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**ARGENTINA<sup>1</sup> :**  
**PANDEMIC, ISOLATION AND STAGNATION**  
**OF AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTION**

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## **Introduction**

The pre-existing crisis of national fiction that Obitel Argentina has been reporting at least since 2010 worsened in the context of the pandemic when the on-air channels released only four Argentine productions that represented 61 hours, the lowest figure since we have been keeping records. The leading channels, especially Telefe, obtained good audience results by programming numerous telenovelas of Brazilian and Turkish origin. If it is true that media corporations have all their past ahead of them, the pandemic allowed them to reintroduce with moderate success some fictions that were successes in their original broadcasts. The data presented here show the complete paralysis of national produc-

1 The Obitel Argentina team would like to thank Kantar IBOPE Media, since without the information provided by them it would not be possible to carry out some of the studies presented here.

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tion, an abrupt and unusual increase of reruns of different origin, the return of narco telenovelas to broadcast TV and the outstanding role of Televisión Pública in the broadcasting of a significant number of national productions, some releases, and especially reruns (Nicolosi, 2021) that allowed the actors to collect royalties for performing rights, a relevant fact in a critical context of virtual paralysis for the fiction industry as a whole.

## **1. The Audiovisual Context of Argentina in 2020**

Marked by the impact of the health crisis, the audiovisual context in 2020 shows a negative balance in almost all areas. Regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the production of Gross Value Added (GVA), i.e. its contribution to the creation of wealth, the generation and maintenance of jobs and consumption, the indicators are, as expected, downward. The most affected audiovisual activity was cinema exhibition in movie theaters, which had the lowest number of tickets sold since records have been kept and, possibly, the lowest number in a century (INCAA, 2020). The impediment to the presence and agglomeration of people in closed spaces included this activity among the first to be closed as part of the containment measures promoted by the national government as of March 19, 2020. At the same time, the numerous limitations and the limited capacity allowed in the return of the activity during the last part of the year did not allow a recovery of the activity, although it did allow the resumption of the re-engagement with audiences. Television was considered an essential activity and its workers were exempted from the restrictions on circulation that applied to the rest of the population (Decree 297/2020 art. 6, paragraph 9), so that the levels of broadcasting activity were maintained. At the same time, and despite the economic recession that accompanied the pandemic, pay

TV subscription levels were maintained. This is partly due to changes in the domesticity and routines of people who initially had more time for leisure and consumption of cultural goods at home (SInCA, 2020). In open television, there was a greater presence of news content, a continuation of the downward trend in audience share and a drastic reduction in the number of fiction release hours due to the paralysis of filming, so that programming was mainly based on reruns and entertainment content.

### **1.1. Open Television in Argentina**

Of the cultural industries, the audiovisual industry is the one with the greatest economic magnitude: it contributes 84% of the gross value added of the cultural sector and 51.2% of the jobs (Bulloni Yaquinta et al., 2021). Open television in particular makes a significant contribution and during 2020 was not exempt from difficulties generated, in part, by the contraction of the advertising market. However, the main broadcasters analyzed in this chapter did not manifest major alterations and continued their operations amidst the atypical context.

The open television system in Argentina is made up of six channels with national coverage. TV Pública is part of the Federal System of Public Media and Contents and is financed with contributions from the National Treasury, official advertising, taxes provided for by the Audiovisual Communication Services Law and other resources of its own. The other five networks are privately managed commercial channels.

#### **Chart 1. National open television channels in Argentina**

Private broadcast / channel (5)	Public broadcast / channel (1)
América 2 (channel 2)	TV Pública (channel 7)
El Nueve (channel 9)	
Telefe (channel 11)	
El Trece (channel 13)	
Net TV	
<b>CHANNEL TOTAL= 6</b>	

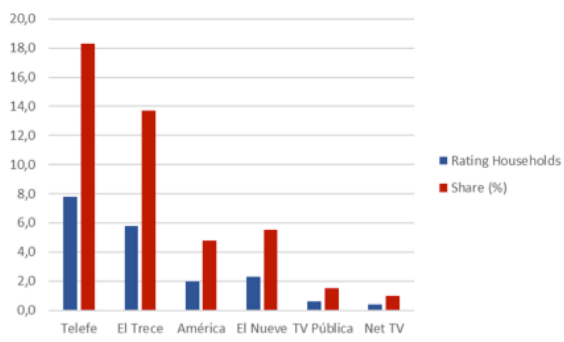
*Source: Obitel Argentina*

The four traditional networks reach the entire country through affiliates, repeaters or content sales: TV Pública, Telefe, El Trece and El Nueve. Although with marginal audience levels, Grupo Perfil's on-air network, NetTV, has been operating since 2018, with generalist programming. In some time slots this new signal disputes the sixth position to a very weakened TV Pública. Only the state-owned broadcaster holds a national license and covers most of the national territory with its signal (99.5%), while the leaders, Telefe and El Trece, reach all provinces through direct ownership or by association with the main local broadcasters. The six nationwide networks broadcast their programming through cable television, mostly privately managed and with high countrywide reach. TV Pública formally depends on the board of directors of Argentine Radio and Television State Society (RTA S.E.), which operates within the scope of the Federal System of Media and Public Contents (SFMyCP), created in 2015. América is part of the América Medios group. Telefe is owned by U.S.-based Viacom Inc. together with eight repeaters in the interior of the country. Clarín holding company operates El Trece through its Artear division and owns radio stations, newspapers, open channels, and the most important pay TV and fixed broadband companies in the country. It is also co-owner of the only newsprint mill in the country. The ownership of El Nueve is the subject of a legal dispute between the Chairman of the Board, local businessman Carlos Loréfice Lynch, and Mexican investor Remigio

González González. The legal proceedings, which are still in progress in a Delaware court (United States), did not prevent the sale of 90% of the shares to Grupo Octubre, led by Víctor Santa María, a trade unionist turned media businessman. Grupo Octubre has expanded in recent years in the printing press business with the purchase of the newspaper *Página/12* and several magazines; radio broadcasting through the ownership of one of the most listened AM radio stations in Buenos Aires (AM 750) and several FM radio stations. By the end of 2020, it also created a news signal for pay TV, IP.

**Graph 1. Audience and share by station**

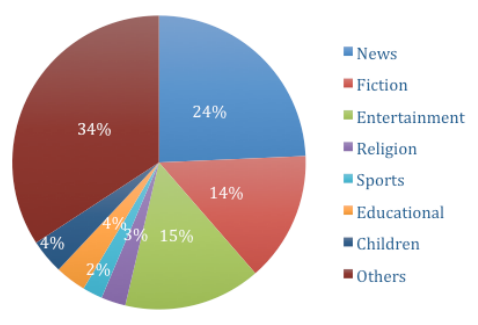
Channel	Rating Households	%	Share (%)
Telefe	7,8	40,9	18,3
El Trece	5,8	30,6	13,7
América	2,0	10,7	4,8
El Nueve	2,3	12,2	5,5
TV Pública	0,6	3,2	1,5
Net TV	0,4	2,3	1,0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>44,8</b>



Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.

