

ARGENTINA: FICTION AFTER TELEVISION¹

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Introduction

2023 was a year dominated by an intense electoral agenda that extended throughout the second half of the year until the inauguration of a new national government in December. In terms of fiction, El Trece once again bet on national production, releasing two long-running shows that failed to significantly arouse the audience's interest. On the other hand, the leading channel, Telefe, did not release any national fiction production for the first time since Obitel Argentina has records. The strategy of promoting series created exclusively for video-on-demand platforms through open television channels was consolidated and extended to more players this year, to the point that it is clear that the production and distribution of fiction in Argentina is increasingly a function that the traditional media delegated to streaming services. In this regard, different sectors linked to fiction production began to account for this fact: the Argentine Actors Association pointed out at the end of this chapter that "it has been 119 days since no fiction has been produced for national broadcast TV. November 30, 2023 was the last day of recording of 'Buenos Chicos'. Since that day, Argentine TV does not employ actresses, actors or technical personnel to work in fiction programs"⁴. A symptomatic fact of the critical situation of national fiction is the absence of projects of one of the emblematic production companies in the field, Pol-ka. After 30 years as one of the powerhouses of television fiction, according to some media reports, the company would not have projects for the 2024-2025 period, so it could focus on providing specific services to platforms and venture into other formats⁵.

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⁴ Source available in March 2024 at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C5Etd0iOYju/?igsh=MWdyYnR4eHQwdH-BqYw%3D%3D>.

⁵ Source available in March 2024 at <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/espectaculos/television/polka-deja-de-producir-ficciones-lo-mas-parecido-al-fin-de-una-epoca-para-la-television-abierta-nid05012024/>.

1. The Audiovisual Context of Argentina in 2023

1.1. Open television in Argentina

Argentina’s open television system can be characterized through the main players based in Buenos Aires, which includes six private channels that, through direct ownership of subsidiaries in different provinces, or commercial agreements with repeaters and sale of specific content, achieve national coverage, despite having licenses that, in most cases, only cover the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (this includes the City of Buenos Aires and the surrounding urban areas).

Chart 1. “National” open television channels in Argentina.

Private channels (6)	Public channels (1)
América 2 (channel 2)	TV Pública (channel 7)
El Nueve (channel 9)	
Telefe (channel 11)	
El Trece (channel 13)	
Net TV	
Bravo TV	
CHANNELS TOTAL = 7	

Source: Obitel Argentina

The most consolidated and long-established private commercial channels are Telefe (Paramount, United States), El Trece (Grupo Clarín, Argentina), El Nueve (Grupo Octubre, Argentina) and América (Grupo América, Argentina). In 2018, Net TV (Grupo Perfil, Argentina) and in 2022 Bravo TV (Grupo Olmos and Grupo Crónica, Argentina) were added, the latter still with low brand recognition, low audience levels and a programming that highlights the reruns of fictions from different Ibero-American countries, generally already aired years before by other open TV channels. TV Pública (Radio y Televisión Argentina Sociedad del Estado) is the first Argentine television channel and the only one with a nationwide license. However, the state broadcaster enjoys a low social significance, marginal audience levels, and pendular relations with the governments in power that go from providing funding for the development of ambitious artistic projects or technological upgrades, to threats of paralysis and retraction of its operations. This is largely due to the high dependence of the state broadcaster on funding from the National Treasury (Schejtman, Rivero and Becerra, 2021). Channels licensed for open television are also available through Digital Terrestrial Television (known in Argentina under the brand name Televisión Digital Abierta, TDA), with reach within their respective areas of coverage⁶.

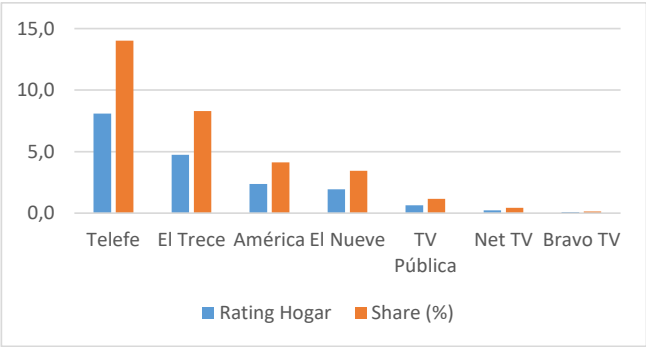
⁶ Information available in March 2024 at <https://www.tda.gob.ar/canales-cobertura.php>.

