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U.S. HISPANIC:

TELEVISION IN THE TIMES OF A PANDEMIC¹

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has been not only a health crisis challenge that society had to face through different measures such as sanitation, isolation and lockdowns in contemporary times, but also has underscored and exacerbated events and phenomena within U.S. socio-cultural and political realities with an effect that defined the direction of the country. The lockdown that the population has endured because of the pandemic, drove people to find solace or shelter in the television screens and digital platforms,

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looking for information about what was happening around them at local, but also at national levels, as never before. This made more visible different social problems, such as racism, xenophobia, police brutality, which became central issues in the current electoral campaigns for the presidency. Two of the most visible signs were, on the one hand, the national protests called by the *Black Lives Matters* movement, which denounced police brutality against the African American population, and on the other hand, the surge of alt-right groups aligned to the ideology of white supremacy gathered through militia organizations in different places across the country. In this context, the 2020 presidential elections became a referendum on the kind of country it should be before the elections of two diametrically opposed candidates, not only as a result of their political agendas, but because of their personal styles to face the pandemic and the different social challenges before them. Donald Trump was looking for his reelection representing the Republican Party against Joe Biden, ex-vice-president from the Obama administration, representing the Democratic Party. The 2020 elections, produced a deep division, with pernicious effects at social levels, dividing families, friends, and co-workers because of electoral preferences.

Most likely, “the mood” of the audiences, who looked for a space to scape before the deadly reality of the pandemic and the deeply divided “socio-political” realities, it was reflected on the unexpected change in the consumption’s trend of fictional content in the last decade. The trend before the pandemic was a gradual but consistent decline in ratings on traditional telenovela before the surge of new action-driven narratives anchored in suspense and noir, targeting young and male audiences, exemplified by the

rise in ratings of narco-themed telenovelas, promoted by the network Telemundo as *Super Series*. This resulted in Telemundo's claim of the first place in ratings among audiences between 18 to 49 years old in 2019. In August 2020, Natalie Krittoef, a *New York Times* journalist, pointed out to this phenomenon arguing that audiences were looking for a space to escape from the harsh realities of the pandemic. Traditional melodrama seemed to offer an emotional shelter in turbulent times. The results obtained by Nielsen in terms of which were the fictional most watched titles seem to confirm this diagnosis. The traditional telenovela was the big ratings winner in 2020. Univision reclaimed its ratings hegemony and its melodramas took all the positions in the ten most watched fictional titles list of 2020. In contrast, Telemundo did not have a strong or well know *Super Series* title as part of their fictional offer in this year. It is important to remember that in the last season of *El Señor de los Cielos*, the network lost Rafael Amaya from its leading role diminishing greatly the appeal of this *Super Series*.

It is also important to consider the finishing of a cycle of reordering in the Hispanic television industry in which all the corporations, with the only exception of Telemundo, changed ownership and went through a corporate and institutional reordering.

1. U.S. Hispanic audiovisual context in 2020

1.1 Open TV in the U.S. Hispanic market

The selling of the Hispanic media conglomerate Univision Communications Inc. to Searchlight Capital Partners LP and Forge-Light LLC in 2020, closed a period of profound corporate transformation of the national Spanish language broadcasting television networks in the United States. The result of these changes has been the transfer from Latina/o and/or Latin American owners to financial entities and Corporate America ownership. The very same trend that happened with Hispanic radio and newspapers, is now happening to national television broadcasters. First it was Azteca America, a property of Mexican TV Azteca (owned by the Salinas Group), that was bought by the corporation HC2 Holdings in 2017. Later, in 2019, EstrellaTV, a television network as subsidiary of Liberman Media, owned by Lenard Liberman, a Mexican-American, was bought by HSP Investment Partner LCC. Now, Univision Communication Inc. is bought by Searchlight Capital and Forge-Light (both with 64% of the shares), while Televisa keeps the 36% of the company's ownership. Televisa keeps its programming and advertising agreements with the new owners, which makes Univision the only national broadcasting television corporation that still preserves ownership from a Latina/o or Latin American person or entity in the United States. Telemundo, the other hegemonic national Spanish language television network, is a subsidiary of the media corporation NBC-Universal, a division of the telecommunication giant Comcast.

Chart 1. Hispanic national television networks in the U.S.

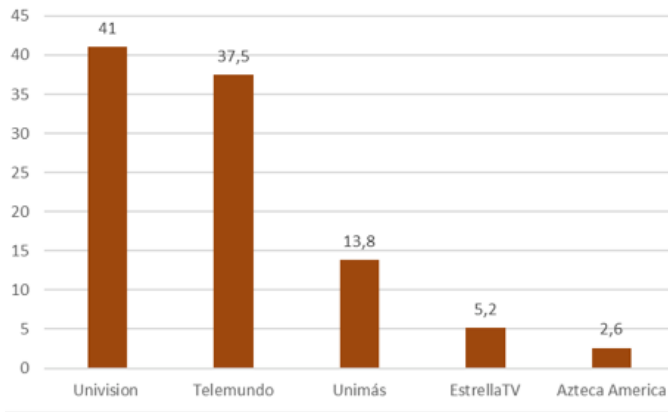
Private channels
Azteca America
EstrellaTV
Telemundo
UniMás
Univision
CHANNELS: 5

Source: *Obitel U.S. Nielsen*

In 2020, the sister networks Univision and UniMás had an increase on audience’s share in the Hispanic television market in contrast to 2019; while Telemundo, EstrellaTV and Azteca America saw a decrease on their numbers.

Graph 1. TV audience’s share by network

Channel	Share % HHL D
Univision	41.0
Telemundo	37.5
Unimás	13.8
EstrellaTV	5.2
Azteca America	2.6
TOTAL	100

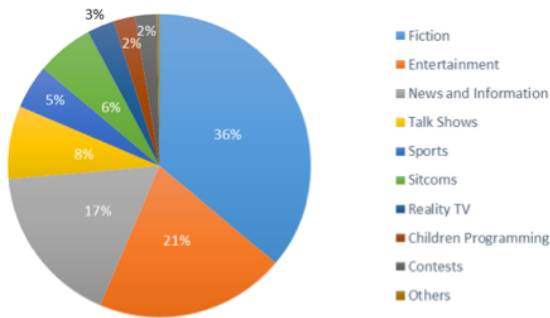


Source: Obitel U.S. - Nielsen

In relation to the programming offer by television genre, fiction keeps its leadership in the screen in terms of programming hours, followed by entertainment and news. Fictional content had a slight increase on its offer in relation to 2019, with one percentage point up. But the trend of keeping its presence around the 35% to 36%, is way too low from the visibility that this genre had during the first half of the 2010 decade, in which represented at least the 40% constantly. News had a slight increase in relation to last year, and entertainment had a marginal decrease, but numbers were mostly consistence in comparison to those of 2019. The most visible variation happened in the realm of sports, which offering fall from the 6.7% in 2019, to 4.7% in 2020, because of the cancellation of sporting events due to the pandemic.