**Graph 2. Genres and hours broadcast in TV programming**

Genres broadcast	Screening hours	%
News	12.008:00	24,3
Fiction	7.047:00	14,3
Entertainment	7.425:00	15,1
Religion	1.349:00	2,7
Sports	1.065:00	2,2
Educational	1.668:00	3,4
Children	1.884:00	3,8
Others	16.887:00	34,2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49.333</b>	<b>100</b>



*Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.*

In 2020, an increase in the supply of news content is observed due to the exceptional nature of the events related to the pandemic and the greater eagerness of audiences to have live access, especially to official decisions during the months of March and April. This period is also coincident with a significant increase in the rating of all news signals transmitted through pay TV (Espada, 2020; Kantar-Ibope Media, 2021). At the same time, there was a significant drop in the number of

hours dedicated to sports, partly due to the lack of activities in this area during most of the year. Two genres long neglected by open television, such as humor and children's content, also fell. The latter is paradoxical, since, as consultants such as Parrot Analytics (2020) point out, the year was marked by a shift towards greater demand for lighthearted, entertaining content aimed at children and young people, the latter due to the greater presence of these audiences at home. At this point, open television seems to have given up the possibility of concentrating younger audiences from the linear screen (despite the fact that Televisión Pública offered a four-hour daily educational series<sup>4</sup>). Fiction went from 7.4% in 2019 to 14% of the total hours broadcast in 2020, although a minimal portion of that total is national premiere fiction.

The open television audience continued its declining trend that has been a decade-long migration of audiences to other platforms. With the sole exception of *Telefe*, the other open channels continued to lose audience, despite the exceptionality of the year, the greater availability of time for entertainment and the higher demand for news content. As a whole, the five open channels captured 44.8% of the linear television share, exactly one point less than in the previous year, being surpassed by the pay TV channels, which now have a 55.2% share of the total television share.

*Telefe* widens its lead over *El Trece*, which remains in second place. *Televisión Pública* fails to break with a cycle of audience loss that *Obitel Argentina* reports since 2016, and during 2020 fell by 40%

4 The program *Seguimos Educando*, a joint initiative of *Televisión Pública* and the National Ministry of Education, distributed an average of seven hours a day of educational content on open television for all levels of formal education, combining "teleclasses", cartoons and documentaries. See <https://www.tvpublica.com.ar/programa/seguimos-educando/>

in relation to the previous year, averaging just 0.6 points, even below many pay-TV signals.

## **1.2. Pay TV and VoD Platforms in Argentina**

According to data from the National Communications Agency (ENaCom) for the third quarter of 2020<sup>5</sup>, 69.3% of Argentine households had some pay TV service, mostly through physical links, while satellite technology captures a smaller market share of less than 20%. If clandestine connections are added, it is estimated that close to 80% of the country's households have access to this service, one of the highest penetration levels in the continent. There are 7.3 million households with this service, a marginal increase compared to those reported the previous year. However, according to the same official agency, there are important geographical asymmetries in the access to the service: while provinces such as Córdoba, Tierra del Fuego, La Pampa and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires show figures above 60%, at the other extreme Catamarca, Tucumán, La Rioja, among others, are around 25%. The pay TV market is strongly concentrated mainly in Cablevisión, a division of Grupo Clarín, which controls 40% of the market, especially in provincial capitals and the most profitable urban centers. There are also peripheral players such as telecommunications cooperatives and SMEs that provide this service in places farther away from large urban centers and with lower population density and commercial interest, which together account for less than 20% of the pay TV market. The trend that Obitel Argentina has reported in recent years regarding alliances between

5 Official ENaCom data for the third quarter of 2020. Available at <https://indicadores.ena-com.gob.ar/Informes>



pay TV networks, operators and broadcast TV channels for the production and distribution of fictions in different platforms was also affected by the generalized stagnation of the sector.

## Chart 2. Pay TV channels in Argentina

<b>Outstanding Pay TV networks in 2020</b>
1) A24 (news), 2) TN (news), 3) C5N (news), 4) LN+ (news) 5) Crónica TV (news), 6) Canal 26 (news), 7) CNN Español (news), 8) IP (news)
<b>TOTAL: 8 news networks</b>

Source: Obitel Argentina

The pay TV market in Argentina has the particularity of offering a profuse and growing number of national channels dedicated to the broadcasting of news, opinion and political debate content. As of 2020, there were 7 nationally-owned channels, along with CNN en Español, which produces some programs hosted by Argentine journalists. These broadcasters are usually among the most watched pay TV channels and, in prime-time slots, they surpass Net TV, TV Pública, América and El Nueve. In fact, during 2020, together they had an average of 8.2 rating points, more than the leading open TV channel. Towards the end of the year, a new station was added to the grid, IP, the news signal of Grupo Octubre, which controls Canal 9. During this year, there was no release of national fiction on any subscription television channel.

**Chart 3. VoD in Argentina**

<b>Top 10 VoD platforms active in 2020</b>	<b>Total</b>
Netflix, Prime Video (Amazon), Movistar Play (Telefónica), Claro Video (América Móvil), Disney+, HBO Go (Warner Media), Cablevisión Flow (Telecom), Cine.ar Play and Cont.ar (National State), Sensa (Colsecor)	<b>10</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

*Source: Obitel Argentina.*

The table above presents a list of the top 10 video-on-demand platforms active in Argentina as of 2020. It is not an exhaustive list but just a sample of players with the highest market penetration (Netflix, Cablevisión Flow) together with others that provide ownership diversity, such as Sensa (a cooperative VOD platform) or those belonging to the National State. For the purposes of this list, the official YouTube channels of open television broadcasters are not included.

### **1.3. Independent Television Fiction Production Companies**

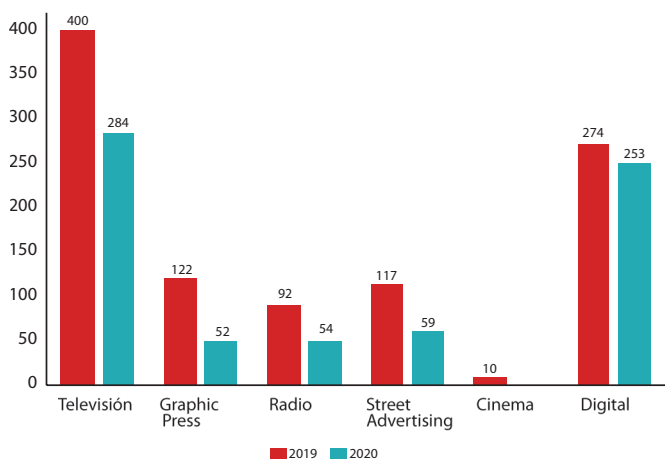
Three open television channels showed national fiction releases during 2020: El Trece, Telefe and TV Pública. In the first case, it was the fiction *Separadas*, a Pol-Ka production whose broadcasting was first suspended due to the impossibility of continuing filming and later definitively cancelled amid public disagreements and disputes between the production company, some of its protagonists and the Argentine Actors Association (Asociación Argentina de Actores). Since then, Pol-Ka, one of the largest independent fiction production companies in the country, began a retraction process that included the

reduction of its workforce and difficulties to pay salaries, which were partially covered with emergency aid provided by the National State. Telefe presented *Los Internacionales*, an eight-episode miniseries co-produced with Colombia, with the participation of Viacom International Studios, while TV Pública broadcast the first fiction produced in pandemic, *Terapia en Cuarentena*, a miniseries by NOS producciones with little previous experience in fiction.