Since the early 1990s Telefe and El Trece have led the audience, which is measured mainly in the City of Buenos Aires and some of the main capitals of the country, although in the last four years Telefe has consolidated its position as clear leader, distancing itself from its direct competitor. These two channels are, in turn, the regular broadcasters of the most important television serialized fiction at national level (Kirchheimer and Rivero, 2022). In the past, Telefe has commissioned most of its fictions to different local independent production companies, with Underground standing out, owned by the American Telemundo since 2019. On the other hand, El Trece (Grupo Clarín) is the exhibition platform for the fictions of the production company Pol-ka, 91.3% of whose shares belong to the company Artear, the audiovisual division of Grupo Clarín (Convergencia, 2021), so it is, in a way, a captive production company that generates content exclusively for that broadcaster. On the other hand, El Nueve and América focus mainly on entertainment and variety content. Occasionally they have broadcasted series, miniseries or national unitaries produced with state funds. Finally, TV Pública is a regular fiction broadcaster, sometimes as part of its programming policies, as in the cases of *El Marginal* (2016, 2018 and 2019) or the period serial *Cuéntame Cómo Pasó* (2017), but it usually serves as a screen for the broadcasting of miniseries and unitaries produced with different funds for the promotion of audiovisual production granted by the National State to independent production companies as part of a cultural and industrial policy to promote this activity in the country, fictions that are also part of the national audiovisual repository also available on other screens.

Graph 1. TV rating and share by station (rating per household).

Channel	Rating Household	%	Share (%)
Telefe	8,1	44,7	14,0
El Trece	4,8	26,2	8,3
América	2,4	13,1	4,1
El Nueve	1,9	10,8	3,4
TV Pública	0,6	3,6	1,2
Net TV	0,2	1,3	0,4
Bravo TV	0,1	0,5	0,1
TOTAL	18,1	100	31,6

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina



Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina

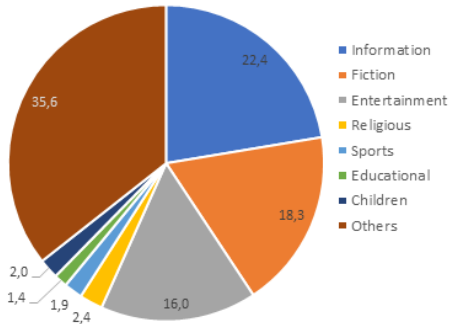
As in the previous year, the audience levels of the main open television channels remained relatively stable or with marginal downward variations. The sum of the ratings of the seven channels observed reached 18.1 points, just below the 19.3 of 2022. In terms of share, open television channels went from 33.2 to 31.6 in the same period. This year, Telefe came closer to doubling El Trece in rating and share, leaving behind a traditional competition of equals of more than two decades. The leading channel was favored by the broadcasting of the finale of the reality show *Gran Hermano*, which peaked at 30.9 rating points, the acquisition of rights to broadcast the local Martín Fierro awards to the radio and television industry, and the premiere of international entertainment formats with good performance, such as *The Challenge*, *Got Talent*, *Master Chef*, *Escape Perfecto* and some sports broadcasts.

The dispute for third place between América and El Nueve, which in recent years had been evenly matched, was resolved this year in favor of the former. In particular, as from September, América’s numbers distanced itself from its direct competitor, largely due to the arrival of Marcelo Tinelli, a popular local host who hosted the reality show *Bailando 2023*, obtaining discrete numbers in relation to his own past, but above the broadcaster’s average. TV Pública, which in 2022 and thanks to the broadcasting of the World Cup in Qatar had managed to recover the annual average point, fell again to 0.6. This happens even though 12 of the 35 most watched TV broadcasts of the year took place on the screen of the state channel with high ratings, always above double digits. In all cases, these were soccer matches of the national men’s first division, which, however, did not allow the public channel to improve its overall numbers. Net TV and Bravo TV of Grupo Perfil remain as low-cost proposals, with programming mainly based on the broadcasting of some live variety programs and reruns of Latin American telenovelas, which do not manage to gather a significant audience.

Graph 2: Genres and hours broadcast in TV programming

Broadcast genres	Broadcast hours	%
News	12964	22,4
Fiction	10622	18,3
Entertainment	9281	16,0
Religion	1383	2,4
Sports	1096	1,9
Education	787	1,4
Children	1183	2,0
Others	20644	35,6
TOTAL	57960	100

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina



Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina

The total hours broadcasted by the seven channels observed increased by 4.8% due to the full incorporation of a new channel, Bravo TV, which had started broadcasting in May 2022. In percentage terms, there were no significant variations in the participation of each genre in the total hours broadcast, with the only exception of fiction. This item went from representing 15.5% of the total, with 8592 hours broadcast in 2022, to 18.3% in 2023, with 10622 hours. The increase is due to the return of long-form fiction to El Trece, but mainly to the contribution of NetTV and BravoTV, which base most of their programming on reruns of Latin American telenovelas.