Graph 2. TV programming by genre

Broadcast genres	Hours	%
Fiction	11 675:53	36.1
Entertainment	6 594:14	20.3
News and Information	5 573:46	17.2
Talk Shows	2 527:33	7.8
Sports	1 524:47	4.7
Sitcoms	1 975:54	6.1
Reality TV	928:03	2.9
Children Programming	743:00	2.3
Contests	758:00	2.3
Others	81:28	0.3
TOTAL	32 382:39	100.0



Source: Obitel U.S. - Nielsen

1.2. Pay TV and VoD platforms in Hispanic television

In 2020, Galavisión maintained its leadership as the most watched pay television network in Spanish in the U.S.; while TDUN (sports) kept its second place. Both networks are subsidiaries from Univision Communication Inc. In third place, Universo, climbs one place with a key increase on audiences. Universo is the sister pay TV of Telemundo, a subsidiary of NBC-U/Comcast. It is important to underscore that, with the exception of the Univision owned networks, all the most watched pay television networks are subsidiaries from the largest media corporations in the U.S., NBC/Comcast, Fox Corporation, Disney, Discovery Inc., ATT/Warner Media and the Mexican corporation MVS.

Chart 2. Pay television networks in the U.S.

Most watched pay TV Networks in 2020
1) Galavisión (general), 2) TDUN (sports), 3) Universo (general), 4) Fox Deportes (sports), 5) Discovery Familia (information), 6) ESPN Deportes (sports), 7) Cine Latino (movies), 8) Discovery en Español (information) 9) CNN en Español (news), 10) Nat Geo Mundo (information)
TOTAL: 10 channels

Source: Obitel U.S. Nielsen

In 2020, several new players emerged in the SVoD landscape of streaming, as well as television networks offering their content online. To the already established SVoD players lead by

Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Disney+ and AppleTV+, were joined in 2020 with HBOMax (formerly HBO Now, WarnerMedia), Peacock (NBC-Universal/Comcast), and in 2021 Paramount+ (formerly CBS All Access, Viacom).

In the realm of Spanish language television, Univision have its digital services UVideos and Univision Now, but it has been working on collaboration with Televisa to launch a new platform named PrendeTV, to enter fully in competition to the other larger conglomerates. For its part, the Telemundo’s App offers its programming catalog on demand, and it’s also integrated into the offering of the Peacock platform from NBC/Comcast.

Chart 3. VoD in the United States

Main active VoD platforms in 2020	Total
Netflix, Prime Video (Amazon) Hulu (Disney), Disney+, HBOMax (ATT/WarnerMedia), Paramount+ (Viacom/CBS), Peacock (NBC/Comcast) AppleTV+	8
TOTAL	8

Source: Obitel U.S.

1.3 Independent house productions in television fiction

Argos Comunicación, TeleColombia (formerly FoxTeleColombia, now owned by Disney), W Studios and Lemon Studios are the four most important independent production houses for their

key role in the production of fiction for the main national television Spanish language networks in the United States. In particular, Argos Comunicación, has become, in the last decade, the central piece in the production formula of success from Telemundo, followed by TeleColombia, while W Studios and Lemon Studios have also produced key successful fictional titles for Televisa and Univision.

1.4. Audiovisual sector's sources of funding

Based on the fourth quarterly report and annual financial report, Univision Communication Inc. and Comcast (owner of Telemundo) presented a decrease in their net revenues in 2020, in relation to the 2019. Univision decreased its net revenues from USD \$2.68 billion dollars in 2019, to USD \$2.54 billion. While Comcast reported net revenues of USD \$103.5 billion dollars in 2020, below the USD \$108.9 billion dollars from 2019. Also, the financial results from the fourth quarterly report from HC2 (owner of Azteca America), show a decrease in the consolidated net revenues with USD \$ 1,005 million dollars in 2020, below to the USD \$1,077 million dollars in 2019. There is not information available in the case of EstrellaTV, which is now a subsidiary of Estrella Media.

1.5. Communication policies

One of the most important issues in regards to media policies in 2020 was the possibility to establish a regulatory framework for the operation of Silicon Valley corporations, in particular in relation to the bigger multinational corporations which control social media such as Facebook/Instagram/WhatsApp, Twitter, Google/YouTube, Apple and TikTok. The debate was triggered by

the large amount of misleading information that circulates in these platforms, as well as the increase on the hate speech, particularly in ascendancy during the presidency of Donald Trump. This discussion carries the distinction between the rights of free speech given by the constitution and the ones of hate speech. Corporations of social media are protected against litigations and lawsuits, because in contrast to media corporations, they are not considered as the authors of the content published through their platforms. As private companies they can follow their own rules in relation to censorship or the elimination of any content in their digital spaces. The huge disinformation flows in social media networks triggered the creation of special sessions with lawmakers in Washington, in which the owners of these companies were questioned and asked for a more proactive position in relation to the prevention of hate speech and disinformation. However, they were unable to create an official regulation for these objectives.

1.6. Infrastructure of digital and mobile connectivity

Accordingly with the Pew Research Center, the 98% of the population in the United States has a mobile telephone, and the 81% are smart phones. 96% of Hispanics in the U.S. has a mobile, and 79% own a smart phone. The 74% of the adult population has a desktop or a laptop, and 52% has a tablet. But the young population, and social minorities, including Latina/os and the poorest population in the U.S., rely on smart phones to have access to internet services. The same center reports that 90% of the adult population uses internet, while in the case of the Hispanic adult population is 86%. Furthermore, 73% of the general popu-

lation have access to broadband services. But in the case of the Hispanic population, they have only 61% access to broadband in contrast to 66% of African American population, and 71% of the white population. Mobile telephone dependency to have access to internet is of 12% of the white population, 23% of the African American population, and 25% of the Hispanic population (Pew Research Center, 2019).

2. Analysis of the year: national and Ibero American premiere fiction

The impact of Covid-19 in the programming lineups in 2020 was felt in the reduction of premiere titles released during that year. In 2020 there were released only 28 new titles, way below the 45 titles premiered in 2019. In 2020 there were 46 reruns only 4 below the 50 rerun titles on 2019. In relation to national premiere titles, the decrease was of 3 titles, from 12 in 2019 to 9 in 2020. In the realm of *Obitel* premiered titles, the decrease was more profound: there were only 19 new titles, in contrast to the 33 released in 2019. It is important to emphasize that the decrease in new titles was compensated, not in the number of reruns titles including in the programming lineup, but by the number of total hours that these reruns represented.

