinema to the very margins of cultural life in Europe” (Wayne 2005, 14; see also Jäckel 2003, 88; Miller et al. 2005, 185-190).

Directly inspired in its philosophy, concept, objective, operations and terms by Eurimages and MEDIA programmes, the Conference of Iberian-American Cinematographic Authorities (CICA) approved in November 1997 a new funding scheme named Ibermedia. The first signing countries were Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Portugal and Colombia. Its annual budget reaches 3,7 millions of dollars.<sup>3</sup>

Spain has benefited from these programmes in different ways over the years, as Chart 2 shows (See Appendix). The maintenance of the current system of subsidies and pan-European and pan-Latin American training programmes will lead to a greater collaboration between producers from different countries. In this sense, due to its role as a cultural and economic ‘bridge’ across the Atlantic, Spain’s role as a co-producing country will be reinforced (Otero 1999, 27; Chavarrías 2004, 12). Regarding the European case, it is also worthy to mention

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<sup>1</sup> Between 1989 and 2004, Eurimages has invested 277,7 million of euros in 845 co-productions. For more information, see <[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Cooperation/Eurimages/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/Eurimages/)>.

<sup>2</sup> The MEDIA Programme is currently in fourth installment: MEDIA Programme (1987-1990), MEDIA I (1991-1995), MEDIA II (1996-2000) and MEDIA Plus (2001-2005), finally extended to 2006. The new MEDIA Programme will start in 2007. For more information, see <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html)>.

<sup>3</sup> Between 1998 and 2004, Ibermedia has invested in 160 co-productions. For more information see <<http://www.programaibermedia.com/esp/htm/home.htm>>.

that the adoption of the euro has effectively pushed investments and co-productions even further, reducing financial uncertainties inherent in floating exchange rates for foreign investors (Jäckel 2003, 65).

### **Spanish Legislation on International Co-Productions**

Spain, like most European countries, has a long tradition of government intervention in the film industry. In relation to international co-productions, it is worthwhile knowing the specific legal provisions from the recent Spanish Cinema Law (by Royal Decree 526/2002, dated 14<sup>th</sup> of June) established in a similar way to other European countries. According to this law, films will be considered Spanish co-productions if they fulfill the following requirements: a) Be considered national in the co-producing countries, so that they can opt for the respective subsidies in each case; b) Be produced by creative staff, artistic and technical representatives of the involved countries; c) Have only one director; d) Participation will go from 20% to 80% for bilateral co-productions, and from 10% to 70% for multilateral co-productions; e) There could be at least one financial co-producer in case of a multilateral co-production, provided that the rules related to financial co-productions are respected.

As for the contributions, there will have to be considered the following criterion: 1) Technical and artistic contributions of each co-producer will have to be proportional to their own economic contribution. Cash contributions from the Spanish co-producer can not be over the 50% of the economical quantification of the contribution for work or services; 2) Each producer will have to be in charge of the expenses related to their national staff; 3) In order to assess the scriptwriter role with Spanish participation, it will have to be developed by people of this nationality, although joint script will be accepted in collaboration with scriptwriters of other nationalities; 4) The contribution of the minority Spanish co-producer regarding creative staff, artistic and technical representatives will have to consist of at least one member per each category; 5) Studio filming and post-production work will have to take place in the majority co-producing country, except self-script demand; in addition, the Spanish producer will have to be co-owner of the original negative film, although each co-producer has the right to have a film negative in his/her own version; 6) Finally, encashment and payments between residents and non-residents as a result of the co-production will be enforced by the legislation on foreign trade transactions.

Regarding financial co-productions, in the Spanish case, the following requirements are a must: a) They will have to be worth more than 1,803,036 euros; b) They will have to accept one or more minority participation of a financial sort, which the production cost of each of them will go from 10% to

25%; c) They will have to be considered national according to the legislation in the majority country; d) They will have to specify profit sharing procedures.

Finally, as for co-productions that take part in a TV network and if opting to incentives, the law states several requirements: at least 75% of the films produced by a TV network (either directly or through producing companies formed mainly by private capital TV networks, or made up of a group whose body consists of TV networks, or takes part mainly with companies linked to TV networks) have to be co-produced with an independent producing company.

In the case of TV co-productions, there are no generalised agreements between countries, but specific, depending on the sort of programme. It is more the case of greater mini-series, TV movies or cartoons. Over the last years, the number of co-production formulas continues to rise. They can be considered co-productions in its broad meaning, since, in most cases, it involves financial contribution in return for broadcasting rights.

## **A First Analysis of Spanish International Co-Productions**

Throughout the last decade, and more specifically from 2000 to 2004, the Spanish film industry has grown substantially in terms of both production activity and new creative talent (Triana-Toribio 2003, 143-147; Everett 2005, 21). With regard to the production of Spanish films, a great capacity for innovation and the creation of original works was amply demonstrated. The growth trend of Spanish film production was constant in this period, from 56 feature-length films in 1995 to 125 in 2004 (see Chart 3). Likewise the number of international co-productions rose from 22 in 1995 to 41 in 2004, plainly indicating an expansion of the international scope of the Spanish film industry. Productions of all-Spanish films amounted to 982 while the number of co-productions was 348, for an annual average of 98 all-Spanish films and close to 35 co-productions. This represents an average percentage of 35.4% of co-production for the ten year period (see Graph 1). In this sense, Spain is slightly under the Western European average percentage for the same period (see Chart 4 in Appendix).

The figures for the last five years are even more revealing of the rise of film production activity in Spain. Between 2000 and 2004, the total number of films produced accounted for were 585 while the number of co-productions was 214 (including 12 documentaries), for an annual average of 117 all-Spanish films and 43 co-productions. This means that an average 36.7% of Spanish film productions in the last five years are international co-productions, which is an indicator of the notable increase of this production strategy during these recent times.

As a general picture, Chart 5 offers a first typology of international co-productions in Spain during this period—excluding documentaries—, from a triple perspective: share of Spanish participation, number of countries involved and geographical origin of partners (by continents). This is the standard classification used by the public entity in charge of cinema in Spain—Instituto de la Cinematografía y Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA) in its annual report (See Appendix). From the first point of view, Spain participates more often as a minor partner (41.5%) than a major partner (36.1%), although there is no substantial difference between these two categories. In fact, the average share of Spanish participation for this period is as high as 41.1%, for an average budget of 3.5 million euros.

In addition, the favourite co-production strategy for Spanish co-producers is the bilateral agreement (63.0%) in contrast to the trilateral (26.7%) or multilateral (10.4%) deals. Finally, regarding the origin of partners, European countries participate in 61.8% of the total number of Spanish co-productions (46.5% wholly European partners), whereas Ibero-American countries are involved in 53.4% of Spanish co-productions (38.1% wholly Ibero-American partners). It is also interesting to point out that in 8.4% of co-productions, Spain acted as a bridge between European and Ibero-American countries.

These last observations must be completed by a detailed analysis of the most prolific co-producing countries in the case of Spain. As Chart 6 exhaustively illustrates, as many as 29 different countries have been involved in Spanish film co-productions in the last five years, which represents a significant variety of nationalities and cultures. Among them, there are 17 European countries (58.6%), 9 Latin American nations (31.0%), 2 North-American countries (6.8%) and Australia (3.4%). This same percentage is maintained at the top 10 most active co-producing countries (6 European and 4 Ibero-American). France and Argentina are the two main co-producing countries, participating respectively in 55 (27.0%) and 44 (21.6%) of all co-productions for this period. Whereas Argentina is our main partner in the bilateral category, France is the most active ally in trilateral and multilateral co-productions (See Appendix).