1.2. Pay TV and VoD platforms in Argentina in 2023

According to data from the Ente Nacional de Comunicaciones (ENaCom) for the third quarter of 2023, 64.33% of Argentine households had some kind of pay TV service. This is a year-on-year drop of almost 3% from the 67.24% reported for the same period of the previous year. It is also a downward trend that has continued over the last three years. Most of the connections were made through physical links, while satellite technology captures a smaller market share of 11.5%. If clandestine

connections are added, it is estimated that close to 80% of the country’s households would have access to this service, one of the highest penetration levels in the region. The pay TV market is strongly concentrated mainly in Personal-Flow (managed by the merged Telecom-Clarín Group), with 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.

Chart 2. Most watched pay TV channels in Argentina 2023

10 most watched pay TV signals in Argentina			
Channel	Genre	Origin	Household Rating
TN	News	Argentina	2,1
C5N	News	Argentina	1,4
LN+	News	Argentina	1,4
Crónica TV	News	Argentina	0,9
A24	News	Argentina	0,8
ESPN	Sports	United States	0,8
TyCSports	Sports	Argentina	0,7
Canal 26	News	Argentina	0,7
Cartoon Network	Children	United States	0,4
Space	Varieties	United States	0,4

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina

The first three places among the most watched pay TV channels do not present any new developments with respect to the previous year. TN (Grupo Clarín), C5N (Grupo Indalo) and LN+ (La Nación), whose programming focuses on information, analysis, opinion and political debate, grew in audience and remained as the most watched stations. This growth may be due to the fact that 2023 was a year of intense electoral activity at the national level, which lasted from August with the primary elections to November with the presidential runoff; later, on December 10, with the inauguration of Javier Milei as president.

According to Daxaxis data for the first four-month period of 2023, the video platforms market in Argentina was led by Netflix (35.8%), followed by Disney+ (15.4%), HBO Max (13%), Star+ (12.8%) and Prime Video (10.9%). Since 2018 and increasingly, all these companies have ventured into the production of local serialized fiction to the point that they are currently practically the only players in the audiovisual system in charge of this function.

1.3. Sources of financing for the audiovisual sector

According to the Argentine Chamber of Media Agencies (CAAM), the data for 2023

(...) evidencian el discreto movimiento del mercado publicitario sin crecimiento genuino de la inversión en medios en 2023, si observamos que la tasa de crecimiento en pesos está en la mitad del índice de inflación interanual del 211,4%. Sumado esto a la actualización del tipo de cambio de diciembre que llegó a 2,5 veces versus el promedio de los 10 primeros meses del año.

En términos de inversión publicitaria, se pudo ver una caída en el volumen esperado para el 2do semestre, en comparación con el peso en el año y asimismo podemos ver cómo contribuyó a la modificación de los shares de los sistemas, sobre todo en la TV. (...) Se observa la tendencia en alza de las inversiones en medios y plataformas digitales con un crecimiento en inversión por arriba del promedio⁷.

According to data from this Chamber, which gathers the main media agencies operating in the country⁸, the advertising market was impacted by the economic crisis that Argentina is going through. In turn, the data show that television in particular lost 23% of its share in total investment measured in dollars. In 2022 this medium had received USD 501 million, while last year it fell to USD 383.8 million. Television is the only medium where advertising investment is contracting, together with Digital, which loses only 6% but leads the total share, which stands at 42.8% of the total, against 34.7% for television.

In turn, between January and October 2023, the National Government had invested AR\$40,244 million in official advertising. As for its distribution

En términos individuales, 2023 presenta una novedad: por primera vez el destinatario que más publicidad recibió no es un medio tradicional. YouTube con \$1.079 millones es individualmente el más pautaado. El podio lo completan Telefe de Buenos Aires (\$907 millones) e Infobae (\$876 millones)⁹.

⁷ “(...) evidences the discreet movement of the advertising market with no genuine growth in media investment in 2023, if we observe that the growth rate in pesos is half of the year-on-year inflation rate of 211.4%. Add this to the December exchange rate update that reached 2.5 times versus the average of the first 10 months of the year.

In terms of advertising investment, we could see a drop in the volume expected for the second half of the year, compared to the peso in the year, and we can also see how it contributed to the change in the shares of the systems, especially in TV. (...) We can see the upward trend of investments in media and digital platforms with a growth in investment above average”. Available in March 20204 at <https://www.agenciasdemedios.com.ar/inversiones-publicitarias/>

⁸ Anunciar, Carat, Havas, Ignis, EssenceMediacom, Initiative, Midios, Mindshare, OMD, PHD, Quiroga, Starcom, UM, WaveMaker y Zenith.