Table 1. Fictions broadcast in 2020 (national and imported; premiered, reruns and co-productions)

PREMIERE NATIONAL TITLES – N° 9

Telemundo – N° 7 national titles

1. *100 Días Para Enamoraros* (telenovela)
2. *Decisiones: Unos Ganan, Otros Pierden* (unitario)
3. *La Doña 2* (telenovela, U.S. - Mexico)
4. *Enemigo Íntimo 2* (telenovela, U.S. - Mexico)
5. *Falsa Identidad 2* (telenovela, U.S. - Mexico)
6. *Operación Pacífico* (telenovela, U.S. - Colombia)
7. *El Señor de los Cielos 7* (telenovela, U.S. - Mexico)

Univision – N° 1 national title

8. *El Dragón: El Regreso del Guerrero* (telenovela, U.S. - Mexico)

UniMás – N° 1 national title

9. *Dani Who?* (series, U.S. - Mexico)

PREMIERE IMPORTED TITLES – N° 19

Azteca America – N° 1 titles

10. *Bajo el Alma* (telenovela – Mexico)

Telemundo – N° 2 titles

11. *La Ley del Corazón* (telenovela – Colombia)
12. *Sobreviviendo Escobar* (telenovela – Colombia)

Univision – N° 15 titles

13. *Cita a Ciegas* (telenovela – Mexico)
14. *Como Dice el Dicho* (unitary – Mexico)
15. *Como Tu No Hay 2* (telenovela – Mexico)
16. *Dulce Ambición* (telenovela – Brazil)
17. *Hijas de la Luna* (telenovela – Mexico)
18. *Imperio de Mentiras* (telenovela – Mexico)
19. *Me Declaro Culpable* (telenovela – Mexico)
20. *M.D. Línea de la Vida* (telenovela – Mexico)
21. *Ringo: La Pelea de la Vida* (telenovela – Mexico)
22. *La Rosa de Guadalupe* (unitary – Mexico)
23. *Rubi 2020* (telenovela – Mexico)
24. *Sin Miedo a la Verdad* (unitary – Mexico)
25. *Te Doy la Vida* (telenovela – Mexico)
26. *Vencer el Desamor* (telenovela – Mexico)
27. *Vencer el Miedo* (telenovela – Mexico)

UniMás – N° 1 title

28. *Esta Historia Suena* (unitary – Mexico)

RERUNS TITLES– N° 46

Azteca America – N° 6 titles

29. *Ángel Alas del Amor* (telenovela - Mexico)
30. *Así en el Barrio como en el Cielo* (telenovela – Mexico)
31. *Cada Quien su Santo* (unitary - Mexico)
32. *Lo Que Callamos las Mujeres* (unitary – Mexico)
33. *La Mujer de Judas* (telenovela - Mexico)
34. *Mujeres Rompiendo el Silencio* (unitary – Mexico)

EstrellaTV – N° 3 titles

35. *El Capo* (telenovela - Colombia)
36. *Historias Delirantes* (Anthology – Mexico)
37. *Secretos* (Anthology – Mexico)

Telemundo – N° 9 titles

38. *El Clon* (telenovela – U.S. - Brazil)
39. *Decisiones* (unitary – U.S.)
40. *Decisiones Extremas* (unitary – U.S.)
41. *La Doña Edición Especial* (telenovela – U.S. – Mexico)
42. *Dueños del Paraíso* (telenovela – U.S.)
43. *Historias de la Virgen Morena* (unitary – U.S.)
44. *José José: El Príncipe de la Canción* (telenovela – U.S.)
45. *Reina del Sur 2 Edición Especial* (telenovela – U.S.)
46. *Yo Soy Betty, la Fea* (telenovela - Colombia)

Univision– N° 8 titles

47. *Destilando Amor* (telenovela – Mexico)
48. *La Fuerza de Creer 2* (webseries – U.S.)
49. *Inocente de Ti* (telenovela – Mexico)
50. *Mañana es para Siempre* (telenovela - Mexico)
51. *Papa a Toda Madre* (telenovela - Mexico)
52. *Que te Perdona Dios* (telenovela - Mexico)
53. *Simplemente María* (telenovela – Mexico)
54. *Un Gancho al Corazón* (telenovela, Mexico)

UniMás – N° 20 titles

55. *Alborada* (telenovela, Mexico)
56. *Amigas y Rivaldes* (telenovela, Mexico)
57. *Amores Verdaderos* (telenovela, Mexico)
58. *Bella y las Bestias* (telenovela, U.S.)
59. *Blue Demon 3* (serie, Colombia, Mexico, U.S.)
60. *La C.Q.* (series, Mexico, U.S.)
61. *Contra Viento y Marea* (telenovela, Mexico)

62. *Corona de Lagrimas* (telenovela, Mexico)
63. *En Tierras Salvajes* (telenovela, Mexico)
64. *Hasta que el Dinero nos Separe* (telenovela, Mexico)
65. *El Hotel de los Secretos* (telenovela, Mexico)
66. *Mariana de la Noche* (telenovela, Mexico)
67. *Mi Corazón es Tuyo* (telenovela, Mexico)
68. *Pasión y Poder* (telenovela, Mexico)
69. *La Que No Podía Amar* (telenovela, Mexico)
70. *Que Pobres Tan Ricos* (telenovela, Mexico)
71. *La Reina Ester* (miniseries, Brazil)
72. *Rosario Tijeras* (telenovela, Mexico)
73. *Sortilegio* (telenovela, Mexico)
74. *La Vecina* (telenovela, Mexico)

Five Turkish titles

1. *Cenet* (telenovela, Turkey)
2. *Todo por mi Hija* (telenovela, Turkey)
3. *Amor Eterno* (telenovela, Turkey)
4. *Pájaro Soñador* (telenovela, Turkey)
5. *¿Qué Culpa Tiene Fatmagul?* (telenovela, Turkey)

TOTAL PREMIERE NATIONAL TITLES: 9

TOTAL PREMIERE OBITEL TITLES: 19

TOTAL PREMIERE TITLES (NATIONAL AND OBITEL): 28

TOTAL RERUNS: 46

TOTAL TITLES: 74

Source: *Obitel U.S. - Nielsen*

It is important to point out that besides the 46 reruns, which are titles scheduled in 2020 but that were already premiered before 2020, the strategy of Telemundo has been also the use of repetitions. In this case, repetitions are the titles that premiered in 2020, most likely in prime time, but that are rebroadcast commonly hours later in the “late fringe” time slot at midnight or at 1:00 AM.