Some conclusions can be drawn from these first figures. Firstly, as it has been mentioned, Spanish co-producers are significantly involved in their international film productions, with an average share of more than 40%. This means that Spain is usually one of the main partners, if not the main one. Secondly, the bilateral agreement is the most frequent formula when dealing with co-productions due to its greater flexibility and its better creative—and sometimes even financial advantages. In addition, Spanish co-productions reflect a tendency to work with their natural allies in Europe (especially the big five Western European countries) and Latin America (Spanish-speaking countries). It is also worthy to mention the small but interesting presence of

some Eastern European countries (Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania) on a multilateral basis. On the other hand, the total absence of partners from Africa and Asia is quite significant especially given that Morocco, for instance, is one of the countries most represented in stories about immigrants, like *Said* (L. Soler 1999), *Tomándote/Tea for Two* (I. Gardela 2000) or *Poniente* (C. Gutiérrez, 2002).

## **Spanish International Co-Productions and European Cross-Border Films**

Nevertheless, the “taxonomy” of the Spanish international co-productions would not be complete without a deeper analysis of their nature. Effectively, the previous data reflect only a sort of “formal” or external approach useful indeed for statistical purposes, but not necessarily in order to figure out cultural and/or national identity issues. As Santaolalla explains with regard to the Spanish case,

[T]he nature of co-productions varies a great deal. In some cases the degree of multinational collaboration is barely discernible in the final product; in others, the fusion of perspectives and practises is very noticeable (Santaolalla 2005, 6).

For this reason, some authors have offered an attempt to classify of European international films from a broader perspective. This is the case of Mike Wayne in his book *The Politics of Contemporary European Cinema*. Discussing the relationship between national identity and international markets, Wayne offers a “model of the kinds of films which get made by a national cinema operating in an international environment” (Wayne 2002, 40), a quite convenient profile for international co-productions, as it is our case. This model is split in four categories drawn by “a mixture of economic and cultural factors” (Wayne 2002, 40): embedded films, disembedded films; cross-border films; and anti-national national films.<sup>4</sup>

The *embedded films* would be those which “are pitched primarily (although not exclusively) for the national market, either because of their budgets [...] or because the cultural material” (Wayne 2002, 40), i.e. the excessive “parochialism” of their plot. In other words, this category would be the typical “national cinema” mainly addressed to the domestic market. Most of the Spanish films would fit into this category, from modest productions like *El Bola/Pellet* (A. Mañas, 2000) to big box-office successes like the three-installment of the *Torrente* saga (S. Segura, 1998, 2001, and 2005).

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne specifies that these are not mutually exclusively categories. In addition, he argues that although this classification is built largely around the case of the UK, it could be applied with modifications to the output of other European cinemas.

On the other hand, the *disembedded films* would be “those films which have the budget and the cultural potential to succeed in the American market” (Wayne, 2002: 42). In the case of Spain, we could include under this category either some big-budgeted film productions shot in English like *Desafinado/Off Key* (M. Gómez Pereira, 2001) or *Los otros/The Others* (A. Amenábar, 2001) as well as medium-budgeted films produced by Filmax’s brand Fantastic Factory, like *Darkness* (J. Balagueró, 2002).

In the third place, the *cross-border films* are defined by Wayne as “those films which travel in the international market outside America, particularly [...] the European market” (Wayne 2002, 45). According to this author, this category would include not only the art films, but also

[...] those films which inscribe travel and a certain porosity of national identities within their narratives as a precondition of their co-productions which funded them and the broader European identities which they are exploring (Wayne 2002, 45).

Some recent examples of Spanish cross-border (art) films would be *Solas* (B. Zambrano, 2000), distributed in 13 European territories, *Lucía y el sexo/Sex and Lucia* (J. Medem, 2000), which travelled around 22 European countries, or any of the Almodovar’s movies. *Hable con ella/Talk to Her* (2002), for instance, reached as much as 28 European territories.

Finally, Wayne adds a fourth category called *anti-national national films*, defined by “their critique of the myth of community which underpins national identity” (Wayne 2002, 45). Films like *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (F. León de Aranoa, 2002) or *Te doy mis ojos/Take My Eyes* (I. Bollain, 2003) would be good examples.

It is also interesting to bring here the typology that Manuel Palacio specifically proposes for Spanish co-productions. In his article “Elogio postmoderno de las coproducciones” (“In Praise of Post-modern Co-Productions”), this author argues that the concept of “national cinema” or “national (film) identity” is derived not from the “official” nationality recognition of a film as by what he calls “a national look.” This “national look” emerges from a unique universe, formed by a recurrent set of patterns involving characters, stories, images or any other specific cultural features (Palacio 1999, 222-223).

In this perspective, Palacio distinguishes three categories of co-productions. In the first place, the *strictly financial co-productions*, “where two or more productions companies join their financial resources to reach a better position in the international markets” (Palacio 1999, 231)<sup>5</sup>. According to this author, no

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<sup>5</sup> From here on, all the quotes from Spanish texts are my translation.

matter the mixed nationality of creative talents, cast and crew, there is a prevalent “national look” coming from the main partner. As examples, he mentions the majority of Almodovar’s films during the 1990s, structured as co-productions between El Deseo, his production company, and the French firm Ciby 2000. Secondly, Palacio points out the *international-flavour co-productions*, “which try to delete any kind of trace from the national point of view in search of an international style” (Palacio 1999, 231). As examples, he refers to some of the movies by Fernando Trueba, Vicente Aranda or Bigas Luna. Finally, this author includes the *multicultural or hybrid co-productions*, the “only” co-production in a proper sense, in his view—, “not limited by an economic deal among partners, [but] reflecting the ambivalence in the construction of a collective identity [...] [as well as] breaking down the “official” stereotypes” (Palacio 1999, 232). Some of the most representative examples he comes across are two Spanish-Latin American co-productions: *Maité* (E. Olasagasti and C. Zabala, 1994), a Spanish-Cuban film, and *Martin (Hache)* (A. Aristaráin, 1997) co-produced by Spain and Argentina.

### **A New Typology of International Co-Productions**

The two typologies described above are unquestionably useful to study the relationship between economic and cultural forces in co-productions —given that this combined perspective is the core topic when dealing with “national identity” and “cross-border” issues. Nevertheless, after analysing all the 202 Spanish international co-productions made between 2000 and 2004, I consider it necessary to go a little bit further and re-adjust some of the categories offered by Wayne and Palacio. The advantage of this new typology is to offer a more exact picture of the nature of international co-productions in the Spanish case, revealing the difficult balance between financial interests and multicultural ties.

As Chart 7 reflects, the main categories I am proposing here are: (inter)national co-productions, foreign financial co-productions, multicultural co-productions and internationally-oriented co-productions. Two prior considerations must be kept in mind. Firstly, these categories are mutually exclusive. Secondly, although the majority of the Spanish international co-productions analyzed fit well in one category or the other, I plainly admit that the criteria to classify some particular movies could be arguable (see Appendix).

The Spanish *(Inter)national Co-Productions* would be those films with a genuine national or local flavour (a strong taste of “Spanishness”) in their story lines, characters and points of view, directed by a Spanish talent and with a significant Spanish participation (50% or higher). In addition, they are shot mainly on the national territory. In this sense, these movies could be considered one-hundred percent Spanish, except for the fact that they have been formally

set up as co-productions for economic reasons. This type would correspond to what Wayne calls *embedded films* and what Palacio denominates *strictly financial co-productions*. Taking these features into account, we can identify 34 films (16.7% of co-productions) for the period of analysis. It is worthy to mention that, under this category, there is a clear unbalance in favour of European partners (25 movies) over Latin American ones (just 7 films), which reinforces the idea of economic motives since our European neighbours are financially more capable allies.