⁹ “In individual terms, 2023 presents a novelty: for the first time, the recipient that received the most advertising is not a traditional medium. YouTube, with \$1,079 million, is individually the most advertised. The podium is completed by Telefe from Buenos Aires (\$907 million) and Infobae (\$876 million)”. Available in March 2024 at https://www.eldiarioar.com/opinion/clarin-indalo-octubre-cabeza-distribuyo-pauta-oficial-ultimo-alberto-fernandez_129_10767506.html

The new government of Javier Milei (La Libertad Avanza) announced the suspension of official advertising for one year. It did so through Decree No. 89/2023 published on December 26, 2023, although it leaves out of the scope of the measure numerous decentralized agencies and state-owned companies that may continue to invest in advertising in the media.

1.4. Communication policies

The year 2023 was one of low intensity for communication policies, in a context where the political agenda was focused on the extensive electoral campaign that occupied almost the entire second half of the year. Probably the most significant event was the delayed spectrum auction for the provision of 5G services that the government carried out in October, two months before leaving office¹⁰. The auctioned frequencies were left in the hands of the three main telecommunications companies operating in the country, Claro (AMX), Telecom and Telefónica, which invested USD 875 million to exploit this resource for the next 20 years.

At the end of 2023, the new government issued a Decree of Necessity and Urgency (70/2023) that addresses a wide range of issues, among them, relaxes some limitations still existing regarding the operation of audiovisual services licenses by the same holder, allows companies that provide satellite services to enter the subscription television sector and facilitates the entry of foreign satellite services players, such as Elon Musk's Starlink company, explicitly mentioned by the President of the Nation¹¹.

1.5. Digital and mobile connectivity infrastructure

Mobile telephony continues to be, together with free and open television, the most widespread information access technology, with a national penetration that exceeds 100% in almost all regions of the country, and a national average of 130.9% according to ENaCom data for the third quarter of 2023¹². As of September 2023, there were 61.1 million mobile accesses in the country, out of a population of 46 million. 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. Regarding broadband at home, the average penetration at national level reaches 77.84% of the country's households, an increase of 1% compared to the same period in 2022. 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 Chaco, Formosa, Corrientes,

¹⁰ Available in March 2024 at 2024 at https://www.enacom.gob.ar/institucional/el-estado-argentino-licito-la-banda-5g-por-mas-de-875-millones-de-dolares_n4578

¹¹ Source and topic extension at <https://martinbecerra.wordpress.com/2024/03/14/premios-y-castigos-por-decreto/>

¹² Available in March 2024 at <https://indicadores.enacom.gob.ar/Informes>

Mendoza, San Juan and Santa Cruz, where this figure is around 50% of households.

Although the national average speed is 129.67 Mbps (a significant growth compared to 62.46 Mbps in 2022) and offers of access at more than 30 Mbps are common, almost 30% of domestic connections are concentrated in the sub-30 Mbps speed range, with large variations available depending on the province. As for the type of technology, cable modem largely dominates (41.7%), but fiber-to-the-home connections have grown in recent years to reach 25.3% in 2023. 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, in a more experimental way, the emergence of community internet access networks self-managed by the inhabitants themselves. At the close of this chapter, Starlink, Elon Musk's satellite broadband company, was already offering its service in the country, targeting a productive segment or private users far from urban centers¹³.

¹³ Source and topic extension at <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/724404-starlink-ya-llego-a-la-argentina-precio-mensual-del-servicio>

2. Year in Review: National and Ibero-American release fiction in 2023

TABLE 1. Release fiction productions exhibited in 2023
(domestic, foreign Obitel films and co-productions)

UNRELEASED NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS – 10	UNRELEASED IMPORTED PRODUCTIONS – 6
El Trece – 6 national productions 1. <i>Argentina Tierra de Amor y Venganza</i> (telenovela) 2. <i>Buenos Chicos</i> (telenovela) 3. <i>Diciembre 2001</i> (miniseries) 4. <i>El Encargado 2</i> (miniseries) 5. <i>Los Protectores 2</i> (miniseries) 6. <i>Planners</i> (miniseries)	Telefe-2 productions 1. <i>Café con Aroma de Mujer</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 2. <i>Pantanal</i> (telenovela – Brazil)
El Nueve – 1 national production 7. <i>Familia de Diván</i> (miniseries)	Net TV- 2 productions 3. <i>Cuna de Lobos</i> (Telenovela – Mexico) 4. <i>Raphael</i> (Miniseries – Spain)
América – 1 national production 8. <i>Médoly. La chica del Metro</i> (miniseries)	Bravo TV – 1 production 5. <i>Enfermeras</i> (telenovela – Colombia)
TV Pública - 2 national productions 9. <i>La Bellas Almas de los Verdugos</i> (miniseries) 10. <i>Madame Requin</i> (miniseries)	El Trece –1 production 6. <i>Mi Fortuna es Amarte</i> (telenovela – Mexico)
Telefé – 0 productions	El Nueve - 0 productions
Net TV – 0 productions	América – 0 productions
Bravo TV – 0 productions	TV Pública – 0 productions
CO-PRODUCTIONS – 1	TOTAL UNREALEASED PRODUCTIONS: 17
TV Pública - 1 coproduction 11. <i>Los Mil Días de Allende</i> (Miniseries – Chile, Argentina and Spain)	