In spite of the fact that there were only 9 premiered national titles, 3 below the 12 from 2019, they actually represented the 32%, above the 26% of the titles in 2019, that in terms of num-

ber of episodes they represented the 22% in 2020, above the 20% from 2019. Furthermore, in terms of number of hours, the national premiered titles represented the 23% of the premiered hours, three points above the 20% from 2019.

Table 2. Premiere fiction in 2020: Hispanic U.S.

Country	Titles	%	Chapters/ Episodes	%	Hours	%
NATIONAL (total)	9	32.1	357	22.3	366:41	22.8
OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)	19	67.9	1244	77.7	1243:54	77.2
Argentina	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
Brazil	1	3.6	77	4.8	76:48	4.8
Chile	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
Colombia	2	7.1	154	9.6	154:0	9.6
Ecuador	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
Spain	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
U.S. (Hispanic production)	9	32.1	357	22.3	366:42	22.8
Mexico	16	57.1	1013	63.3	1013:0	62.9
Peru	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
Portugal	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
Uruguay	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
Venezuela	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
COPRODUCCIONES (total)	7	25.0	286	17.9	295:42	18.4
U.S. coproductions	7	25.0	286	17.9	295:7	18.4
Coproductions countries Obitel	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:0	0.0
TOTAL	28	100.0	1601	100.0	1610:35	100.0

Source: *Obitel U.S. - Nielsen*

Obitel fictions represented the 78% of the premiered episodes, and the 77% of the premiered hours. In terms of country of origin, Mexico is still the most important provider for fiction in the Hispanic market, with 16 titles, but way below the 28 titles from 2019. However, the titles from Mexico represented only the 57% of

premiered titles, below the 62% from 2019. In terms of hours, they represented the 63%, slightly up from the 62% in 2019. Colombia and Brazil were second and third place as fiction provider countries, with 7% and 3.6% respectively in relation to the number of titles. Similar to the 6.7% and 4.4% in 2019, and consistent to the trend of the last decade. In contrast, while Obitel productions grew in number of titles, they decreased in number of episodes and hours.

Table 3. Formats of national and Ibero American fiction

Format	National						Ibero-American					
	Titles	%	C/E	%	H	%	Titles	%	C/E	%	H	%
Telenovela	7	77.8	333	93.3	342.41	93.5	15	78.9	913	73.4	913.10	73.4
Series	1	11.1	10	2.8	10.00	2.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Miniseries	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Telefilm	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Unitary	1	11.1	14	3.9	14.00	3.8	4	21.1	331	26.6	330.44	26.6
Docudrama	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Others (soap opera, etc)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Total	9	100	357	100	366.41	100	19	100	1244	100	1243.54	100

Source: Obitel U.S. - Nielsen

Table 4. The 10 most watched titles in broadcast television

	Title	Channel	Producer	Format /Genre	N° de chap./ ep. (2020)	Time Slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>Te Doy la Vida</i>	Univision	Televisa	telenovela melodrama	80	Prime time	7.5	17.1
2	<i>Rubí</i>	Univision	Televisa W Studios Lemon S.	telenovela melodrama	26	Prime time	6.8	17.0
3	<i>Como Tu No Hay Nada Dos</i>	Univision	Televisa W Studios Lemon S.	telenovela comedy drama	84	Prime time	6.6	17.4
3	<i>Ringo</i>	Univision	Televisa	telenovela melodrama	59	Prime time	6.6	14.1
5	<i>El Dragón</i>	Univision	Televisa Univision W Studios Lemon S.	telenovela crime drama	15	Prime time	6.2	15.6
6	<i>Vencer el Desamor</i>	Univision	Televisa	telenovela melodrama suspense	32	Prime time	6.2	15.3
7	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	Univision	Televisa	unitary melodrama	118	Afternoon	5.8	14.2
8	<i>Médicos la Línea de la Vida</i>	Univision	Televisa	telenovela medical melodrama	81	Prime time	5.7	14.3
9	<i>Imperio de Mentiras</i>	Univision	Televisa	telenovela melodrama	62	Prime time	5.4	13.4
10	<i>Sin Miedo a la Verdad</i>	Univision	Televisa	unitary melodrama	35	Prime time	5.2	12.1

Source: *Obitel U.S. - Nielsen*

This table is an example of why Univision retook its leadership in ratings and audiences' share, by occupying all the spots from the ten most watched fictions list. It is important to point out that the four titles produced by W Studios and Lemon Studios in Mexico took four out of the five first spots in the list. Any of the Telemundo titles made it into the list of the most watched in 2020.

El Señor de los Cielos 7 reached the eleventh place of the list. It is important to underscore the achievements of the Turkish fictional titles. The most revealing data is that the fiction with the highest number ratings and audiences' share was *Amor Eterno*, a Turkish production broadcast in Univision. While in the case of Telemundo, the production with the highest rating and share was also a Turkish production titled *Todo por Mi Hija*, which had occupied the ninth place, if we have counted them into this list.

Table 4A. The 10 most watched national titles in broadcast television

	Title	Channel	Producer	Format /Genre	N° de chap./ep. (2020)	Time Slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>El Dragón</i>	Univision	Televisa Univision W Studios Lemon S	Telenovela	15	Prime time	6.2	15.6
2	<i>El Señor de los Cielos</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Argos	Telenovela	24	Prime time	5.0	12.4
3	<i>La Doña 2</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Argos	Telenovela	75	Prime time	4.1	8.8
4	<i>Operación Pacífico</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Fox Telecolombia	Telenovela	44	Prime time	4.9	9.7
5	<i>Enemigo Íntimo 2</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Argos	Telenovela	60	Prime time	3.6	9.8
6	<i>100 Días para Enamorarnos</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo	Telenovela	57	Prime time	3.5	8.3
7	<i>Falsa Identidad 2</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Argos	Telenovela	58	Prime time	3.4	9.6
8	<i>Decisiones: unos Ganan...</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo	Unitary	14	Prime time	3.1	6.7
9	<i>Dani Who?</i>	UniMás	Viacom Argos	Series	10	Late fringe	0.3	1.6

Source: *Obitel U.S. - Nielsen*

El Dragón a coproduction between Univision and Televisa took the leading position in the most watch list of national titles. The list is dominated by Telemundo productions which is the leading networks in national production but which productions did not make it into the most watched titles of 2020.