Some significant examples of this kind of co-productions will be the following:

- *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (F. León de Aranoa, 2002) was set as a trilateral co-production among Spain (80%), France (10%) and Italy (10%). With a comic-and-dramatic look, this movie tells the story of a group of unemployed people in a northern coastal city of Spain, with no hopes and a rootless future. Although the theme is quite universal, its approach to social criticism is based on typical Spanish references. Despite the fact of its design as an international co-production, there is no evidence of significant contributions from the other two countries, with the exception of finance and a French sound technician. The movie was entirely shot in Spain.
- *Torremolinos 73* (P. Berger, 2003), a Spanish (80%)-Danish (20%) co-production, is a dramatic comedy which narrates the love story between a door-to-door encyclopaedia salesman and his charming and faithful wife Carmen. Their ordinary lives will change when they accept an “indecent proposal”: to shoot a home movie of their intimate life to be distributed in Scandinavia. This movie resembles the “españoladas” of the 1970s and it is fully Spanish in its cultural references. This movie was entirely shot in the South of Spain and its cast and crew is also Spanish.
- *El 7º día (The 7<sup>th</sup> Day)*, C. Saura, 2004), directed by one of our internationally best-known film directors, is a contemporary tragedy inspired by recent true events. For many years two families have been arguing over the boundaries of their properties located in the centre of the rural Spain. Much blood has already been shed over these quarrels and still revenge will be so brutal and retrograde that it will leave everyone deeply shaken. Again, this one-hundred percent Spanish plot was set up as a bilateral co-production with France (80%-20% in favour of Spain), with complete Spanish cast and crew except the director of photography, who was French.
- *Mar adentro/The Sea Inside* (A. Amenábar, 2004), one of the most successful Spanish films of the decade and winner of the Oscar® for Best Foreign Film, tells also a story based on real facts which had a great impact

in Spanish public opinion. It is about a quadriplegic who has spent almost thirty years lying in bed looked after by his family. The arrival of two women changes his life: one tries to convince him that living is worthwhile, the other defends the contrary. At the end he will decide not to live anymore. Being a wholly Spanish story, the film was set up as a trilateral co-production among Spain (70%), France (20%) and Italy (10%). No key contributions from the last two countries appear either on the creative, artistic or technical or side.

Other representative examples would be *El alquimista impaciente* (P. Ferreira, 2002), co-produced by Spain (80%) and Argentina (20%); *El embrujo de Shangai* (F. Trueba, 2002), a trilateral adventure among Spain (70%), United Kingdom (20%) and France (10%); *Crimen ferpecto/Ferpect Crime* (A. de la Iglesia, 2004), a co-production between Spain (90%) and Italy (10%); or any of the movies produced by Morena Films, a Spanish production company specialised in crazy comedies set up as co-production with United Kingdom on a 80%-20% basis. Its most recent films are *Canicula* (A. García-Capelo, 2001), *Gente Pez* (J. Iglesias, 2001), *Peor imposible, ¿Qué puede fallar?* (J. Semprún and D. Blanco, 2002).

We could conclude that all these Spanish movies are international co-productions almost “by accident.” Or as Santaolalla explains,

[...] no common denominators seem to emerge in terms of characters or storylines in [these] Spanish-European co-productions, except perhaps for the fact that a significant number of them have a wholly “Spanish” look [...]. It would appear that, in presenting essentially Spanish stories, the mere enactment of Spanishness in these films has the power of synecdochically “signifying” Europeaness [...] as opposed to, above all, Hollywood films (Santaolalla 2005, 6-7).

The *Foreign Financial Co-productions* would be exactly the opposite kind of movies to the previous ones. They are defined by being mainly “non-Spanish” films from the story, plot and character point of view as well as from the cultural background. In addition, they are directed by non-Spanish talents and have been shot in locations outside Spain. In addition to this, the Spanish participation is usually minimal (between 10 and 20% in most of the cases). Thus, other proper names for this category would be “Spanish Co-Financed Foreign Films” or “Foreign Films Partially Financed by Spain.”

As it can be easily seen in Chart 7, more than 50% of international co-productions with Spanish participation belongs to this category (105 out of 202). Being so, they do not fit in any of the classifications offered by Wayne or Palacio, which is also a significant fact. A closer look at these films would

reveal that they are not properly “Spanish” from the “national identity” point of view, although some of them can resemble a certain “Spanishness” thanks to the inclusion of specific elements or references, a subplot, or one of the main or secondary characters.

In this case, there is no difference between Europe and Latin-America (48 and 47 co-productions respectively), which reflects somehow that Spain is considered by both a reliable financial partner.

Some significant examples of these financial European co-productions would be:

- *Mirka* (R. Benhadj, 2000), a drama co-produced by Italy (60%), France (30%) and Spain (10%), directed by an North African director, starring Karin Benhadj, Gérard Depardieu and Vanessa Redgrave. It was shot in Italy in Italian and with no involvement of Spanish talent.
- *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* (R. De Herr, 2001) is a multilateral co-production among France (45%), Australia (25%), Spain (20%) and Netherlands (10%), directed by a Dutch director, starring Richard Dreyfuss and entirely shot in French Guiana. Despite of significant Spanish financial contribution, no Spanish key creative or artistic personnel can be found in this film.
- *Laissez-passer/Salvoconducto/Safe Conduct* (B. Tavernier, 2002), a period piece set in Paris during the Nazi occupation, is formally a French (90%)-Spanish (10%) co-production. It was entirely shot in France and has no Spanish key element whatsoever.
- *Io no ho paura* (G. Salvatores, 2003), based on the novel by Niccolò Ammanti, is a trilateral co-production among Italy (65%), Spain (20%) and United Kingdom (15%), shot in Italy and with Italian cast and crew except the Spanish actress Aitana Sánchez-Gijón in a leading role.

The same can be said from *Jet Set* (F. Onteniente, 2001), a French comedy co-produced with Spain on a 90%-10% split; *The Reckoning* (P. McGuigan, 2002), a period-piece drama set in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century England, co-produced with United Kingdom (72%) and Spain (28%); *Triple Agent* (E. Rohmer, 2004), also a period-piece multilaterally co-produced by five countries, where Spain’s share is just 10%; or the last films of Ken Loach (*Bread and Roses*, 2001; *The Navigators*, 2002; *Sweet Sixteen*, 2003), Peter Greenway (*The Tulse Luper Suitcases* trilogy, 2003-2005) and Nani Parenti (*Merry Christmas*, 2001; *Natale sul Nilo*, 2002).

Among the most representative financial Latin American co-productions we could mention:

- *Pantaleón y las visitadoras* (F. Lombardi, 2000), a Peruvian comedy co-produced with Spain (20%), tells the story of a military captain, a good man and husband, who has to deal with the sexual desires of his soldiers, settled down in the Amazonian forest. Spanish contribution is limited to the composer and director of photography.
- *El hijo de la novia* (J.J. Campanella, 2001), one of the most successful Argentinean films in Spain, was set up as a co-production between both countries on a 80%-20% basis in favour of Argentina. It tells a lovely story of family reunion during the Argentinean economic crisis of the 2000s. The movie was shot in Argentina with local talent and crew (although some actors are based in Spain). Only the composer was Spanish (Angel Illarramendi). The same basic structure, with a bigger Spanish contribution (54%), was set for Campanella's next film *Luna de Avellaneda* (2004).
- *Kamchatka* (M. Piñeyro, 2002) keeps many similarities with the previous one. It was also a very successful film at the Spanish box-office. Set up as a Argentinean-Spanish co-production (50/50 split) directed by a Uruguayan director, it tells a family story in a very specific historical background—the military dictatorship from mid 1970s onwards, when thousands of people were persecuted and kidnapped. The composer and the director of photography are the only Spanish talents involved. The movie was also shot in Argentina.
- *Whisky* (P. Stoll and J.P. Rebella, 2004), a Uruguayan social comedy co-produced with Spain (20%), tells the story of the owner of a modest hosiery factory and his wife, who is his trusted employee. Their monotone life is suddenly threatened by the visit of a relative. Using a code between absurdity and melancholy, this film tries to subtly portray how the awkwardness and small misfortunes of these three people, so different from each other, gradually come to light as they try to cover up their resentments.