Source: Obitel Argentina

The number of unreleased domestic and imported productions remains at 17, as in the previous two years, as well as the number of Argentine productions, which remains at 10, the same as in 2022. This happens thanks to the use of the linear screen for the release of one or two chapters as a promotional mode of series that later become part of the catalogs of different video-on-demand platforms. This year, the alliance between El Trece and Star+ continues, which allowed the premiere of the first episodes of the series *Diciembre 2001*, *El Encargado 2*, *Los Protectores 2* and *Planners* on open television. On the other hand, original platform series were later broadcast in their entirety on open television. This is the case of *Melody, la chica del*

metro (Prime Video - El Nueve) and *Familia de Diván*¹⁴ (Flow - El Nueve). Telefe was the only open channel that did not release national fiction, an unprecedented fact. The leading audience channel continues, 10 years after the beginning of the phenomenon, to program Turkish telenovelas: it broadcast eight productions, in some cases continuations of the previous year, such as *Llamas del Destino*, *Nuestro Amor Eterno*, *Todo por mi Hogar*, *Traicionada y Traicionada II*, *Eda y Serkan*, *Huérfanas* and *Amor de Familia*, all of them in the afternoon. On the other hand, TV Pública premiered two short-lived national fictions and was the local screen for the co-production *Los Mil Días de Allende*, created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1973 military coup in Chile.

TABLE 1b. Exhibition of repeat productions in 2023
(domestic, foreign Obitel titles and co-productions)

REPEAT NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS – 2	REPEAT IMPORTED PRODUCTIONS - 16
Telefe - 1 national production 1. <i>Casados con Hijos</i> (series - Argentina)	Net TV- 9 productions 3. <i>El Cuerpo del Deseo</i> (telenovela – Hispanic US) 4. <i>El Patrón del Mal</i> (serie – Colombia) 5. <i>El Señor de los Cielos</i> (telenovela – Hispanic US) 6. <i>La Esclava Blanca</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 7. <i>La Reina del Flow 2</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 8. <i>La Usurpadora</i> (telenovela – Mexico) 9. <i>Pulseras Rojas</i> (series – Spain) 10. <i>Rosario Tijeras</i> (telenovela – Mexico) 11. <i>Rubí</i> (telenovela – Mexico)
TV Pública - 4 productions 2. <i>Combatientes</i> (miniseries – Argentina)	Bravo TV – 6 productions 12. <i>Avenida Brasil</i> (telenovela – Brazil) 13. <i>Destilando Amor</i> (telenovela – Mexico) 14. <i>Esmeralda</i> (telenovela – Mexico) 15. <i>La Venganza de Analía</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 16. <i>Primera Dama</i> (telenovela – Colombia) 17. <i>Los herederos del Monte</i> (telenovela – Colombia, Hispanic US)
El Trece – 0 productions	Telefe – 1 production 18. <i>María la del Barrio</i> (telenovela – Mexico)
El Nueve – 0 productions	El Nueve - 0 productions
América – 0 productions	América – 0 productions
Net TV – 0 productions	TV Pública –0 productions
Bravo TV – 0 productions	El Trece – productions
COPRODUCTIONS – 0	TOTAL REPEAT PRODUCTIONS: 18

Source: Obitel Argentina

¹⁴ In 2023 El Nueve released a single episode of this original series of Flow (Personal) but with continuity in 2024.

In 2023, 18 reruns were broadcast, compared to 20 in the previous year. Most of them are explained by the programming strategy of Net TV and Bravo TV (large number of telenovelas from Obitel countries). Both channels owned by the same company seem to have a coordinated programming strategy, which is why some reruns that in 2022 were seen on Bravo TV moved to Net TV last year. These are classic Latin American fictions already seen on numerous occasions in different open television channels: *Rubí*, *Rosario Tijeras*, *La Usurpadora*, *El Patrón del Mal*. *Avenida Brasil* (Bravo TV) was broadcast in its entirety in the morning with repeats in the afternoon and also on weekends. In addition to the reruns of already classic productions, *Telefe* made a nostalgic rescue of *María, la del barrio* by airing some chapters of the 1990s telenovela on Sunday afternoons. These strategies help to explain the increase of fiction as a genre in the total share of hours broadcast by open television.