#### 1.4. Sources of Financing for the Audiovisual Sector

The Argentine Chamber of Media (CAAM), reports that “the pandemic made 2020 a very particular year in terms of media consumption. In millions of USD, in 2019 the estimated total advertising investment was USD 1,016 and in 2020 it fell to USD 703”<sup>6</sup>.

**Graph 3. Estimated Advertising Investment in the industry (in millions of USD)**



6 Data from the Argentine Chamber of Media <https://www.newslinereport.com/negocios/nota/la-inversion-publicitaria-vario-en-argentina>

According to their estimates the overall drop was slightly more than 30% in relation to 2019, the biggest drop is evident in television investment and disappears completely for cinema. Although television dominates the distribution of the advertising pie, it loses ground year by year to the Internet, which as of 2019 concentrated 27% of investment. Television, on the other hand, benefits proportionally more from government advertising. According to official data for the second half of 2020, the six open television channels received \$843,485,211 million Argentine pesos, which represents 17% of the total investment made by the National State in that period<sup>7</sup>. According to ENaCom data, during the third quarter of 2020 the Audiovisual Communication Services, an item that concentrates television and radio, had a turnover of \$ 25,718 million Argentine pesos, which represents 5% of the total turnover of the information and communication sector in the country. Subscription television was a much more lucrative business and in the same period had revenues of Ps. 112,404 million. The promotion fund administered by the film institute (INCAA) is another source of financing for the production of fiction films and series, but in 2020 it was limited to minimal budget executions. On the other hand, this fund is mostly composed of a levy charged on movie tickets, so the lack of attendance to theaters severely affected the resources available to finance new contents.

7 Official data from the Office of the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers for the second half of 2020. Available at [https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/informe\\_publicidad\\_oficial\\_2020\\_2.pdf](https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/informe_publicidad_oficial_2020_2.pdf)

## **1.5. Communication Policies**

In 2020, the unprecedented situation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic exposed more clearly a series of exclusions and digital inequalities that were centered on the issue of connectivity and its asymmetries. Faced with a greater demand for connectivity for education, work, shopping, banking or state procedures, entertainment and information, these previous inequalities deepened, leaving a good part of the citizenry in a situation of greater relative lack with respect to the time before the pandemic, an issue that the National State addressed with different public policy tools. Among the different specific actions aimed at facilitating access to devices and connectivity, especially in the most vulnerable areas and popular neighborhoods, it is worth mentioning the Decree of Necessity and Urgency 690 of August 2020, which declares mobile telephony a public service, reestablishes the figure of “public services in competition” to Information Technology services (telephony, Internet, pay TV) and suspends tariff increases until the end of the year. At the closing of this chapter, aspects of the regulation of the Decree, especially those referring to the state intervention in the regulation of the tariffs of the services now declared public, were in court, partially implemented by only some companies, especially cooperatives that decided to comply with it.

## 1.6. Digital and Mobile Connectivity Infrastructure

Mobile telephony continues to be, together with free and open television, the most widespread information access technology, with a nationwide penetration that exceeds 100% in almost all regions of the country, and a national average of 120.1% according to ENaCom data for the third quarter of 2020. However, more than 50% of active mobile lines are prepaid, usually more widely used among lower-middle socioeconomic sectors. The deployment of 4G technology has grown rapidly in recent years, reaching a wide coverage of the territory. During 2020, the installation of the necessary infrastructure to bring the service to different points of the country slowed down, but did not stop. Nevertheless, as of the third quarter of 2020, 15 departments in 9 provinces did not have this type of service.

Regarding home broadband, the national average penetration reached 66.3% of the country's households, a slight increase compared to 2019, probably due to the greater number of activities that required internet access at home since the beginning of the quarantine. Likewise, there are regions such as the City of Buenos Aires where the adoption of the service is almost total, and other provinces such as Formosa, Mendoza, San Juan and Santa Cruz, where this figure does not exceed 40% of households. Although the national average speed exceeds 40 Mbps download (almost double that of the previous year) and access offers of more than +30 Mbps are common, 31% of domestic connections are concentrated in the speed range from 1 to 6 Mbps, with large variations in the speed available depending on the province. Fiber optics, one of the most robust technologies and with the best capabilities to support the transmission of large amounts of data such as

those required by VoD, represents 8.3% of accesses, almost two points more than the previous year<sup>8</sup>.

The territorial extension added to the dispersion of the population in rural areas or in small urban concentrations, combined with the absence or low quality of connectivity infrastructure in some regions and economic difficulties, impede Internet access. The absence of the market and the state in some areas of the country has allowed the deployment of telecommunications cooperatives and, more experimentally, the emergence of community internet access networks self-managed by the inhabitants themselves.

8 These are official data from ENaCom. Available at <https://indicadores.enacom.gob.ar/Informes>

## 2. Analysis of the Year: National and Ibero-American Premiere Fiction on Open TV

**Table 1. Fictions shown in 2020 (national and imported; releases, reprises and co-productions).**

<p><b>NATIONAL PREV. UNRELEASED PRODUCTIONS – 4</b></p> <p><b>El Trece- 1 national production</b> 1. <i>Separadas</i> (telenovela)</p> <p><b>TV Pública – 3 national productions</b> 2. <i>La Persuasión</i> (series) 3. <i>Si solo si 3</i> (miniseries) 4. <i>Terapia en cuarentena</i> (miniseries)</p> <p><b>Telefe - 0</b> <b>Canal 9 – 0</b> <b>América - 0</b> <b>NefTV – 0</b></p> <p><b>CO-PRODUCTIONS – 1</b></p> <p><b>Telefe – 1 production</b> 1. <i>Los Internacionales</i> (Argentina / Colombia)</p> <p><b>OBITEL IMPORTED PREV. UNRELEASED PRODUCTIONS –7</b></p> <p><b>Telefe – 3 productions</b> 1. <i>Acoso</i> (miniseries - Brazil) 2. <i>Club 57</i> (telenovela - Italy/USA hispanic) 3. <i>Jesús</i> (telenovela - Brazil)</p> <p><b>Net TV – 3 productions</b> 4. <i>Fugitivos</i> (series -Colombia) 5. <i>La ley secreta</i> (series -Colombia) 6. <i>La promesa</i> (series -Colombia)</p> <p><b>TV Pública – 1 production</b> 7. <i>La otra mirada</i> (series – Spain)</p> <p><b>NON OBITEL IMPORTED PREV. UNRELEASED PRODUCTIONS – 7</b></p> <p><b>Telefe – 7 productions</b> 1. <i>Alas rotas</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 2. <i>Cesur</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 3. <i>Fuerza de mujer</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 4. <i>Guerra de rosas</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 5. <i>Huérfanas</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 6. <i>Lazos de sangre</i> (telenovela – Turkey) 7. <i>Y tu quien eres</i> (telenovela – Turkey)</p>
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**REPRISE PRODUCTIONS – 30**