Other illustrative movies from this category would be the Argentinean (78%)-Spanish (22%) co-production *Plata quemada* (M. Piñeyro, 2000); *El crimen del Padre Amaro/The Crime of Padre Amaro* (C. Carrera, 2002), co-produced with Mexico (Spanish share of 20%); the trilateral co-production *El último tren* (D. Arsuaga, 2002), among Argentina (52%), Uruguay (20%) and Spain (28%); and the comedy *Bombón, el perro* (C. Sorín, 2004), an Argentinean (80%)-Spanish (20%) co-production.

In relation to these last examples—although it could be also applied to the financial Spanish-European co-productions—, the following comment by Santaolalla is very adequate:

[D]espite the frequent appeals to historic debt, Spanish-Spanish American co-productions are perhaps inevitably above all guided by economic considerations. [...] Sometimes the Spanish American element is little more than an exotic flourish [...]. On other occasions, however, the collaboration leaves a mark on the very fabric of the film, making it a more complex, dialogical text (Santaolalla, 2005: 8-9).

In the third place, the Spanish *Multicultural Co-Productions* would represent the quintessential spirit of co-productions, because they are not merely a product strictly based on financial contribution but also on a real cultural exchange. Here, the story, plot and characters reflect the hybrid nature of multiple idiosyncrasies linking together in a more natural way, as in the case of Spain, the relationship with its European neighbours or its deeper resemblance with Spanish-America. This category would coincide exactly with the one proposed by Palacio as *multicultural or hybrid co-productions* and also correspond to the *cross-border films* description offered by Wayne. Apart from that, the Spanish participation varies from 30% to 60%.

As Chart 7 reveals, as much as 25.7% of Spanish international co-productions during these last five years would fit into this category. Looking at the origin of our partners, it seems that we find it easier to develop multicultural stories with our Latin American relatives (25 films) than with our European neighbours (19 films).

- *El espinazo del diablo/The Devil's Backbone* (G. del Toro, 2001), a Spanish (54%)-Mexican (46%) co-production, directed by an internationally known Mexican director and produced by Almodóvar, tells a fantastic story about some mysteries surrounding an orphanage during the Spanish Civil War. The movie was shot in Spain with Spanish crew and talent and the presence of a very well-known Argentinean actor, Federico Luppi. This film offers a multicultural or hybrid look, since it can be considered “clever re-writing of the quintessential 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish historical event: the Civil War” (Santaolalla, 2005: 9) from a Mexican perspective. Since Luppi’s character represented Hispanic Americanness, he works as a metaphor for Mexico and its role in the Spanish War. (Santaolalla, 2005: 9-10)
- *Lugares comunes/Common Places* (A. Arístarain, 2002) was a successful and critically acclaimed Spanish (60%)-Argentinean (40%) co-production starring Federico Luppi and Mercedes Sampietro. It deals with a story about a mature couple, wonderfully in love with each other. But their calm, reflective world is deeply affected when the husband receives official notification of his compulsory early retirement without any previous warning. Apart from being shot in both countries and having a mixed cast

and crew, this film shows quite clearly some cultural subplots involving Argentina and Spain, represented respectively by husband and wife.

- *Seres queridos* (T. Pelegrí and D. Harari, 2004) is a funny love story between a Jew and a Palestinian, very much in line with *Guess Who's Come to Dinner?* and *Meet the Parents*. It was designed as a multicultural co-production involving four countries: Spain (57%), United Kingdom (23%), Argentina (10%) and Portugal (10%). Directed by two filmmakers from Spain and United Kingdom, this film is a real cultural hybrid story.

Other movies we could include here are *Tinta roja* (F. Lombardi, 2001), co-produced by Spain (61%) and Peru (39%); *Nueces para el amor* (A. Lecchi, 2001), an Argentinean (54%)-Spanish (46%) initiative; *Pata negra* (L. Oliveros, 2001), a comedy co-produced by Spain (80%) and Cuba (20%); and *Roma* (A. Aristaráin, 2004), a Spanish (80%)-Argentinean (20%) co-production.

Among the multicultural co-productions with Europe, we could include some illustrative films like:

- *Yoyes* (H. Taberna, 2000), a trilateral co-production among Spain (70%), France (20%) and Italy (10%), is based on a real story of a female ETA member. The very topic of the movie—Basque terrorism—acts as a dramatic link between two neighbour countries with similar cultural roots. As a co-production, this film is quite well balanced, especially thanks to the French contribution. In addition, the movie was shot in actual Spanish and French places.
- *Una casa de locos/L'Auberge espagnole/Europudding* (C. Klapisch, 2002) could be the quintessence example of multicultural co-production, according to its English title. Designed as a French (80%)-Spanish (20%) co-production and directed by a French filmmaker, it tells the story of a young Parisian who goes to Barcelona for the last year of his university studies in Economics and shares a flat with other six exchange students, each from a different European country. The movie, with cast and crew from different countries, was shot in Barcelona. It is noteworthy that there are as many as seven different languages spoken in the film. Somehow, that small flat is a metaphor for the whole Europe.
- *El misterio Galíndez/The Galíndez File* (G. Herrero, 2003), starring Harvey Keitel, Saffron Burrows and Eduard Fernández, is based on the novel done by the Spanish writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán. The story begins when an American researcher arrives in Spain to work on her doctoral thesis about a Basque exiled in the United States after the Civil War, who was kidnapped and disappeared in strange circumstances. Her research soon leaves the academic field and goes deeper into the political and criminal

sphere, and so her life is in danger. This thriller was set up as multilateral co-production involving as many as six countries, with a significant Spanish contribution (50%). The movie is in English and Spanish and was shot in three different countries.

- *Un día sin fin/È già ieri* (G. Manfredonia, 2004) is a Spanish (50%)-Italian (28%)-British (22%) remake of the American blockbuster *Groundhog Day* (I. Reitman, 1993). In this case, a famous Italian television journalist is sent to the Canary Islands to cover how a colony of storks is settling on the summit of the Teide Volcano. A Canaries biologist is there to welcome him and help him. From that point, every day will be an exact copy of the one before. The movie was directed by an Italian, shot in the Canary Islands and spoken in both languages (Spanish and Italian).

Other examples could be *La balsa de piedra / The Stone Raft* (G. Sluizer, 2002), co-produced by Netherlands (48%), Spain (34%) and Portugal (18%); and *Imagining Argentina* (C. Hampton, 2004), a British (53%)-Spanish (47%) co-production set in Argentina.

Finally, the Spanish *Internationally-Oriented Co-Productions* would be those films primarily designed for the international marketplace. According to this aim, they are shot in the English language and involve an international cast and crew. Despite its international appeal, their “Spanish presence” is ensured by a significant contribution: either the director is a Spaniard in most of the cases, or the financial stake Spain keeps represents usually more than 50% of the share. The nature of these co-productions is more economic than cultural, so the natural partners are mainly English-speaking countries that are able to share costs and grosses (market). Under these terms, Latin-America is not a viable option.