**TABLE 2. Formats of release national fiction in 2023
and its evolution in the five-year period.**

Format	Productions						Hours					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Telenovela	4	1	1	2	2	10	289:30	35:00	72:10	115:05	199:30	711:15
Series	5	0	2	0	6	13	38:00	0:00	14:10	0:00	17:35	69:45
Miniseries	8	4	5	9	3	29	36:30	26:45	17:00	28:55	12:10	121:20
Sitcom	1	0	0	0	0	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Unitary	0	0	0	0	0	0	7:40	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	7:40
Docudrama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Total	18	5	8	11	11	53	371:40	61:45	103:20	144:00	229:15	910:00

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and ObitelArgentina

The evolution of formats in the last five years shows the quasi-disappearance of the national release telenovela from the open television screen, which this year, despite a small rebound, is far from its best times. Short formats (series and miniseries) add up in number of productions and allow to match the numbers but not the amount of hours of 2022. This is not only due to the characteristics of this type of content, but also because only one or two episodes of series that are actually exclusive to platforms are broadcast as promotional material, so the numbers of short formats in the table above appear artificially high.

TABLE 3. Release fiction screened in 2023: countries of origin

Country	Productions	%	Hours	%
NATIONAL (total)	11	65	229:15	35
OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)	6	35	433:45	65
Argentina	11	65	229:15	35
Brazil	1	6	114:15	17
Chile	0	0	0:00	0
Colombia	2	12	281:40	42
Ecuador	0	0	0:00	0
Spain	1	6	1:50	0
Hispanic US	0	0	0:00	0
Mexico	2	12	36:00	5
Peru	0	0	0:00	0
Portugal	0	0	0:00	0
Uruguay	0	0	0:00	0
Venezuela	0	0	0:00	0
CO-PRODUCTIONS (totals)	1	6	4:20	1
National co-productions	1	6	4:20	1
Obitel countries co-productions	0	0	0:00	0
TOTAL	17	100	663:00	100

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and ObitelArgentina

Considering the historical minimum of hours that took place in the 2020-2021 biennium, the years of the pandemic, a slight recovery is noticed, but it is not enough to remove the country from the list of markets with low production capacity. Obitel release fiction hours fell by half this year, from 831 in 2022 to 433 in 2023. This is partly explained by Telefe’s lower interest in fiction in general and its sustained bet on those of Turkish origin. Also, the list of countries of origin of imported fiction was reduced to a small group: Brazil, Colombia, Spain and Mexico.

TABLE 4. Formats of national and Ibero-American fiction screened in 2023

Format	Productions				Hours			
	Nationals	%	Remaining Obitel	%	Nationals	%	Remaining Obitel	%
Telenovela	2	18,2	5	83,3	199:30	87,0	431:55	99,6
Series	6	54,5	0	0,0	17:35	7,7	0:00	0,0
Miniseries	3	27,3	1	16,7	12:10	5,3	1:50	0,4
Sitcom	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Unitary	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Docudrama	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Others	0	0,0	0	0,0	0:00	0,0	0:00	0,0
Total	11	100,0	6	100,0	229:15	100,0	433:45	100,0

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and ObitelArgentina

As the table above shows, in the field of Argentine fiction, the release of short-format productions is preponderant. In the case of national telenovelas, two national

releases are reported this year, although the outlook for the future is not encouraging (absence of fiction projects in Pol-ka, good performance that Telefe obtains with international entertainment formats). As usual, in the opposite direction, imports of productions from the Obitel area are almost exclusively concentrated in telenovelas.

TABLE 5: Top 10 Most watched productions in 2023

Production		Channel	Production company (Country)	Format/genre	No. of episodes 2023	Time slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>Pantanal</i>	Telefe	Globo (BR)	Telenovela	86	Prime Time	9,7	14,5
2	<i>El Encargado 2</i>	El Trece	Pampa Films, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	8,4	12,4
3	<i>Los Protectores 2</i>	El Trece	Kapow, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	6,2	10,2
4	<i>Caf� con Aroma de Mujer</i>	Telefe	RCN (CO)	Telenovela	25	Noon	5,9	12,4
5	<i>Diciembre 2001</i>	El Trece	Kapow, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	5,9	10,5
6	<i>Argentina Tierra De Amor y Venganza</i>	El Trece	Pol-ka (AR)	Telenovela	125	Prime Time	5,5	10,3
7	<i>Buenos Chicos</i>	El Trece	Pol-ka (AR)	Telenovela	79	Prime Time	5,3	9,2
8	<i>Planners</i>	El Trece	PegsaGroup, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	5,1	7,5
9	<i>Mi Fortuna es Amarte</i>	El Trece	Televisa (MX)	Telenovela	5	Noon	2,2	5,0
10	<i>Familia de Div�n</i>	El Nueve	Flow (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	1,1	2,1
Total national productions: 7				Foreign original scripts: 3				
70%				30%				