Table 5. Audience profile of the 10 most watch titles: gender and age

Titles		Channel	Gender %	
			Women	Men
1	<i>Te Doy la Vida</i>	Univision	63.8	36.2
2	<i>Rubí</i>	Univision	65.8	34.2
3	<i>Como Tu no Hay Dos</i>	Univision	60.1	39.9
4	<i>Ringo</i>	Univision	62.8	37.2
5	<i>El Dragón</i>	Univision	62.4	37.6
6	<i>Vencer el Desamor</i>	Univision	64.8	35.2
7	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	Univision	62.9	37.1
8	<i>Médicos la Línea de la Vida</i>	Univision	63.7	36.3
9	<i>Imperio de Mentiras</i>	Univision	64.3	35.7
10	<i>Sin Miedo a la Verdad</i>	Univision	61.2	38.8

Titles		Channel	Age group %					
			2 to 11	12 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 49	50+
1	<i>Te Doy la Vida</i>	Univision	10.8	4.7	6.2	11.7	20.9	45.8
2	<i>Rubí</i>	Univision	9.9	3.6	5.2	12.9	26.9	41.6
3	<i>Como Tu no Hay Dos</i>	Univision	11.1	5.0	5.7	12.5	25.4	40.3
4	<i>Ringo</i>	Univision	11.6	4.2	6.4	12.9	20.7	44.2
5	<i>El Dragón</i>	Univision	10.4	4.4	5.5	11.6	25.0	43.1
6	<i>Vencer el Desamor</i>	Univision	9.6	3.5	4.5	11.7	22.3	48.3
7	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	Univision	11.8	4.9	6.3	12.1	22.2	42.6
8	<i>Médicos la Línea de la Vida</i>	Univision	8.6	4.7	5.3	12.3	21.7	47.3
9	<i>Imperio de Mentiras</i>	Univision	8.2	3.7	4.2	11.9	24.7	47.4
10	<i>Sin Miedo a la Verdad</i>	Univision	12.0	4.8	5.3	12.0	23.7	42.1

Source: *Obitel U.S. - Nielsen*

The dominance of Univision titles in the most watched fiction list, combined with the absence of Telemundo's *Super Series*, is showed in the demographic change in gender and age in the table. In relation to gender, the percentage of female audiences dominates the table with around the 63% of the audience, and only a 37% of male audience.

The absence of successful narco-themed telenovela titles from Telemundo, which were able to enter in the most watched list in 2019, such as *La Reina del Sur 2* or *El Señor de los Cielos 7* not only reduced the male presence in the audiences' demographics from the most watched in 2020, but also changed drastically the demographics in terms of age cohort. In 2020 there was a jump from 41% to 44% in the age cohort of 50 years old and more. In 2020 there was also a decrease on audiences of 18 to 49 years old, particularly in the group of 35 to 49 years old, in relation to 2019. The change in demography was shown in the increase of women and the group of 50 and more years old.

3. VoD monitoring in 2020

The most important players in the streaming market at global levels are U.S. corporations, in terms of number of subscriptions, consumption hours, investment amount, and the extension of their catalogs. In 2020, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, HBOMax, Disney+ dominated the landscape of SVOD services. At the end of the year, there was an increase on SVOD subscriptions. This increase was based on two combined circumstances: the confinement caused by the pandemic, and the interest that triggered the launch of Disney+ in the global market. Netflix still keeps its lead-

ership in terms of number of subscribers, but its range in percentage terms decreased with the entry of new different SVOD players such as AppleTV+, Peacock, and Paramount+ in early 2021. Netflix has already 209 million subscriptions, while Disney+ reached 100 million. HBOMax has 41 million, from which 18 were already subscribed to HBO. In spite of the slowing on Netflix subscriptions, only in 2020 the platform had 36 million new subscriptions at global levels (Zeitchik, 2021). In fact, from 2018 to 2020 the spending on SVOD subscription doubled in the United States from an average spending of 8 dollars a month to 16 (Blanco, 2021).

In the terrain of Spanish language television, Univision has its U-Video services, and Univision Now. As part of the changes deployed by Univision's new corporate administration, at the end of 2020 they announced the launch of PrendeTV, a streaming service (AVOD), exclusively dedicated to Hispanic audiences in the United States. PrendeTV will be a service with more than 30 channels, and more than 10 thousand hours of content in Spanish from global content providers. This is a key bet for the future of Televisa and Univision in the increasing growing market of VoD content (Univision to launch, 2021). For its part, Telemundo has an App for VoD content, and also offers its programming lineup through the Peacock platform. The television network also entered into an original production alliance in streaming services, and in 2020 joined with Telefonica, the Spanish telecommunication giant to coproduce with Movistar the series *Dime Quién Soy*. This series was premiered in Spain in 2020 and it is scheduled to be included in the Peacock catalog in 2021.

3.1. VoD's platforms market

Press reports pointed out that the Covid-19 pandemic not only increased audiences' consumption time of SVOD services, but also increased the number of SVOD subscriptions by the population. From an average of three SVOD services subscribed, audiences' subscriptions increased to four. This new trend was also accompanied with another factor: an increase rhythm of subscription cancellations. Audiences increased their number of SVOD subscriptions but they also became more selective in content consumption based on opening and cancelation data. This decision was related to specific titles and seasons (Daswani, 2020).

3.2. VoD analysis in 2020: national and Ibero American premiered fiction

Table 6. National and Ibero American premiere fictions in 2020 in VoD platforms

PREMIERE NATIONAL TITLES	PREMIERE IBERO AMERICAN TITLES	COPRODUC TION U.S. AND IBERO AMERICAN
<p>Netflix – N° 37 national titles <u>Hispanic No. 3</u> 1. <i>Selena</i> (series) 2. <i>On my Block</i> (series) 3. <i>One Day at a Time</i> (series)</p> <p>HBO – N° 21 national titles No Hispanic title</p> <p>Amazon – N° 11 national titles No Hispanic title</p>	<p>Netflix – N° 33 Ibero American titles 1. <i>Almost Happy</i> (comedy series - Argentina) 2. <i>Puerta 7</i> (drama series, Argentina – U.S.) * 3. <i>Chicas de Ipanema</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 4. <i>Omnisciente</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 5. <i>Espectros</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 6. <i>Reality Z</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 7. <i>El Reto del Beso</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 8. <i>Buenos Días Verónica</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 9. <i>3%</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 10. <i>La Reina de Indias y el Conquistador</i> (series – Colombia) 11. <i>Amar y Vivir</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 12. <i>La Venganza de Analia</i> (series – Colombia) 13. <i>Siempre Bruja</i> (series, Colombia – U.S.) * 14. <i>Chichipatos</i> (series, Colombia – U.S.) *</p>	<p>Netflix – N° 0 titles</p> <p>HBO – N° 0 titles</p> <p>Amazon – N° 0 titles</p> <p>Hulu – N° 0 titles</p>