**Telefe – 3 productions**

1. *Casados con hijos* (series – Argentina)
2. *Elif* (telenovela – Turkey)
3. *Floricienta* (telenovela – Argentina)
4. *Perra vida* (series-Brazil)

**El Trece – 4 productions**

5. *Argentina tierra de amor y venganza* (telenovela – Argentina)
6. *El tigre Verón* (series – Argentina)
7. *Las mil y una noches* (telenovela – Turkey)
8. *Otros pecados* (miniseries – Argentina)

**Net TV – 8 productions**

9. *El cartel* (telenovela – Colombia)
10. *El patrón del mal* (telenovela – Colombia)
11. *La niña* (telenovela – Colombia)
12. *La reina del flow* (telenovela – Colombia)
13. *La ruta blanca* (telenovela – Colombia/Mexico)
14. *La viuda negra* (telenovela – Colombia)
15. *Las muñecas de la mafia* (telenovela – Colombia)
16. *Tiro de gracia* (telenovela – Colombia)

**TV Pública – 14 productions**

17. *Amores de historia* (miniseries – Argentina)
18. *Balas perdidas* (miniseries – Argentina)
19. *Conflictos modernos* (miniseries – Argentina)
20. *Doce casas* (miniseries – Argentina)
21. *El secretario* (miniseries – Argentina)
22. *En terapia* (miniseries – Argentina)
23. *Germán últimas viñetas* (miniseries – Argentina)
24. *Historia de un clan* (miniseries – Argentina)
25. *Jorge* (miniseries – Argentina)
26. *La última hora* (miniseries – Argentina)
27. *Las 13 esposas de Wilson Fernández* (miniseries – Argentina)
28. *Los Sónicos* (miniseries – Argentina)
29. *Ultimátum* (miniseries – Argentina)
30. *Variaciones Walsh* (miniseries – Argentina)

**GRAND TOTAL NATIONAL PREV. UNRELEASED: 5**

**GRAND TOTAL OBITEL PREV. UNRELEASED: 7**

**GRAND TOTAL NON OBITEL PREV. UNRELEASED: 7**

**GRAND TOTAL REPRISES: 30**

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.

In 2020, 11 Obitel productions were released, compared to 26 the previous year. This consolidates a downward trend that began in

2014 when the number of releases reached 48 productions. El Trece aired the first chapters of a telenovela, *Separadas*, whose recordings were first suspended due to the pandemic and then definitively cancelled. Telefe scheduled an Argentine-Colombian miniseries, *Los Internacionales*, in which its controlling company Viacom International Studios participated as producer, but with poor results in terms of audience. Finally, TV Pública presented three miniseries in an unprecedented way for open television, two of which were finished at the time of the beginning of the quarantine and a third which became the first fiction filmed in confinement. The persistence of Brazilian telenovelas broadcasted mainly by Telefe stands out, together with the novelty of Net TV, which intensified its fictional profile with narco telenovelas of Colombian origin.

**Table 2: Premiere fiction in 2020: Countries of origin**

Countries	Titles	%	Chapters/ Episodes	%	Hours	%
<b>NATIONAL (total)</b>	5	41,7	83	17,5	61:45	14,7
<b>OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)</b>	7	58,3	392	82,5	356:15	85,3
Argentina	4	33,3	75	15,8	55:00	13,2
Brazil	2	16,7	136	28,6	179:00	42,9
Chile	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Colombia	3	25,0	194	40,8	153:00	36,7
Ecuador	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Spain	1	8,3	2	0,4	01:25	0,3
USA (hispanic productions)	1	8,3	60	12,6	22:50	5,4
Mexico	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Peru	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Portugal	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Uruguay	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Venezuela	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>CO-PRODUCTIONS (total)</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
Argentine co-productions	1	0,0	8	0,0	06:45	0,0
Co-productions between Obitel countries	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	12	100,0	475	0,0	418:00	100,0

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.

As for national premiere fiction, there is a general drop in all the indicators observed in comparison with the previous year. In 2019, there were 18 national premiere productions, against 5 in 2020; the number of episodes fell from 480 to 83 and the number of hours from 371 to 61. However, Obitel premiere fiction registered a much milder drop and managed to keep its place on the local screen: it went from 8 productions in 2019 to 7 in 2020; from 421 episodes to 392 and from 293 hours to 356 last year.

**Table 3. Formats of national and Ibero-American fiction**

Format	National						Ibero-American					
	Titles	%	C/E	%	H	%	Titles	%	C/E	%	H	%
<b>Telenovela</b>	1	20,0	35	42,2	35:00	56,9	3	42,8	194	49,5	210:30	59,0
<b>Series</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	00:00	0,0	3	42,8	190	48,5	140:45	39,4
<b>Miniseries</b>	4	80,0	48	57,8	26:45	43,1	1	14,4	8	2,0	05:40	1,6
<b>Telefilm</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>Unitary series</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>Docudrama</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>Others</b>	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>61:45</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>356:15</b>	<b>100,0</b>

*Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.*

Considering the number of national releases, once again, as in the previous year, the miniseries prevails over the other formats. The telenovela, on the other hand, is first in the number of programmed hours among productions from the rest of Ibero-America.

**Table 4. Top 10 most watched shows on open television**

	Titles	Channel	Production company	Format/Genre	No. of chap/ep (in 2020)	Time slot	Rating (%)	Share (%)
1	<i>Jesús</i>	Telefe	Casablanca and RecordTV	Telenovela/Biblical	115	Prime Time	12,6	24,1
2	<i>Separadas</i>	El Trece	Pol-ka	Comedy	35	Prime Time	9,0	18,3
3	<i>Acoso</i>	Telefe	Globo	Miniseries/Drama	8	Prime Time	6,9	17,4
4	<i>Los internacionales</i>	Telefe	Viacom Studios	Miniseries/Crime	8	Night	4,6	12,8
5	<i>Club 57</i>	Telefe	Rainbow SpA and Nickelodeon	Telenovela/Musical	60	Morning	1,0	4,9
6	<i>La promesa</i>	Net TV	CMO/Caracol	Series/Drama	67	Afternoon	0,6	1,4
7	<i>La persuasión</i>	TV Pública	El Buey solo	Miniseries/Comedy	8	Night	0,5	2,2
8	<i>Fugitivos</i>	Net TV	Caracol	Series/Drama	19	Afternoon	0,5	1,3
9	<i>Terapia en cuarentena</i>	TV Pública	NOS/Contenidos Públicos S.E	Miniseries/Comedy	8	Night	0,3	1,2
10	<i>Si solo si</i>	TV Pública	Manda de Dos Producciones	Miniseries	24	Morning	0,2	0,8

*Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.*

The trend observed in recent years of a drop in the average rating and share of the ten most watched programs continues. Usually, the top ten presented by Obitel Argentina shows that Telefe and El Trece share almost equally in this list, both with national or Obitel productions. However, 2020 is atypical since the two leading channels programmed one national production each, being in the case of Telefe a co-production. After regaining the first place for a national production in 2019, during 2020 a Brazilian production takes over again as the most watched premiere fiction. In fact, if it were possible to consider fictions of Turkish origin, the list of the most watched fictions would include seven Turkish fictions, two Brazilian ones and only one from Argentina. Due to the very reduced broadcasting of national productions, it was unnecessary to prepare the table usually presented here with the most watched Argentine productions, because the previous table contains almost all the shows released, including all the national ones.