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and ObitelArgentina

Once again, a Brazilian production, the remake of the classic *Pantanal*, is in first place, although with a rating below double digits. The new version of *Caf  con Aroma de Mujer* (Colombia) and *Mi Fortuna es Amarte* (Mexico) joined the imported productions in this year’s top ten. This last case is striking because the telenovela, which has a length of over 90 episodes, was aired for only one week in January 2023 on El Trece and was cancelled due to low ratings.

TABLE 5a: Top 10 Most watched national productions in 2023

Production		Channel	Production company (country)	Format/genre	No. of episodes 2023	Time slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>El Encargado 2</i>	El Trece	Pampa Films, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	8,4	12,4
2	<i>Los Protectores 2</i>	El Trece	Kapow, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	6,2	10,2
3	<i>Diciembre 2001</i>	El Trece	Kapow, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	5,9	10,5
4	<i>Argentina Tierra De Amor y Venganza</i>	El Trece	Pol-ka (AR)	Telenovela	125	Prime Time	5,5	10,3
5	<i>Buenos Chicos</i>	El Trece	Pol-ka (AR)	Telenovela	79	Prime Time	5,3	9,2
6	<i>Planners</i>	El Trece	PegsaGroup, Star+ (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	5,1	7,5
7	<i>Familia de Diván</i>	El Nueve	Flow (AR)	Series	1	Prime Time	1,1	2,1
8	<i>Melody, la Chica del Metro</i>	América	Warner Music, Prime Video (AR)	Series	12	Morning	0,4	1,1
9	<i>Madame Requin</i>	TV Pública	3C Films Group (AR)	Miniseries	5	Prime Time	0,4	0,6
10	<i>Los mil días de Allende</i>	TV Pública	Parox, Mediterráneo, Aleph, Mente Colectiva y HD Argentina.	Miniseries	4	Prime Time	0,3	0,4
Total national productions: 9					Original foreign scripts: 1			
90%					10%			

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and ObitelArgentina

In recent years, Obitel Argentina has observed that productions with relatively low audience levels and broadcasted in channels that compete for the fourth or fifth position in the general rating, nevertheless manage to place national fiction productions among the most watched of the year given the generalized drop in audience and the lower offer of this type of contents. Indeed, series such as *Mélody, la chica del metro* (América), *Madame Requin* (TV Pública) and *Los Mil Días de Allende* (TV Pública) enter the national top ten with figures well below the average rating point.

TABLE 6: Audience profile of the 10 most watched productions:
gender, age, socio-economic status

Production		Channel	Gender %		NSE%			
			Female	Male	ABC1	C2	C3	D
1	<i>Pantanal</i>	Telefe	60,4	39,6	15,7	18,4	24,3	41,6
2	<i>El Encargado 2</i>	El Trece	56,8	43,2	11,9	29,5	32,4	26,2
3	<i>Los Protectores</i>	El Trece	49,3	50,7	18,5	17,7	39,3	24,6
4	<i>Café con Aroma de Mujer</i>	Telefe	63,2	36,8	14,7	21,9	21,8	41,7
5	<i>Diciembre 2001</i>	El Trece	49,6	50,4	3,1	35,3	26,3	35,3
6	<i>Argentina Tierra de Amor y Venganza</i>	El Trece	56,6	43,4	17,0	27,6	26,8	28,6
7	<i>Buenos Chicos</i>	El Trece	54,1	45,9	8,7	26,9	31,4	33,1
8	<i>Planners</i>	El Trece	53,7	46,3	29,7	6,0	31,6	32,8
9	<i>Mi Fortuna es Amarte</i>	El Trece	60,7	39,3	8,1	38,2	24,5	29,2
10	<i>Familia de Diván</i>	El Nueve	52,5	47,5	0,0	20,9	29,9	49,3