PREMIERE NATIONAL TITLES	PREMIERE IBERO AMERICAN TITLES	COPRODUCTION U.S. AND IBERO AMERICAN
<p>Hulu – Nº 18 national titles No Hispanic title</p>	<p>15. <i>El Robo del Siglo</i> (series, Colombia – U.S.) * 16. <i>Unstoppable</i> (series – Mexico) 17. <i>Narcos: México</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 18. <i>La Casa de las Flores 3</i> (series – Mexico) * 19. <i>Diablero</i> (series – Mexico) * 20. <i>Control Z</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 21. <i>Historia de un Crimen</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 22. <i>Oscuro Deseo</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 23. <i>Alguien Tiene que Morir</i> (miniseries, Mexico – Spain – U.S.) * 24. <i>Vis a Vis: El Oasis</i> (series – Spain) 25. <i>El Sabor de las Margaritas</i> (series – Spain) 26. <i>Velvet Collection; Final</i> (series – Spain) 27. <i>Los Favoritos de Midas</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 28. <i>El Desorden que Dejas</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 29. <i>Elite</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 30. <i>Las Chicas del Cable</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 31. <i>La Casa de Papel</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 32. <i>Valeria</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 33. <i>Alta Mar</i> (series – Spain) *</p> <p>HBO – Nº 4 Ibero American titles 34. <i>Entre Hombres</i>, (series, Argentina, U.S.) * 35. <i>Todxs Nosotrxs</i> (series, Brazil – U.S.) * 36. <i>Patria</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 37. <i>XHOXB</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) *</p> <p>Amazon – Nº 8 Ibero American titles 38. <i>El Presidente</i> (series, Chile - Argentina, U.S.) * 39. <i>El Cid</i> (series, Spain – U.S.) * 40. <i>De Brutus Nada</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 41. <i>Pan y Circo</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.) * 42. <i>El Candidato</i> (series, Mexico, U.S.) * 43. <i>Como Sobrevivir Soltero</i> (series, Mexico – U.S.)* 44. <i>Caronte</i> (series, Spain) 45. <i>Pequeñas coincidencias</i> (series, Spain)</p> <p>Hulu – Nº 0 Ibero American titles</p>	
Total: 87	Total: 45	Total: 0
GRAND TOTAL: 132		

Source: *Obitel U.S.*

*These are Netflix, HBO and Amazon productions, which means they are US productions but made in Latin America¹

1 It is important to underscore that from the 45 titles premiered as Ibero American productions, 35 titles were from U.S. investment, such as 25 from Netflix, 4 from HBO, and 6 from Amazon. Only 8 titles were productions entirely from Ibero America. If we take into account copy rights, then 122 from the 132 reported productions.

The biggest television markets lead the number of titles coming from Ibero America, with Spain, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia in the first place. Many of these productions are also a result of the investment of U.S. SVOD platforms, as an extension which can be use in the U.S. domestic market for the Hispanic population. The consequence of this specific strategy has been the lack of English or Spanish language productions from VOD platforms that aligned to the realities of the Latina/o population in the U.S.

Table 7. VoD premiere fiction in 2020: countries of origin

Country	Titles	%
NATIONAL (total)	87	65.9
OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)	45	34.1
Argentina	3	2.2
Brazil	8	6.1
Chile	1	0.8
Colombia	6	4.5
Spain	15	11.4
U.S.	87	65.9
Mexico	8	9.1
Peru	0	0.0
Portugal	0	0.0
Uruguay	0	0.0
Venezuela	0	0.0
COPRODUCTIONS (total)	35	26.5
Coproductions U.S. **	35	26.5
Coproductions among OBITEL countries	0	0.0
TOTAL GENERAL	124	100.0

Source: Obitel U.S.

In the field of SVOD fiction, there is a clear dominance of national productions, from the U.S., in this case, both in English and in Spanish, with a release of 87 premiere titles which represents the 65.9% of the total titles.³ From *Obitel* countries, Spain is the main provider of fiction to SVOD platforms, followed by Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. In 2020, Spain had 15 premiere titles which represented 11.4% of the total. Followed by Mexico with 12 titles, and Brazil with 8 titles.

4. Fiction and audiences' participation in digital environments⁴

In 2020, social media became more important with the arrival of the pandemic caused by Covid-19, given that in-person conversations, movie going, or the famous water cooler chats -when people speak at the office about what happened in a popular series at the moment- were not possible anymore. Because of the state of the pandemic, connecting with audiences through social media became indispensable.

Having a strong presence in social media became an imperious necessity, thus, is in this context that is interesting to analyze people's answers to the promotion that was given to the telenovela *100 Días para Enamorarnos*. Telemundo published in social media clip-videos between thirty to sixty seconds, about what happened in the last episode, and about what will happen in the next episode; as well as interviews with the talent and clips behind the

3 If we consider the titles produced in Ibero America by US corporations, then we are actually talking about 121 titles, which represents the 93.7% of the titles with American copyrights.

4 This section was possible thanks to the collaboration of Erick Muñoz, a graduate from the Radio, Television and Film Academic Department at the Communication School at the University of Texas at Austin.

scenes. For that purpose, the network created specific accounts in Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to share information about the telenovela. However, the telenovela was in production and had to slow the process due to Covid-19, creating an interesting contrast between the comments made by the audience in pre-pandemic times, and the ones made during the pandemic. There were negative comments in relation to the production, mostly when it comes of how the production suffered a quality decline due to the hygiene and prevention measures established by the studios to keep the production going. I will talk a little bit more about this in the final part of the chapter in section 6 which is dedicated to the pandemic as The Theme of the Year.

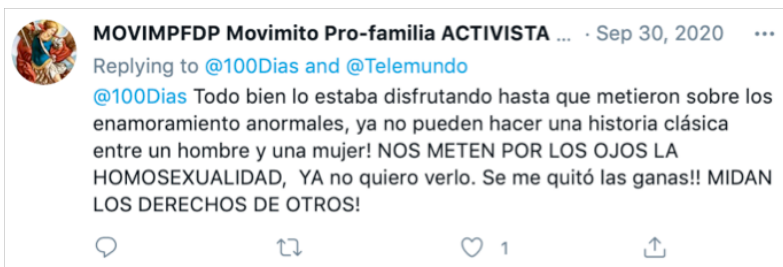
The telenovela unleashed interesting conversations in the context of the very positive reception that Ale and his transition to Alex (performed by Macarena García), a transgender teenager which developed a romance with a girl named Lucía (performed by Fernanda Urdapilleta). If your only contact with the telenovela were social media, you would think that Lucía and Alex were the leading characters, because their romance inundated social media, but in reality, they were only secondary characters from the story. Several Facebook groups were totally dedicated to which was de-nominated as #Luciale or #Lucialex.