**Table 5. Audience profile of the 10 most watched shows: gender, age, socioeconomic level.**

Titles		Channel	Age groups %				
			4 - 12	13 - 18	19 - 24	35 - 44	45 +
1	<i>Jesús</i>	Telefe	18,4	23,2	24,1	17,1	17,3
2	<i>Separadas</i>	El Trece	13,3	24,7	18,9	26,8	16,2
3	<i>Acoso</i>	Telefe	14,6	19,0	28,6	17,0	20,8
4	<i>Los internacionales</i>	Telefe	13,6	25,3	27,6	17,5	16,1
5	<i>Club 57</i>	Telefe	29,6	19,6	27,5	13,7	9,5
6	<i>La promesa</i>	Net TV	11,2	11,6	41,4	10,8	25,1
7	<i>La persuasión</i>	TV Pública	34,5	4,0	3,8	23,5	34,1
8	<i>Fugitivos</i>	Net TV	26,9	22,8	19,2	7,0	24,0
9	<i>Terapia en cuarentena</i>	TV Pública	3,8	0,0	0,0	27,9	68,3
10	<i>Si solo si</i>	TV Pública	5,0	31,5	32,1	12,4	19,0

Titles		Channel	Gender %		Socioeconomic level %			
			Women	Men	ABC1	C2	C3	D
1	<i>Jesús</i>	Telefe	55,0	45,0	1,6	15,5	38,6	44,3
2	<i>Separadas</i>	El Trece	53,5	46,5	6,5	38,1	30,6	24,8
3	<i>Acoso</i>	Telefe	62,7	37,3	6,4	27,1	30,5	36,0
4	<i>Los internacionales</i>	Telefe	52,2	47,8	12,6	15,2	31,4	40,8
5	<i>Club 57</i>	Telefe	57,2	42,8	0,8	19,4	22,8	57,0
6	<i>La promesa</i>	Net TV	72,1	27,9	6,6	21,9	19,5	52,0
7	<i>La persuasión</i>	TV Pública	32,5	67,5	0,0	60,6	23,1	16,3
8	<i>Fugitivos</i>	Net TV	61,6	38,4	0,2	9,8	12,6	77,3
9	<i>Terapia en cuarentena</i>	TV Pública	19,6	80,4	0,0	17,0	51,4	31,5
10	<i>Si solo si</i>	TV Pública	37,5	62,5	4,2	26,3	52,6	16,9

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.

Measured by gender, this year the average audience is almost equally divided between women (50.4%) and men (49.6%), which may be explained not so much by changes in the profile of the programmed fictions as by the greater presence of the family at home throughout the day, as a result of the confinement. As for the socioeconomic level, the drop in audience with higher purchasing power accelerated

sharply, representing only 3.9% on average for the first 10 fictions. The middle class sectors (C2 and C3) concentrated 56.4% of the audience, while the remaining 39.7% was made up by those at the bottom of the pyramid by socioeconomic level. Audiences with greater purchasing power diversify their agenda of cultural consumption in the growing offer of video-on-demand platforms, while open television remains as a space for middle and popular sectors with lower incomes. 64.7% of the fiction audience on open TV is 18 years old or older, while the infant-juvenile audience represents the remaining 35.3%, a drop of 3% with respect to the previous year. In sum, despite the exceptionality of the year and the transformations in domesticity, open television and in particular fiction did not manage to revert trends that we have been reporting for several years referred to the gradual loss of open television audience, together with the impoverishment and aging of the audiences that consume fiction on that screen.

### **3. VoD 2020 Monitoring**

Since March and after the first containment measures against the Covid-19 pandemic implemented by the National Government, which included a prolonged period of social isolation, the greater permanence of people at home has altered the usual patterns of the attention economy. Available data show a greater growth in the number of subscribers to the main platforms, together with a greater number of hours dedicated to on-demand content viewing. The platforms benefited from the global context not only because of the greater availability of time and resources to devote to home entertainment, but also because of their business models independent of the advertising market, which is shrinking globally. At the same time, the greater planning in

the production of original content and the licensing of content produced in different countries allowed them, unlike linear television, to present novelties practically all year round. The early arrival of Disney+ in the region is a relevant fact for this market, but it is not yet on the radar of our observations, since so far it bases its content offer on the extensive catalog that precedes it rather than on the production of original fiction content.

### **3.1. VoD Platforms Market**

2020 was a year of landing, expansion and growth for several of the main video on demand platforms operating in the country. Netflix continues to be the main player in this market. According to data from local consulting firm Carrier y Asociados, it was estimated that by mid-2020 there were 4.8 million subscribers to the Netflix service in the country, which due to account sharing and family consumption practices represents a much higher number of actual viewers. The figure is significant because in the midst of the pandemic, the platform managed to attract 800 thousand new subscribers compared to the previous year, according to the same consultant. If we consider the total imports of audiovisual services made in 2020, 65% correspond to Netflix, 18% to Spotify and 17% to all other platforms that offer on-demand audiovisual services from outside the country. Considering that there are more than 7 million households with broadband in the country, VoD services would still have ample room to continue growing, unlike the situation in markets such as the United States and Canada, which are already close to saturation. However, in 2020 Netflix also began to feel the increased competitive pressure from other large corporations that made their definitive launches in the region (González, 2020). In particular,

Disney+ advanced its plans for Latin America with a large and familiar catalog, reaching almost 3.5 million downloads of its app between October 2020 and February 2021, according to Statista estimates (2020).

State-owned platforms also grew in the year of the pandemic, particularly Cine.ar Play, the VoD of the National Film Institute (INCAA) which offered Argentine content in free mode and national film releases in pay-per-transaction mode (TVOD). According to data presented by SInCA, the platform reached 514 thousand active users in 2020, compared to 250 thousand the previous year.

### **3.2. VoD Analysis in 2020: National and Ibero-American Premiere Fiction**

In 2019 Obitel Argentina had reported the release on platforms of 13 productions of national origin, 39 from Ibero-American countries and 2 co-productions. In 2020, in terms of national releases, the number of releases did not vary significantly in relation to the previous year, although there was an increase in the number of productions from Obitel, especially thanks to the greater incorporation of content to Prime Video's catalog, which grew from 3 to 17 Ibero-American productions in one year. In the same vein, the Movistar+ platform grew from 4 productions offered in 2019 to 10 included in 2020. With the exception of Netflix, which maintained at 24 the number offered in the year-on-year comparison, the platforms significantly increased their offer of Spanish-language content. This can be explained by the search to capture market share in a pandemic context in which audiences spent more time consuming on-demand content and subscriptions to this type of service grew.