Among the examples of this kind of movies we could mention:

- *Sabotaje/Sabotage!* (Ibarretxe Brothers, 2000), a trilateral co-production among Spain (52%), France (28%) and United Kingdom (20%), starring David Suchet, Stephen Fry and Dominique Pinon, was shot in English in Spain, with an international cast and mixed crew. It offers a peculiar portrait of the preliminaries of Waterloo battle, where Bonaparte and Wellington are rivals not only involving military strategies but also regarding the love of Lady Edwina, a double agent and also an expert strategist. The movie had a very poor performance at the domestic box-office. Apart from Spain, it has been only released in France.
- *Desafinado/Off Key* (M. Gómez Pereira, 2001) was a expensive Spanish (70%)- British (20%)-Italian (10%) co-production, shot in Spain and France. This English-spoken film, starring Joe Mategna, Danny Aiello and

George Hamilton, tells the story of a trio of opera singers reunited by a wedding ten years after their stormy breakup. Despite its high commercial appeal, it was only released in three European countries, including Spain.

- *Sin retorno/No Turning Back* (J. Montejo and J. Nebot, 2002) was set as a Spanish (60%)-US (40%) co-production shot entirely in the US as an independent American movie. Its plot deals with the difficult situation of Hispanic immigrants in the United States. The movie was co-directed by a Spaniard and a Honduran.
- *Mi vida sin mí/My Life Without Me* (I. Coixet, 2004), co-produced by Spain (68%) by El Deseo, Amodóvar's production company and Canada (32%), follows the usual co-producing formula of Isabel Coixet's movies, one of the internationally best-known Spanish women directors. This drama tells the story of a young mother with a sad and hopeless life. Her grey existence changes completely when she discovers she has cancer. Paradoxically, she will find out also the appetite of life. The movie was shot in British Columbia (Canada) in the English language with international cast.

Other interesting examples would be *Punto de mira/One of the Hollywood Ten* (K. Francis, 2001), a Spanish (68%)-British (32%) co-production despite its American theme; *Manjar de amor/Food of love* (V. Pons, 2002), co-produced by Spain (80%) and Germany (20%); and *Romasanta* (F. Plaza, 2004), a Spanish (78%)-British co-production starring Julian Sands and Elsa Pataky.

With this new typology in mind, there are some interesting conclusions to be drawn (see Graph 2). First of all, the vast majority of all the movies considered international co-productions in Spain (as much as 74.3%) are strictly financial co-productions, with little, if any, multicultural implications. From some perspectives, they could be defined as "false" or merely "formal" co-productions, with no creative or cultural exchange at all. Only 25.7% of Spanish international co-productions are multicultural in essence. Therefore, it must be underlined the prevalence of economic reasons over cultural motivations.

Secondly, Spain looks for co-producing partners with different criteria depending on the nature of the co-production itself. When prioritizing strictly financial issues regarding (inter)national, foreign-financed and internationally-oriented co-productions, European and North American countries are preferred to Latin American ones. Nevertheless, when it comes to multicultural exchange from the Spanish perspective, Latin America prevails over Europe. As much as half of the Spanish multicultural co-productions have been set up with Latin American countries.

Finally, Spain acts as a "bridge" between Europe and Latin America in very few cases within each category. This is especially significant in the multicultural

category, where only six movies have been co-produced by Spain and countries from Europe and Latin America.

In conclusion, I would insist on the fact that this new typology reflects more exactly the inner nature of international co-productions in the Spanish case, differentiating in each category the predominance of economic or cultural interests that lie beyond an agreed formula of co-operation. Of course, in my view, this proposed classification could be also applied to other national cases in Europe.

### **Spanish International Co-Productions at the Domestic and European Marketplaces**

This study would not be complete without a comment on the commercial performance of these international co-productions. Chart 8 shows the top 25 Spanish international co-productions at the domestic box-office, including not only grosses and admissions figures, but also other variables such as countries involved, share of Spanish contribution, nature according to our proposed typology, genre, language, origin of cast and crew and finally country of shooting (see Appendix).

A careful look at this chart reveals some interesting facts. To begin with, the majority of these more successful films are (inter)national co-productions (10 out of 25), followed by multicultural (8) and foreign financial (6) co-productions. If we compare these figures to the total number of films in each category, we would also obtain very revealing percentages: 29.4% (inter)national co-productions are among the most successful, together with 15.3% of multicultural films and 4.7% of foreign co-financed movies. Curiously enough, the lower level of performance at the box-office corresponds to the most frequent type of co-production.

Another revealing fact is that, taking into account only the top foreign financial and multicultural co-productions, as much as 9 are co-produced with Latin American countries and only 5 with European partners. In other words, Spanish audiences seem to feel more enthusiastic about multicultural Spanish-Latin American co-productions, surely because of their cultural identification.

As we continue to look at the chart, we notice the performance of those same movies at the European marketplace.<sup>6</sup> As Chart 9 shows, the majority of these

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to reiterate that this ranking does not include all the Spanish international co-productions, but only those 25 ones that were on the top at the domestic box-office. In this sense, it must be kept in mind that there are other successful co-productions with Spanish contribution at the European marketplace, like the K. Loach film *Bread and Roses* (2001), which got 653,226 admissions outside Spain and B. Tavernier's *Laissez-*

top international co-productions (16 out of 20) has been released in more than one European territory (excluding Spain), and a small group of them (4 films) has even achieved more than 10 countries. It is difficult to establish a regular pattern out of these titles. Firstly, it is not a coincidence that 4 out of the top 10 Spanish international co-productions by number of admissions in Europe (excluding Spain) are precisely multicultural ones. Among them, two stand out among the rest: *L'Auberge espagnole/Una casa de locos/Europudding* (2002), a French-Spanish comedy, and *Los Reyes Magos/The Three Magician* (2003), an animated movie set up also as a Spanish-French co-production (see Appendix).

Secondly, it is quite paradoxical that 3 out of the 10 more successful Spanish co-productions in Europe are (inter)national titles, which mean that even very local stories and characters manage to travel and conquer audiences all over Europe, whether if they are comedies or dramas. Movies like *Mar adentro/ The Sea Inside* (2002), *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (2002) or *Crimen ferpecto/Ferpect Crime* (2004) are good examples of that.

This previous point can be contrasted with another apparent paradox. This ranking of the top 25 international co-productions in Spain only includes 2 films shot in English, *My Life Without Me* (2003) and *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* (2001), neither of which was a commercial success despite their international appeal, and one with mixed languages, *L'Auberge espagnole* (2002), which was much more successful.

Finally, it is interesting to pay attention to the five Spanish international co-productions that travelled the most in Europe (which does not mean necessarily the most viewed in all the cases). Perhaps it is not a coincidence that number one is *L'Auberge espagnole/Una casa de locos/Europudding* (2002), an example of multicultural co-production, very "European" in its plot and characters, which was released in 22 territories including Iceland, Estonia, Slovakia and Turkey, in addition to the USA and Canada. Probably it is not a surprise that a movie like *My Life Without Me* (2003) had reached 16 territories (plus Canada). Quite the contrary, as we have mentioned before, it is significant that a "local" film like *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (2002) was distributed also in 16 European countries. And it is a revealing fact that the other two movies able to travel widely around Europe (10 territories) are two Spanish-Latin-American co-productions, one reasonably successful commercially, *El hijo de la novia* (2001), and one with a modest performance, *El crimen del Padre Amaro* (2002). Also among the most broadly distributed movies is another Spanish-Latin American co-production, *Lista de espera* (2000), released in 9 countries but achieving higher number of viewers than the previous two.