“*Luciale Shippers*” has 10,000 followers in Facebook, while “*Lucia & Alex – Luciale*” had more than 150,000. This without mentioning the dozens of Instagram accounts dedicated to them, and the more than 10,000 posts under the hashtag #lucialex, los Tik-Toks talking about their romance, and even the series of short stories from fan fiction in Wattpad written by Alexxz_warrior titled “*Luciale <3 Lucialex*” which have been read more than 131 thousand times.



But the Lucialex content have also brought some controversy in social media, there have been some hate tweets, such as:



Even in Facebook, the most popular video on the *100 Días Para Enamorarnos* page was an interview with the actress that performs the character of Alex talking about the transition for this character. This video, while writing this book chapter, had 1.8 million views, more than 54 thousand reactions, and about 700 comments. This is extraordinary, considering that most of the videos in this page have about 20 thousand views. So, it is important to point out that *100 Días para Enamorarnos* explored in social consciousness and innovative themes that were supported by fans, which also gave visibility to the telenovela and the plot through the hashtag #Lucialex. It is important to remember that this is not the first time that Telemundo touch on issues of gender affirmation and transgender identities. In 2017, the network broadcast *Sangre de mi Tierra*, a telenovela in which there was a transgender girl, and the painful process that the character went thought for her acceptance in the context of a patriarchal and *machista* family.

5. Highlights of the year

The most important event of the year it was not fictional but real, with a huge impact that television had for the population. The sum of three social phenomena created a combination without precedents in a year as no other in recent history. In 2020, Covid-19 became a global pandemic which in the Unites States took the lives of more than half of a million Americans. To the pandemic was added the battle for the White House with a highly divisive presidential election. In this context and the complex social reality, the electoral contest between Donald Trump from the Republican

Party, and the contender Joe Biden from the Democratic Party was conceived as an existential battle for the American people. From the beginning, the strategy from the Trump administration was to minimize the pandemic, and the message was anti-immigrant, antisocial minorities, anti-sexual diversity, and anti-transgender identities. The electoral battle was impacted by the visibility and increase of African American males' deaths at the hands of the police, which unleashed a wide national protest. The claim against police brutality was exacerbated by the killing of George Floyd at the hands of the police, which gave an impulse to the already existing movement *Black Lives Matter* with massive demonstrations across the nation.

In this context, the television networks reacted by extending their news coverage, special programs and social campaigns, as it was the case of Univision, with different news slots covering the Covid-19 pandemic, but also with a close following of the electoral campaigns with *Vota Conmigo*, and *Destino 2020*. In this domain of the social campaigns, the network launched the series *ActivitaZ* targeting to the Z Generation, and the documentaries *Esencial, pero Deportable* and *DACA: un Paso Más*. On the other hand, Telemundo had a wide coverage on Covid-19 in different news slots, and other in the domain of the presidential elections' coverage. Programs such as *Radar 2020*, *Decisión 2020*, *Latinas en Lucha por el Sufragio Femenino*, among others. In the context of social campaigns, Telemundo launched programs such as *En Memoria de George Floyd*, which reflected the high relevance that the social protests had taken across the country.

6. The theme of the year: fiction in the times of a pandemic

In 2020 there were at least 360.000 deaths and 20 million confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the United States, which is the highest number of deaths and infected cases of Covid-19 registered in the whole planet. However, Covid-19 did not affect equally all the different social classes, nor ethnic and racial groups. At first the most affected were the older, in particular, the older population living in home shelters and asylums. Then, the virus showed its highest deadly effect within the Latinx and African American populations. Two combined factors had a key role in the disproportionate way in which both social minorities were affected by Covid-19. First, the precarious situation of access to health and food services, which provided unfavorable medical conditions, such as high cholesterol, hypertension, respiratory problems and cardiovascular complications as key factors against the changes to survive the Covid-19 infection. This combined with the fact that Latinx and African Americans constituted in a disproportionate number what is consider the “essential workforce” because of their high numbers of participation in the service sectors such as transportation, health services, sanitary and cleaning services, police and security, food services, etcetera, which prevent them to stop working and made them more exposed to possible contagion.

a. Ways to face the challenges in national broadcasting television

The impact that Covid had in the United States can be illustrated in the way that the television networks modify their programming strategies to accommodate to the restrictions

imposed to production, and lack of access to original content. In this context, Telemundo had to change its programming calendar, delaying some of the expected premiere titles and bringing famous telenovelas as rerun in prime time. Before the scarcity of original content and delays, the network decided that instead of launching *Enemigo Íntimo 2*, when *Operación Pacífico* ended, they decided to schedule a special edition of *La Reina del Sur 2*, and in the promotional material, the network promise that the new remastered version will have unpublished scenes for the pleasure of the fans of this telenovela.

A way to face the lack of new titles was through the combined strategy of reruns and repetitions. The programming lineup did not show a significative higher number of rerun/repetition titles in 2020 in contrast to 2019, but the difference came from the number of hours given to these rerun/repetition titles, having a compensation effect in the programming lineup. It is so, despite the fact that in 2019 there were 50 rerun titles, they only represented around 4,534 hours; while in 2020, with only 28 titles they represented around 5,076 hours, which represented an increase of 500 hours in spite of the decrease on the number of titles.

Another important strategy has been the increase on the number of hours on Turkish telenovelas scheduled in the three main distributors of fictional content in prime-time in the U.S. Hispanic television market: Univision, UniMás, and Telemundo. It is so that in spite of that the networks scheduled almost the same number of titles of Turkish fiction, 4 in 2019, and 5 in 2020, in relation to hours, this meant 330 hours in 2019, in contrast to 617 hours in 2020, what is almost the double amount of airtime.

b. *Protocols and strategies for the return of fictional production in broadcasting television*

The isolation and confinement policies, triggered by the pandemic, affected directly television production in the United States. In March 2020, the productions of Netflix, Amazon, Disney, Warner Bros, AppleTV, NBC, CBS, Fox, ABC were totally stopped. Around 97 television series and 21 pilots stopped their production. The Spanish language networks in the United States also saw their operations affected by the pandemic. In March 14th the television networks ordered their “non-essential personal” to work from home. Univision closed its offices in Newport, in Miami, and moved its operations to its office at Doral, Miami. Particularly, the talent working in live television productions was considered by Telemundo as essential personal, and under this scheme, several television anchors tested positive to Covid-19.