**Table 6. National and Ibero-American fiction programs screened in 2020 in VoD systems**

NATIONAL RELEASED PRODUCTIONS	IBERO-AMERICAN RELEASED PRODUCTIONS	CO-PRODUCTIONS
<p><b>Cablevisión FLOW – 5 national productions</b></p> <p>1. <i>Tony</i> (miniseries)  2. <i>Adentro</i> (miniseries)  3. <i>Pepper, todo por un like</i> (miniseries)  4. <i>Post Mortem</i> (miniseries)  5. <i>Famoso</i> (miniseries)</p> <p><b>Netflix – 3 national productions</b></p> <p>6. <i>Puerta 7</i> (miniseries)  7. <i>Casi Feliz</i> (miniseries)  8. <i>Secreto bien guardado</i> (miniseries)</p> <p><b>Cont.ar –3 national productions</b></p> <p>9. <i>Terapia en cuarentena</i> (miniseries)  10. <i>No grites</i> (miniseries)  11. <i>La Persuasión</i> (miniseries)</p> <p><b>Movistar Play– 1 national production</b></p> <p>12. <i>Manual de Supervivencia</i> (miniseries)</p>	<p><b>Netflix – 24 Ibero-American productions</b></p> <p>1. <i>La Casa de las Flores 3</i> (series - Mexico)  2. <i>Control Z</i> (series - Mexico)  3. <i>Diablero</i> (series - Mexico)  4. <i>Oscuro Deseo</i> (series - Mexico)  5. <i>Historia de un crimen. La búsqueda</i> (series - Mexico)  6. <i>Desenfrenadas</i> (series - Mexico)  7. <i>Onisciente</i> (series - Brazil)  8. <i>Spectros</i> (series - Brazil)  9. <i>Reality Z</i> (series - Brazil)  10. <i>Boca a Boca</i> (series - Brazil)  11. <i>Coisa Mais Linda</i> (series - Brazil)  12. <i>3 %</i> (series - Brazil)  13. <i>Bom dia, Verónica</i> (series - Brazil)  14. <i>El robo del siglo</i> (series - Colombia)  15. <i>La venganza de Analia</i> (series - Colombia)  16. <i>Amar y Vivir</i> (series - Colombia)  17. <i>Alguien tiene que morir</i> (miniseries - Spain)  18. <i>El desorden que dejas</i> (miniseries - Spain)  19. <i>Élite</i> (series - Spain)  20. <i>Las chicas del cable</i> (series - Spain)  21. <i>Los favoritos de Midas</i> (series - Spain)  22. <i>El sabor de las margaritas</i> (series - Spain)  23. <i>Valeria</i> (series - Spain)  24. <i>Vivir sin permiso</i> (series - Spain)</p>	<p><b>Prime Video – 1 production</b></p> <p>1. <i>El Presidente</i> (miniseries – Argentina, Chile)</p> <p><b>Cablevisión Flow – 1 production</b></p> <p>2. <i>Los Internacionales</i> (miniseries - Argentina, Colombia)</p>

NATIONAL RELEASED PRODUCTIONS	IBERO-AMERICAN RELEASED PRODUCTIONS	CO-PRODUCTIONS
	<p><b>Amazon Prime – 17 Ibero-American productions</b></p> <p>25. <i>De brutas nada</i> (series - Mexico)  26. <i>Cómo sobrevivir soltero</i> (series - Mexico)  27. <i>Pan y Circo</i> (series - Mexico)  28. <i>El Candidato</i> (series - Mexico)  29. <i>Home Office</i> (unitary series - Mexico)  30. <i>Homens?</i> (series - Brazil)  31. <i>Impuros</i> (series - Brazil)  32. <i>Sonhadores</i> (series - Brazil)  33. <i>Me Chama de Bruna</i> (series - Brazil)  34. <i>1 Contra Todos</i> (series - Brazil)  35. <i>Dignidade</i> (series - Brazil)  36. <i>Caronte</i> (series - Spain)  37. <i>Desaparecidos</i> (series - Spain)  38. <i>El cid</i> (miniseries - Spain)  39. <i>Inés del alma mía</i> (series – Spain, Chile)  40. <i>Madres</i> (series - Spain)  41. <i>El pueblo</i> (series - Spain)</p> <p><b>Movistar+ – 10 Ibero—American productions</b></p> <p>42. <i>Antidistubios</i> (series - Spain)  43. <i>El embarcadero</i> (series - Spain)  44. <i>Justo antes de Cristo</i> (series - Spain)  45. <i>La línea invisible</i> (series - Spain)  46. <i>La unidad</i> (series - Spain)  47. <i>Mira lo que has hecho</i> (series - Spain)  48. <i>Nasdrovia</i> (series - Spain)  49. <i>Skam</i> (series - Spain)  50. <i>Vergüenza</i> (series - Spain)  51. <i>Dime quién soy</i> (series - Spain)</p> <p><b>Claro Video – 5 Ibero-American productions</b></p> <p>52. <i>DesHecho en casa</i> (series - Mexico)  53. <i>Orgullo México</i> (series - Mexico)  54. <i>Herederos por Accidente</i> (series - Mexico)  55. <i>Promesas de Campaña</i> (series - Mexico)  56. <i>Manual para Galanes</i> (series - Mexico)</p>	
<b>Total: 12</b>	<b>Total: 56</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL: 70</b>		

Source: *Obitel Argentina*.

Cablevisión Flow (Grupo Clarín) operates as a space for the distribution of content from the Group's own channels, but mainly from pay TV signals, other on-air channels and exclusive content, whether licensed or originally produced. In 2020, a trend that we had already reported the previous year was consolidated, referring to the licensing of webseries produced in the university environment, particularly from the Universidad de Tres de Febrero (Buenos Aires). Flow has already incorporated at least a dozen webseries produced by the university into its catalog.

**Table 7. Premiere fiction in 2020 in VoD: countries of origin.**

Country	Titles	%
<b>NATIONAL (total)</b>	12	17,2
<b>OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)</b>	55	78,5
<b>Argentina</b>	12	17,1
<b>Brazil</b>	13	18,5
<b>Chile</b>	1	1,4
<b>Colombia</b>	3	4,2
<b>Spain</b>	23	32,8
<b>USA (Hispanic productions)</b>	0	0,0
<b>Mexico</b>	16	22,8
<b>Peru</b>	0	0,0
<b>Portugal</b>	0	0,0
<b>Uruguay</b>	0	0,0
<b>Venezuela</b>	0	0,0
<b>CO-PRODUCTIONS (total)</b>	3	4,3
<b>Argentine co-productions</b>	2	0,0
<b>Co-productions between OBITEL countries</b>	1	0,0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Obitel Argentina.

In the VoD platforms observed, fiction from Obitel countries prevails, especially Spain, Mexico and Brazil, where both Netflix and other global services have maintained for some years an intense policy of local content production. Argentina lags behind insofar as local productions generated by international services are still scarce. At the close of this chapter, the global platform had in production stage the second season of the original series *Casi Feliz* and a new production, *El Reino*, both with a release date for 2021.