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*passer/Safeconduct* (2002), which achieved 427,560 admissions in Europe (Spain excluded).

These last examples illustrate, in my view, one of the aspects of the potential role of Spain as a “bridge” between Europe and Latin America, in the sense that its participation as co-producer, even on a financial basis only, facilitates the distribution of genuinely Latin American stories through a significant number of European territories.

In sum, Chart 9 illustrates that no matter what the real nature of the international co-production (financial, multicultural or mixed), the very fact of being produced through transnational partnerships facilitates the commercial exploitation of the movie in a significant number of territories.

### **Conclusions: More Commercial Need than Common Culture**

The analysis of these Spanish international co-productions during this five-year period (2000-04), broken down into the four categories described above, exemplifies the real nature of co-productions in some European countries. As we mentioned at the very beginning, international co-productions in our continent have been often promoted as an ideal formula to achieve the difficult balance between “national identity” and “crossing-border” culture. Nevertheless, at least in the Spanish case, the more frequent motivation to set up a co-production project has been economic or financial rather than multicultural. Effectively, almost 75% of Spanish international co-productions during the last five years have been designed on a strictly financial basis, without demanding necessarily a creative or cultural exchange. Only the remaining 25% can be considered multicultural co-productions in the proper sense of the term. In addition, the average Spanish contribution accounts for more than 40%, which implies a significant presence and/or control in most of the cases. For that very reason also, the bilateral agreement is the preferred formula.

It seems that this reality can be also extrapolated to Europe. Some years ago, Ian Christie suggested that the unity to which the European film industries aspire should be a strategic one based upon “commercial need” rather than a “common culture” (qtd. in Hill 1998, 67; Jäckel 2003, 65). In light of the analysis of Spanish international co-productions in recent times, we can conclude that it is the case.

In addition, Spain has co-produced with a great number of countries, mostly from Europe and Latin America, with France and Argentina being our most prolific partners. Nevertheless, it can be useful to distinguish our favourite co-production allies based on the nature of the co-production itself. The financially-based co-productions—three of the four categories mentioned above—are supported by European and North American countries. On the contrary, Latin American nations are our natural partners when it comes to multicultural co-productions. In any case, it seems that Spain should be a more active bridge

between Europe and Latin-America, taking advantage of its geopolitical history and strategic position (Santaolalla 2005, 2; Chavarrías 2004, 12), and of its shared cultural traditions across both continents. In this sense, the number of Spanish co-productions involving Latin American and European countries could proportionally increase.

Apart from statistical reasons, this variety of countries sharing cinematographic projects illustrates how the “international co-production phenomenon” has an enormous potential in promoting cross-cultural references as well as in addressing questions of “national identity” and “border crossings” in films. Nevertheless, as the Spanish case reflects, if economic motivations are often more important than cultural ones, what does this fact say about the role of European cinema in the construction of a European identity? The answer is necessarily inconclusive. On one hand, the very concept of “European identity” in cinema still remains controversial and is far from consensus (Eleftheriotis 2001, 47-48; Wayne 2002, 33-45; Everett 2005, 7-14; Elsaesser 2005, 489-491). On the other, it is necessary to differentiate the point of view in using the term “cross-border film.” From a multicultural perspective, the vast majority of the international co-productions analyzed could be hardly defined as “cross-border” or transnational films. Effectively, as it has been described before, we could argue about the “Frenchness” and/or “Italianness” of *Los lunes al sol/Mondays in the Sun* (a Spanish-French-Italian co-production); or about the “Spanishness” of a film like *Mirka* (a Italian-French-Spanish co-production). Nevertheless, thanks to the co-production formula, many of these films have really managed to cross national borders and travel around Europe and Latin America, achieving not only a broader market but also making at least a modest cultural impact on cinemagoers, as Chart 9 reflects (see Appendix).

To sum up, the Spanish case illustrates the need to redefine the concept of “international co-production”. As shown, this notion nowadays has acquired a very flexible and sometimes ambiguous meaning, which cannot be reduced to a single dimension whether it is for financial or multicultural reasons. In fact, as we indicated at the beginning quoting Miller et al., co-productions are transforming the audiovisual industries from a social and geographical point of view, creating meeting points between two opposite forces: the commercial politics based on free trade (an absence of borders) and the cultural movements aimed to reaffirm national identities defining geographical borders (Miller et al. 2005, 209).

Despite some of their paradoxes, co-productions will remain an important strategy for the survival of European cinema, combining all the different possibilities. As Eleftheriotis points out,

In the new millennium the challenge that confronts directors, writers, and producers, as well as national and transnational policy makers, is the financial survival of European cinema through the establishment and development of transnational partnerships and the production of films that can effectively cross cultural and national borders (Eleftheriotis 2005, 48-49).

The challenge, as this same author explains, is how to preserve unity while respecting and encouraging diversity (Eleftheriotis, 49). Among the different categories of Spanish international co-productions proposed above, the multicultural ones succeed in approaching this challenge. Nevertheless we should not renounce the benefits of any other given formula. As we have seen in relation to Spain, even the strictly financial co-productions are helping to create networking among European countries that will facilitate future developments for a European cinema that crosses many borders.

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**Chart 1: Co-Production Treaties Signed by Spain**

EUROPE		AMERICAS		AFRICA
European Union	Rest of Europe	Latin America	North America	North Africa
Germany Austria  France Italy Portugal	Bulgaria Czech Republic Slovakia Russia	Argentina Brazil  Cuba Chile Mexico Peru Puerto Rico Venezuela	Canada	Morocco Tunisia

Source: Ecija (2000)

SPANISH CO-PRODUCTIONS

**Chart 2: Projects with Spanish Participation Funded by EURIMAGES and IBERMEDIA.**

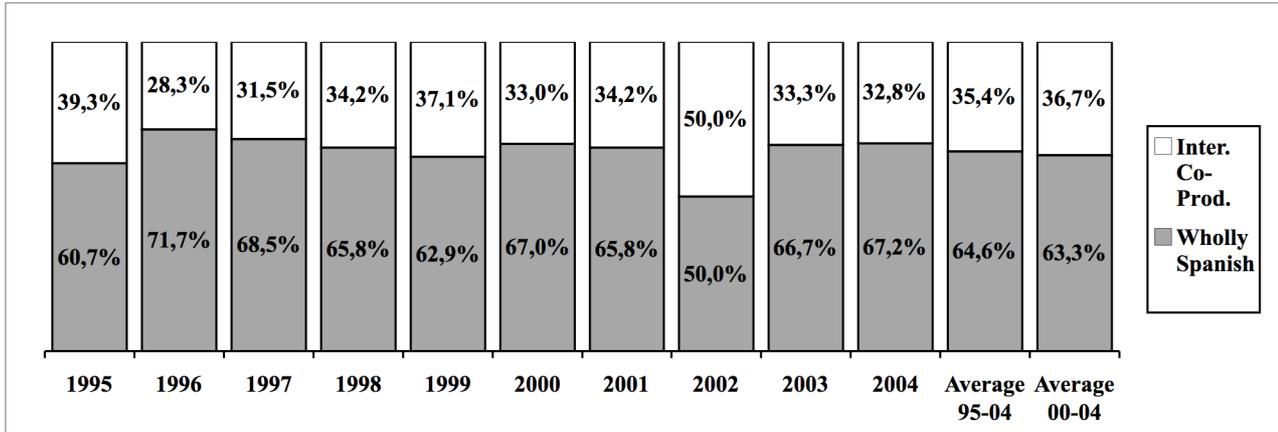
	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	Total
Eurimages		13	13	16	9	10	7	5	8	9	<b>90</b>
Ibermedia				15	15	23	26	26	30	8	<b>143</b>

Source: ICAA, Eurimages, Ibermedia.