When it comes to fictional production, the studios stopped their operations in Miami. Telemundo launched a notice of suspension of activities in Miami and Mexico on March 17th. The filming of *100 Días para Enamorarnos* and *Falsa Identidad 2*, produced by Argos in Mexico were stopped. On the other hand, Univision does not produce fiction in the United States, but it gets its fictional content produced in Mexico by Televisa. The Mexican television corporation did not stop production, by implementing specific protocols of hygiene and sanitation.

It was until June 2020, that in the United States, an agreement between unions and major studios was reached on the deployment of specific policies for production. From the very first day, the personal is subjected to laboratory rapid tests which should be PCR (Polimerasa Chained Reaction). This is followed

by a system of well-defined A, B, C and D zones to create specific flows and barriers of access based on the necessary proximity to the cast, the level of testing, and the degree of physical distant that should be observed. Zone A includes the talent -who cannot use protective equipment nor to have social distance while filming a scene- as well as the personal that interacts with the cast. This zone requires Covid-19 tests at least 3 times a week. The rest of the personal, which can use protective gear and follow social distance all the time, they are divided in three different zones. Zone B is integrated by the personnel that works in the set, but not when the cast is present without protective equipment, and they also required tests at least once a week. Zone C, includes the personnel that work in other areas, which are not the production set, and they required tests at least every other week. Zone D is for the personnel that works remotely, but they do it in the environment of the production and require a PCR test at the day of their hiring. All the productions have a designated supervisor which oversees that all the Covid-19 security protocols are followed. If an employee tests positive to Covid-19, the employee has to received 10 paid days for sickness, and get isolated. They only can return to work when authorized, and following the medical protocols (Balderston, 2020).

However, when the activities of production started again, there were some cases of talent testing positive to Covid-19. Luis Francisco Franco a protagonist of *Falsa Identidad* tested positive for Covid-19, and the production did not stop, but looked to advance in scenes that did not involve his character. Ylsa Salas, a protagonist from *100 Dias para Enamorarnos* also tested positive for Covid-19 in the context of the summer production activities.

c. Experiences on specific national fictional production in the context of the pandemic

One of the fictions that most clearly showed the effects that the pandemic brought to television was Telemundo's production *100 Dias para Enamorarnos*. This is a remake from the Argentinean telenovela under the same name which was produced by Underground (owned by NBC-Telemundo) for Telefe (owned by Viacom). It is important to remember that Underground is an Argentinean independent production house, launched in 2006 by Sebastian Ortega and Pedro Cullel, but it was acquired by NBC-Telemundo and became a subsidiary of Telemundo Global Studios with operations in Argentina. For its part, Telefe, one of the two main broadcasting television networks in Argentina was acquired by Viacom-CBS. Is important to remember that Viacom-CBS is also the owners of Chilevision in Chile.

The original production in Argentina had 125 episodes. The remake of Telemundo, in dramedy style, started the production in 2019, and the filming kept going during 2020. With the premiere of the telenovela announced for April 28th, the production process was just in the middle when the pandemic hit, affecting all aspects of life, forcing the team to stop the production on March 18th, 2020, even though the production was already around the 57 episodes, but there were still some missed scenes from the 50th to the 57th episodes. Before the impossibility to record these scenes at the set, the team continued its work, but in the field of postproduction, in which they tried to filled out all the gaps, and to create a narrative that seems coherent for the viewer. However, audiences

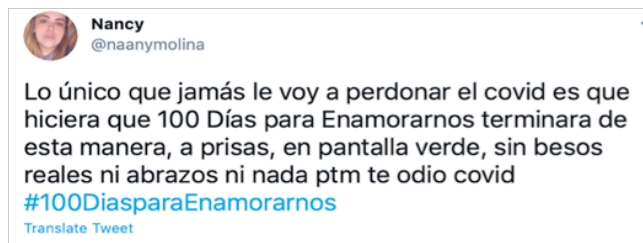
started to express their surprise and complains through social media, because of the interruption of several line narratives within the plot, and because of the incongruence of some sequences. The premature ending, given at June 20 with only 57 episodes, and only with 50 days into the lineal temporality of the fictional narrative, which means the telenovela was only half way through the plot, from the 100 days promised by the title. With a series of narrative threats pending, or inconclusive, the telenovela ended, but with the tacit announcement from its talent/characters through social media that it will continue.

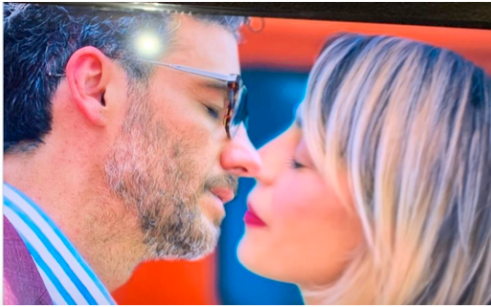
The press announced the restarting of the telenovela production in July, with later reports that Ylse Salas tested positive for Covid-19 during the production, but with a clear imprecision of when she actually tested positive. Talent used social media to share pics and images about the way the production had to deal with the security and sanitary policies on the set. Nevertheless, in the context of the reboot of the production for the second season in 2020, Mariana Trevino, who performs as one of the main characters, refused to be present in the filming set because of fear of getting Covid-19. Instead, Mariana recorded her scenes from her house. Using the green screen technology, Mariana was able to be incorporated to the audiovisual sequence, by choreographing her postures and axes of action, and the direction of her gaze within the frame, accordingly with the position in the space of her scene partners. While in person, the production team used another actress who was always giving her back to the camera, in order to be able to situate spatially the movements and the dynamic on the scene.

In social media, there were complaints about scenes in which, clearly, the actor where not present in the same room, as well as the lack of passion in some of the sequences, due to the impossibility to have physical interaction between the actors. In some cases, screen shots were shared in social media about the way in which a kiss between the main characters was poorly staged. The screen shot revealed how a kiss was made through green screen with the actors in different places.



Many viewers started following the telenovela when it arrived to Netflix, but they found a drastic change of quality between what was presented in the first season and the second season (or what may be considered the episodes post-pandemic), and too many commented that it would have been better to wait, in order to have the resources to produce “correctly” the telenovela.





d. Digital platforms: growth, downloads and fictional programming

In April, press reports gave initial data showing that Covid-19 gave to television a boom, from which Telemundo and Univision were the main television network beneficiaries. But also, there was an increase on the activity in the digital platforms from these networks. In October 2020, a study revealed that 60% of U.S. Hispanic population increased their consumption of television content in streaming during Covid-19 times, spending from three to five hours more than usual, and the 71% reported being watching more television programs. The pandemic also generated an important consumption of VOD content. The subscription of SVOD showed record numbers in 2020, but also the services on transactional on demand (TVOD), and the support of advertisement (AVOD) also achieved important increases.

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