## **4. Fiction and Audience Participation in Digital Environments**

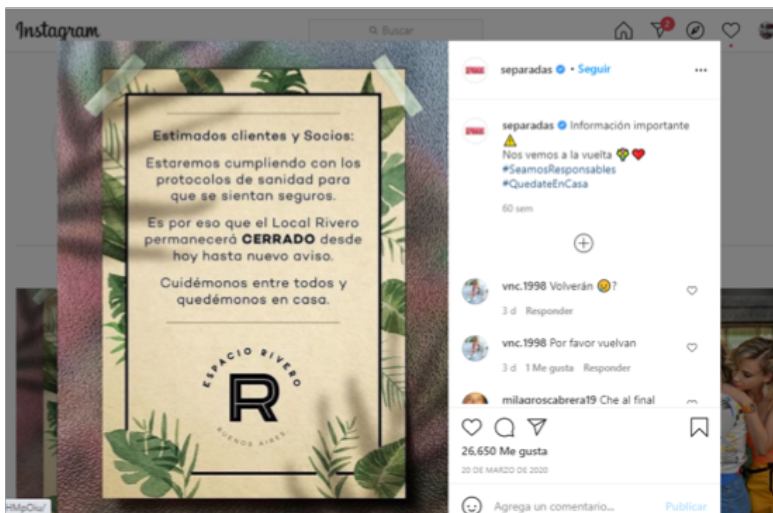
### **4.1 Digital Expansion Proposals**

The already reported drop in the open television audience does not imply an absence of serialized fiction consumption; streaming platforms were the big winners during the pandemic (see above). Although we do not yet have data quantifying the number of viewers who switched from the TV screen to other forms of viewing, in Argentina the arrival of streaming companies has grown, to which are added other state-owned platforms and new more curated proposals such as Retina Latina -Latin American audiovisual-, Mubi -which makes available for a period of thirty days one film per day with an explicit curatorial criteria-, Qubit -according to its own description “the best cinema in the world selected by experts”-, among other platforms. In addition to these, there are spaces that the channels or series themselves provide for the viewing of their productions (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.). Streaming and video on demand platforms have expanded not only the contents traditionally watched through pay TV, but also the possibility of on-demand viewing of productions released on TV screens. This is the case of Cont.ar, the state-owned streaming platform that operates in parallel with Televisión Pública, but also works as a digital reposi-

tory and at the same time has a pay TV signal. Thus, the proliferation of viewing possibilities of a single national production is multiplied by at least three, not counting the rerun strategies on websites of the television channels themselves, their YouTube channels, etc.

In 2020, El Trece allocates a space on its website for viewing the 36 chapters of *Separadas*, but offers only the chapters, which can also be found on YouTube. On Instagram, the show especially showed photos of the actors and actresses prior to the premiere and then images of the characters in moments in and out of the fiction. In this network, the ending of the show itself was announced in a fictional way, but anchored in the health context of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the closing of the bar that was part of the plot.

**Image 1: Last post on the official Instagram profile of the telenovela *Separadas* (El Trece)**



Source: Instagram profile @separadas

On the other hand, the case of the third season of *Si solo si* (TV Pública), a fiction series that includes actors with disabilities among its protagonists and has its own website, is very interesting, since its arrival to open television is subsequent to other initiatives. “*Si solo si* is an integrated concept that started in 2012 with a web series and began to evolve into what it is today... a brand that transcends television and is also developed on other platforms. The different products where the concept of *Si solo Si* is reflected are, without a doubt, of a nobility and perseverance that transcends the individual work of its creator, Sebastián Suárez. Teamwork, professionalism and above all passion make *Si solo Si* what it is today and what it will be over time, as the concept is constantly evolving. It highlights the idea of integrated television, which stands out for being the project that kicked off the inclusion of people with disabilities to the public in a massive way, as it is the first fiction series in the history of world television that integrates actors with and without disabilities in its cast”<sup>9</sup>.

Thus, *Si solo si* is present in all social networks, in state platforms such as Cont.ar and, as reported, it was released on the screen of Televisión Pública. In these spaces the subject matter of the story is exceeded, information on the topics of various disabilities is disseminated; on Instagram there were different live events with actors of the series, as well as previews, promotional material and images of the chapters and the backstage. On their website they also have exclusive content such as “kitchen” (where they present videos teaching recipes), a mobile cinema for schools, information about a documentary in preparation, and a book on disability issues made in conjunction with the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI).

Of all the transmediality proposals, *Si solo si* becomes the most interesting, given that it not only shares its programming on se-

9 <http://www.sisolosi.tv/productora/quienes-somos>

cond screens, but from these spaces it can summon viewers beyond the screens, offering contents beyond the fiction itself.

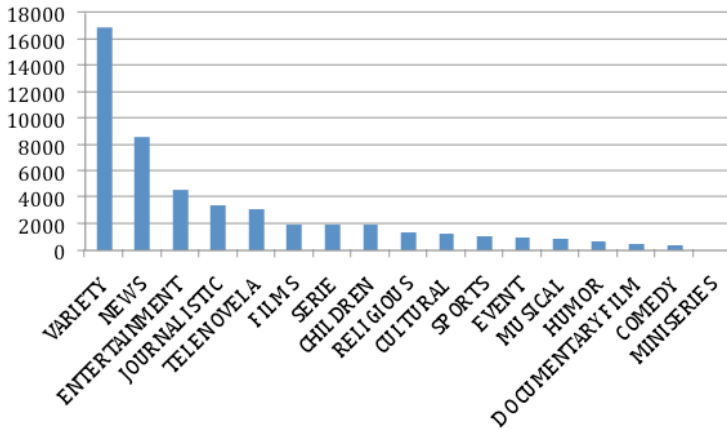
## 5. Highlights of the Year

Throughout 2020, the highlight of the year was the change in the relative weight of the open television offer. Although, as reported in the previous sections, fiction maintained a space on the television screen (30 reruns in 2020, compared to 3 in 2019), the production of national fiction stopped. This allowed a comeback of other genres such as magazine and entertainment programs. The context of Preventive and Compulsory Social Isolation first and of Social Distancing later, also implied a greater demand for information, and thus a greater television turn-on. As can be seen in the report of the ten most watched fictions, it was not premiere fiction that summoned that returning audience; rather, entertainment and contest programs enjoyed the audience's favor. While the show *100 argentinos dicen* returned to El Trece, *Corte y confección* and *El gran premio de la Cocina* received more broadcasting hours.

On the other hand, Telefe celebrated its 30th anniversary with a successful strategy (and very appropriate to the context), reintroducing on its screen many of the mythical fictions of its history. It was a segment called *30 años juntos* (30 years together), in which episodes of *Casi Ángeles*, *Educando a Nina*, *Los Roldán* and *Atraverse* were broadcasted. Foreign fictions such as *Avenida Brasil*, *¿Qué culpa tiene Fatmagul?* or *Moisés y los 10 mandamientos* were also part of the self-homage. Thus, the screen was filled with familiar narratives and nostalgia.

If we observe the distribution of hours by genre, we can see that the number of hours devoted to information in general prevails over the other genres, as well as the prominent place of entertainment.