**Chart 3: Evolution of Film Production in Spain (1995-2004)**

YEAR	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	Total 95-04	Total 00-04	Average 95-04	Average 00-04
Total Film Prod.	6	92	73	79	97	103	117	114	126	125	982	<b>585</b>	98.2	117.0
Wholly Spanish	4	66	50	52	61	69	77	57	84	84	634	<b>371</b>	63.4	74.2
Inter. Co-Prod.	2	26	23	27	36	34	40	57	42	41	348	<b>214</b>	34.8	42.8

Source: ICAA

**Graph 1: Percentage of International Co-Productions in Spain (1995-2004)**

Source: ICAA

**Chart 4: Evolution of Co-Productions in Western Europe (2000-2004)**

YEAR		95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	Total	%	Average 00-04
France	Total	97	104	125	148	181	171	204	200	212	203	1,645	100	164.5
	100% national	63	74	86	102	115	111	126	106	105	130	1,018	61.9	101.8
	Co- productions	66	57	72	78	66	60	78	94	107	73	751	45.7	75.1
UK	Total	81	127	115	91	103	90	83	84	88	75	937	100	93.7
	100% national	40	77	74	65	71	51	52	41	40	28	539	57.5	53.9
	Co- productions	41	50	41	26	31	39	31	43	48	47	397	42.4	39.7
Germany	Total	63	64	61	50	88	94	107	117	107	121	872	100	87.2
	100% national	37	42	47	39	44	47	57	39	54	60	466	53.4	46.6
	Co- productions	26	22	14	11	44	47	50	78	53	61	406	46.6	40.6
Italy	Total	75	99	87	92	108	103	103	130	117	138	1,052	100	105.2
	100% national	60	77	71	79	92	87	71	97	97	97	828	78.7	82.8
	100% national	60	77	71	79	92	87	71	97	97	97	828	78.7	82.8

	Co-productions	15	22	16	13	16	16	32	33	20	41	224	21.3	22.4
Spain	Total	56	92	73	79	97	103	117	114	126	125	982	100	98.2
	100% national	34	66	50	52	61	69	77	57	84	84	634	64.6	63.4
	Co-productions	22	26	23	27	36	34	40	57	42	41	348	35.4	34.8
Big Five	Total No. Films	309	422	400	410	489	467	507	528	543	541	4,616	100	461.6
	Total No. 100% national	197	294	281	298	339	318	326	301	326	339	3,019	65.4	301.9
	Total No. Co-productions	144	155	152	144	149	149	181	227	217	202	1,720	37.3	172.0

Source: Own elaboration on EAO data. Figures from Spain has been corrected according to ICAA data.

**Chart 5: Typology of International Co-Productions in Spain**

YEAR		00	01	02	03	04	Total	%	Average 00-04	%
	Total Number	31	39	55	40	37	202	100	40.4	100
By Percentage	Minor (< 50%)	15	14	20	13	22	84	41.58	16.8	8.32
	Major (> 50%)	8	18	20	14	13	73	36.14	14.6	7.23
	Balanced (all 50%)	2	1	1	0	2	6	2.97	1.2	0.59
	Financial	6	6	14	13	0	39	19.31	7.8	3.86
By No. of Partners	Bi-lateral	19	26	39	23	20	127	62.87	25.4	12.57
	Tri-lateral	10	9	14	11	10	54	26.73	10.8	5.35
	Multilateral	2	4	2	6	7	21	10.40	4.2	2.08
By Continents	With Latin America	11	17	23	13	13	77	38.12	15.4	7.62
	With Latin America & Others	13	0	1	0	0	14	6.93	2.8	1.39
	With Latin America & Europe	3	5	4	3	2	17	8.42	3.4	1.68
	With Europe	13	15	26	21	19	94	46.53	18.8	9.31

	With Europe & Others	1	1	0	2	3	7	3.47	1.4	0.69
	With Others	2	1	1	1	0	5	2.48	1.0	0.50
	<i>Total with Latin America</i>	27	22	28	16	15	108	53.47	21.6	10.69
	<i>Total with Europe</i>	29	20	31	24	21	125	61.88	25.0	12.38
	<i>Total with Others</i>	16	2	2	3	3	26	12.87	5.2	2.57
	Average Spanish Percentage	39.5	43.8	41.5	38.1	42.8			41.1	
	Average Budget	3.82	3.45	3.35	3.28	3.51			3.48	

Source: Own elaboration on ICAA data. Documentaries excluded

**Chart 6: Co-Producing Countries with Spain (2000-2004)**

		Bi-	Tri-	Multi-	Total	%	Average 00-04
1	France	21	21	13	55	27.09%	11.0
2	Argentina	33	9	2	44	21.67%	8.8
3	Italy	11	21	9	41	20.20%	8.2
4	UK	10	15	7	32	15.76%	6.4
5	Mexico	16	4	1	21	10.34%	4.2
6	Portugal	6	5	6	17	8.37%	3.4
7	Cuba	10	0	6	16	7.88%	3.2
8	Chile	5	4	1	10	4.93%	2.0
9	Germany	1	7	2	10	4.93%	2.0
10	Belgium	0	4	3	7	3.45%	1.4
11	Canada	2	3	0	5	2.46%	1.0
12	USA	3	2	0	5	2.46%	1.0
13	Venezuela	2	3	0	5	2.46%	1.0
14	Netherlands	0	1	3	4	1.97%	0.8
15	Uruguay	1	2	1	4	1.97%	0.8
16	Brazil	0	1	2	3	1.48%	0.6
17	Greece	1	1	1	3	1.48%	0.6
18	Peru	2	0	1	3	1.48%	0.6
19	Switzerland	0	2	1	3	1.48%	0.6
20	Colombia	0	2	0	2	0.99%	0.4
21	Denmark	1	0	1	2	0.99%	0.4
22	Hungary	0	0	2	2	0.99%	0.4
23	Luxembourg	0	0	2	2	0.99%	0.4
24	Russia	0	0	2	2	0.99%	0.4
25	Andorra	1	0	0	1	0.49%	0.2
26	Australia	0	0	1	1	0.49%	0.2
27	Bulgaria	0	0	1	1	0.49%	0.2
28	Ireland	0	0	1	1	0.49%	0.2
29	Romania	0	0	1	1	0.49%	0.2

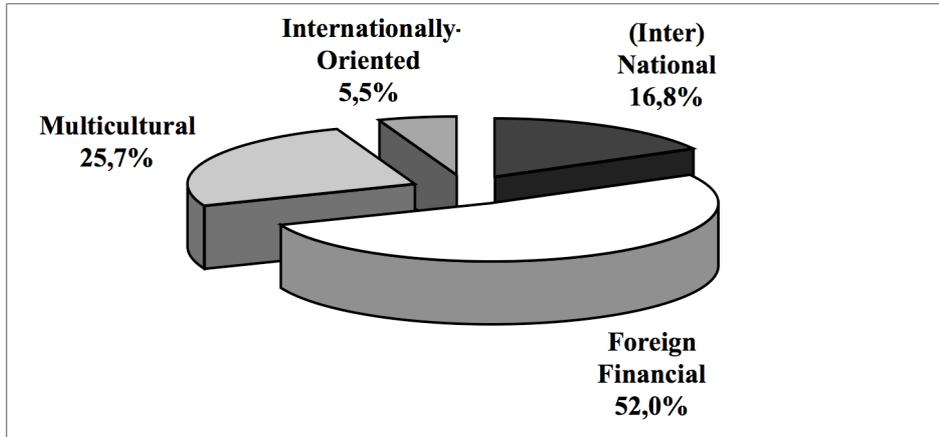
Source: Own elaboration on ICAA data. Documentaries excluded

**Chart 7: New Typology of Spanish Co-Productions (2000-2004)**

YEAR		00	01	02	03	04	Total	%	Average 00-04	%	
Total Number		31	39	55	40	37	202	100.00%	40.4	100.00%	
(Inter)National	With Europe	1	5	7	5	7	25	12.38%	5.0	2.48%	
	With Ibero-America	2	0	4	1	0	7	3.47%	1.4	0.69%	
Foreign Financial	With Both	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.99%	0.5	0.25%	
	Total	3	6	12	6	7	34	16.83%	6.8	3.37%	
	With Europe	9	4	13	11	11	48	23.76%	9.6	4.75%	
	With Ibero-America	5	11	11	11	9	47	23.27%	9.4	4.65%	
	With Both	1	2	1	1	1	6	2.97%	1.2	0.59%	
	With Ibero-America & Others	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.50%	0.2	0.10%	
	With Europe & Others	0	1	0	2	0	3	1.49%	0.6	0.30%	
	Total	15	18	26	25	0	105	51.98%	21.0	10.40%	
	Multicultural	With Europe	5	3	4	4	3	19	9.41%	3.8	1.88%
		With Ibero-America	4	10	6	1	4	25	12.38%	5.0	2.48%
With Both		2	2	1	0	1	6	2.97%	1.2	0.59%	
With Ibero-America & Others		1	0	0	0	0	1	0.50%	0.2	0.10%	
With Europe & Others		0	0	0	0	1	1	0.50%	0.2	0.10%	
Total		12	15	11	5	9	52	25.74%	10.4	5.15%	
Internationally- Oriented	With Europe	1	2	1	1	1	6	2.97%	1.2	0.59%	
	With North America	2	1	1	1	0	5	2.48%	1.0	0.50%	
	Total	3	3	2	2	1	11	5.45%	2.2	1.09%	

Source: Own elaboration on ICAA data

**Graph 2: New Typology of Spanish Co-Productions ('00-'04):  
Percentage by Categories**



Source: Own elaboration on ICAA data.

							%	
1	Mar adentro	A. Amenabar	2004	19,824,399	4,096,373	ES+FR+IT	70%	(Inter)National
2	Los lunes al sol	F.. León de Aranoa	2002	9,772,064	2,103,094	ES+FR+IT	80%	(Inter)National
3	Juana la Loca	V. Aranda	2001	8,895,180	2,067,004	ES+IT+PT	70%	(Inter)National
4	El hijo de la novia	J.J. Campanella	2001	7,230,415	1,574,492	ES+ARG	20%	Financial
5	Carmen	V. Aranda	2003	6,398,307	1,380,728	ES+IT+UK	70%	Multicultural
6	Crimen perfecto	A. de la Iglesia	2004	4,250,445	860,622	ES+IT	90%	(Inter)National
7	El espinazo del diablo	G. del Toro	2001	3,006,235	712,178	ES+MEX	54%	Multicultural
8	Kamchatka	M. Piñeyro	2002	2,983,346	628,013	ES+ARG	50%	Financial
9	Sin noticias de Dios	A. Díaz Yanes	2001	2,747,352	609,409	ES+FR+IT	70%	Multicultural
10	My Life Without Me	I. Coixet	2003	2,637,945	562,364	ES+CAN	68%	Internationally-oriented
11	Los Reyes Magos	A. Navarro	2003	2,318,961	491,737	ES+FR	50%	Multicultural
12	Gente pez	J. Iglesias	2001	2,278,425	567,956	ES+UK	80%	(Inter)National
13	Lugares comunes	A. Aristarain	2002	1,987,053	424,756	ES+ARG	60%	Multicultural
14	Torremolinos	P. Berger	2003	1,819,410	389,307	ES+DK	80%	(Inter)National
15	La Luna de Avellaneda	J.J. Campanella	2004	1,735,176	345,609	ES+ARG	54%	Financial
16	El viaje de	I. Uribe	2002	1,662,267	374,543	ES+PT	90%	(Inter)National

**Chart 9: Top 25 Spanish International Co-Productions at the European Market (2000-2004)**

Original Title	Director	Yr	Genre	Language	Nature	EU Countries (*)	Admiss EU	Admiss Spain	Total EU
L'Auberge espagnole	C. Klapisch	02	Comedy	Mixed	Multicultural	22	4,428,044	308,354	4,736,398
Mar adentro	A. Amenabar	04	Drama	Spanish	(Inter)National	7	810,970	4,096,373	4,907,343
Los Reyes Magos	A. Navarro	03	Animation	Spanish	Multicultural	3	461,111	491,737	952,848
Los lunes al sol	F. León de Aranoa	02	Drama	Spanish	(Inter)National	16	453,841	2,103,094	2,556,935
My Life Without Me	I. Coixet	03	Drama	English	Internationally-oriented	16	442,611	562,364	1,004,975
Crimen perfecto	A. de la Iglesia	04	Comedy	Spanish	(Inter)National	2	357,419	860,622	1,218,041
Lista de espera	J.C. Tabío	00	Comedy	Spanish	Financial	9	253,817	379,999	633,816
El hijo de la novia	J.J. Campanella	01	Comedy	Spanish	Financial	10	193,151	1,574,492	1,767,643
Sin noticias de Dios	A. Díaz Yanes	01	Thriller	Spanish	Multicultural	9	161,607	609,409	771,016
El espinazo del diablo	G. del Toro	01	Science Fiction	Spanish	Multicultural	3	152,439	712,178	864,617
El crimen del Padre Amaro	C. Carrero	02	Drama	Spanish	Financial	11	96,695	318,834	415,529
Juana la Loca	V. Aranda	01	Period Drama	Spanish	(Inter)National	3	76,855	2,067,004	2,143,859

Torremolinos 73	P. Berger	03	Comedy	Spanish	(Inter)National	6	55,228	389,307	444,535
Carmen	V. Aranda	03	Drama	Spanish	Multicultural	8	42,202	1,380,728	1,422,930
The Old Man Who Read Love Stories	R. de Heer	01	Adventure	English	Financial	6	28,523	296,912	325,435
Kamchatka	M. Piñeyro	02	Drama	Spanish	Financial	3	8,715	628,013	636,728
Lugares comunes	A. Aristarain	02	Drama	Spanish	Multicultural	3	7,407	424,756	432,163
El embrujo de Shangai	F. Trueba	02	Drama	Spanish	(Inter)National	1	2,053	302,780	304,833
El viaje de Carol	I. Uribe	02	Drama	Spanish	(Inter)National	1	164	374,543	374,707
Almejas y mejillones	M. Carnevale	00	Comedy	Spanish	Multicultural	0	0	332,130	332,130
Roma	A. Aristarain	04	Drama	Spanish	Multicultural	0	0	250,583	250,583
Incautos	M. Bardem	04	Thriller	Spanish	(Inter)National	0	0	238,362	238,362
Gente pez	J. Iglesias	01	Comedy	Spanish	(Inter)National	0	0	567,956	567,956
Nos miran	N. López Amado	02	Thriller	Spanish	(Inter)National	0	0	360,103	360,103
La Luna de Avellaneda	J.J. Campanella	04	Comedy	Spanish	Financial	0	0	345,609	345,609

Source: Own elaboration on ICAA and EAO (Lumiere) data.

(\*) Number of European countries where the movie has been released (apart from Spain)

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