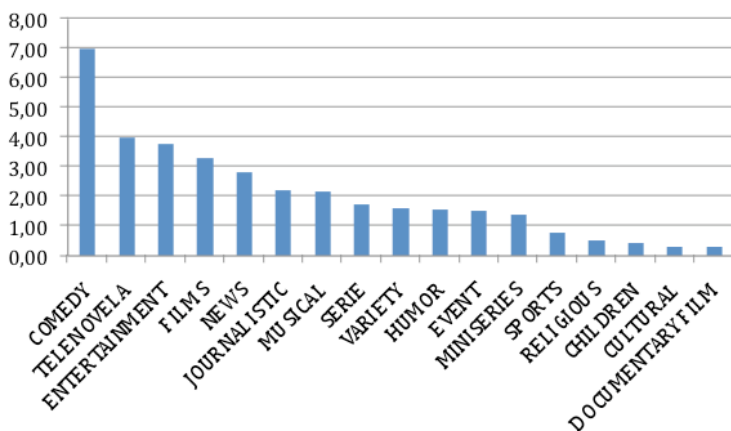
**Graph 4. Number of hours broadcasted by genre**



*Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.*

If, on the other hand, we look at ratings by genre, we see that the space of fiction programs in the audience’s preference is preserved, together with a greater interest in information. A relevant fact that allows us to see a possible reconversion of the open television offer is the greater prominence of entertainment programs with an acceptable performance. El Trece, for example, programmed this genre in the evening during the whole year.



**Graph 5. Household rating by genre**

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina.

As for premiere fiction, it is worth noting that four of the five released fictions were programmed in non-commercial spaces. They had an important thematic variety. The aforementioned third season of *Si solo si* shows that disabilities do not make useless individuals; *La persuasión* deals with a paranoid plot, a criticism of the media treatment and use of information; *Terapia en cuarentena*, on the other hand, deals with the quarantine situation as it happens, based on the already known fictional format of the therapy session; finally, *Separadas* was an orchestral story, in which seven women were victims of a real estate fraud. The role of Televisión Pública is interesting since it chose to program premiere fictions with content that goes beyond the fiction space and clear weight of social merchandising; however, and as it usually happens, the spaces in which these fictions were programmed do not manage to attract the audience's attention.

## 6. Theme of the Year

As pointed out in previous sections, during 2020 Argentine fiction production came to a complete halt. In March, the Preventive and Mandatory Social Isolation is established. Although the change from Isolation to Distancing took place only in November, throughout the year several activities were incorporated with protocols. Until August, all face-to-face activities not defined as essential were suspended. Within this framework, several protocols and good practice recommendations began to be approved due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this context, in April -one month after PMSI's first announcement-, El Trece's most important show, *Separadas*, announced its suspension and later its cancellation. We understand that this total paralysis is unprecedented since the beginning of open television in Argentina.

Over the months and the decisions to program foreign fiction, many actors' groups demanded that the open television channels should reinstate national fictions in order to collect for the performing rights, since the sector collapsed abruptly. This crisis also reached the production companies, the most notable case is that of the production company associated to El Trece, Pol-Ka, which in July announced a terminal crisis and the closing of its doors, and had to lay off at the end of the year about fifty percent of its employees (140 dismissals). In this way, the production company, which up to five years ago released on El Trece two daily series per year and a biannual unitary series, avoided bankruptcy.

Also, in an extraordinary way, the exhibition of films in movie theaters and live shows was stopped. In this context, many actors and actresses turned to the production of shows by streaming and from their own homes, either by re-staging filmed theater, or by devising

new forms of production for it. An extreme case was the experience of telephone theater, in which the recipients received audios of the play on their cell phones for several days.

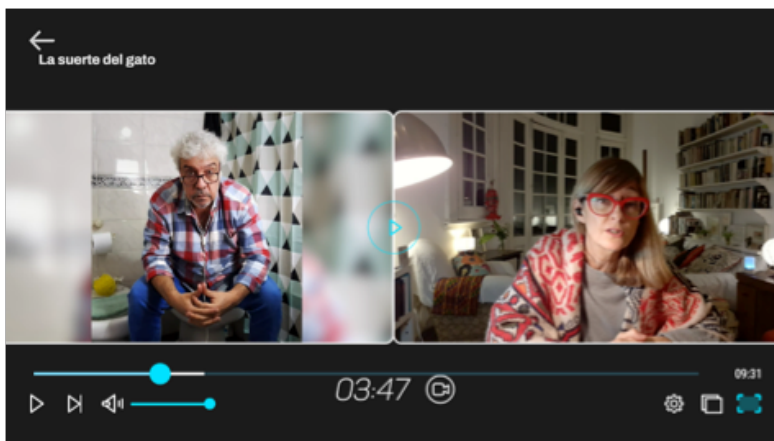
The possibility of producing fiction with the corresponding protocol was submitted to the Executive Power in August by the National Ministry of Culture. It establishes parameters that make audiovisual production almost unfeasible. In addition to the sanitary recommendations, the staggering of tasks to summon as few people as possible for the filming, the general information and preventive sanitary recommendations, temperature controls and swabs, it is established that “The Companies shall take all possible preventive measures so that in all books and/or formats they try to keep the distance between the members of the Artistic Team/Extras/participants as well as the Technical Team and minimize the contact between them, following for each case the indications published by the competent health authorities and the Occupational Risk Prevention Plan specific to each production” (2020:28-9). In this sense, it is not possible to make recordings on location, since the plot makes it necessary for the actors to be at a distance of less than the recommended 2 meters.

Despite these restrictions, one pandemic fiction stands out. It is *Terapia en Cuarentena*, released in August. According to Emanuel Respighi, “Rosario (Mercedes Funes) is a mother who cannot solve -much less enjoy- her motherhood in quarantine. Julio (Coco Sily) is a sixty-something who moved into his mother’s house to take care of her and suffers the coexistence to the point of suffocation. Malena (Violeta Urtizbera) is a doctor who intervenes in the pandemic and the neighbors of the building where she lives want to lynch her for fear of her infecting them. Diego (Luciano Cáceres) is a gay man who cannot stand the confinement, the impossibility of going to the gym and the inactive sexual life imposed by the pandemic. They all suffer the mandatory

preventive social isolation, but they do not know each other. They only share the same therapist, Anita (Carola Reyna), who tries to help them solve their problems through online sessions. That is the relationship scenario of *Terapia en cuarentena*, the only fiction that could be filmed in the country since the sanitary emergency was decreed” (2021).

In the article, Respighi points out that “It was the actual actors and actresses who recorded themselves, but they were assisted and directed remotely by the creative team of the NOS production company. To do so, each of the cast members received -by messenger- a smart cell phone and basic camera and photography equipment, as well as prevention and safety elements (such as masks, alcohol gel, gloves). All this remotely recorded material was finally edited by the production company’s post-production team, with each of the technicians involved also from their homes” (2021).

### **Image 2: *Terapia en cuarentena* (Televisión Pública)**



Source: *screenshot. www.cont.ar*

An interesting aspect of the only Argentine fiction series filmed in pandemic about the pandemic is that the variety of situations in which the characters find themselves allows the emergence of the various troubles and sensations caused by the isolation, both of those who are facing the health situation and those who live with people at risk, seeing their daily lives and routines altered. These plots are also developed through a very interesting camera set-up. The computer or cell phone camera situation allows the image to “fall”, “freeze”, “pixelate”, turning the therapy device itself into an intriguing space for audiovisual experimentation. The unusual interruption of the sessions thus becomes one of the leitmotifs of the series, which often brings a humorous tone to a distressing situation. This processing of the confinement that *Terapia en Cuarentena* presents as fiction extraordinarily questions its audience as well as their own experiences.

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