Production		Age %				
		04 - 12	13-19	20-24	35-44	45+
1	<i>Pantanal</i>	14,0	15,3	28,3	19,3	23,1
2	<i>El Encargado 2</i>	5,8	23,9	20,1	17,1	33,1
3	<i>Los Protectores</i>	13,6	17,1	17,5	20,7	31,1
4	<i>Café con Aroma de Mujer</i>	13,4	16,1	32,3	21,6	16,5
5	<i>Diciembre 2001</i>	19,4	11,1	14,1	24,7	30,6
6	<i>Argentina Tierra de Amor y Venganza</i>	11,7	15,6	20,8	19,5	32,3
7	<i>Buenos Chicos</i>	12,7	22,3	21,2	17,0	26,9
8	<i>Planners</i>	9,2	21,3	32,4	11,1	25,9
9	<i>Mi Fortuna es Amarte</i>	8,6	15,6	20,4	22,5	32,8
10	<i>Familia de Diván</i>	0,0	33,3	6,2	27,8	32,6

Source: Kantar Ibope Media and Obitel Argentina

As for the audience profile, there are no major novelties. Regarding gender, women are in the majority in almost all cases, with exceptions such as *Los Protectores 2* and *Diciembre 2001*. In these two cases, the themes related to soccer and national politics, respectively, summon more male audience and show an audience with greater gender parity. Viewed by socioeconomic level, fiction on open television is mostly consumed by audiences with middle and low income. This year, as in previous years, Brazilian fictions with a biblical theme, which concentrated the majority of the audience’s attention in the lower socioeconomic level segments, were not programmed. Telenovelas such as *Pantanal* or *Café con Aroma de Mujer*, 40% of whose audience belongs to the NSE D segment, took that place.

3. VoD Monitoring 2023

During 2023, the phenomenon pointed out in previous years referred to the displacement of national fiction towards video-on-demand platforms that adopted it as a function of their own. The main global platforms operating in the country, Netflix, Prime Video, Star+, Disney+, HBO+ together produce a number of national productions that far exceeds the meager offer of open television for this category. Since 2018 when Netflix premiered *Edha*, the first Argentine fiction made for a platform, the number of releases has increased to 20 in 2023. Thus, national releases in VoD services (20) once again surpassed those of open television (11). However, of these 11, only four are titles conceived for traditional television, so it is clear that national production is almost entirely linked to the production processes that the platforms command.

3.1 VoD platform market in 2023

The VoD platform market did not show significant modifications in 2023 in Argentina. Increasingly, all companies have ventured into the production of local serialized fiction to the point that they are currently practically the only players in the audiovisual system in charge of this function. With the sole exception of Flow, linked to the ICT services operator Personal (Telecom-Clarín), the rest of the TVE (TV Everywhere) platforms linked to subscription television operators (Movistar TV, Telecentro Play, Claro Video, DirecTVGo) have not yet ventured into the production of original national fictions.

3.2. Supply of local VoD platforms in 2023 (national, regional in-country)

Along with global and transnational platforms and some local initiatives such as Flow, linked to the subscription television operator Personal (formerly Cablevisión), which serves as an Internet aggregator of content from different sources, we find the platforms of the National State. Cont.ar, dependent on the state-owned company Contenidos Públicos Sociedad del Estado, is a reversion of a predecessor, Contenidos Digitales Abiertos (CDA) from 2011, which operates free of charge (FVOD) and includes in its catalog a significant number of national series, particularly those made with state support. It is also a space where access to live streaming transmissions of all public channels (TV Pública, Encuentro, PakaPaka, DeporTV), Radio Nacional and other cultural contents converge. For its part, Cine.ar Play, managed by the Instituto Nacional de Cine y Artes Audiovisuales (INCAA) has been operating since 2015 (formerly under the brand Odeon) and offers mainly short fiction, films and documentaries with free access or in pay-per-transaction mode (TVOD).

The government that took office in December has established that the state-owned companies that manage state-owned channels, radios and platforms are intervened by the National Executive Power, their boards of directors were dissolved, and their future seems uncertain at the closing of this chapter.

3.3. VoD analysis in 2023: national release fiction and co-productions.

In 2023, the five main global video platforms released, together with Flow, a total of 20 national serialized fiction productions, the highest number since these services have been producing fictional content in the country. This is evidence of a greater interest of global streaming platforms in producing Argentine content in association with independent production houses, all of them based in Buenos Aires and with extensive background in audiovisual production, both in film and television.

TABLE 7. National fiction and co-productions exhibited
in VoD systems in 2023

NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS	RELEASE	RELEASE CO-PRODUCTIONS
Prime Video (2)		HBO (1)
01. <i>Iosi, el Espía Arrepentido</i> (series – 2nd season)		01. <i>Tè quiero y me duele</i> (miniseries - Mexico)
02. <i>Melody, la Chica del Metro</i> (miniseries)		Disney (2)
HBO Max (2)		02. <i>C.H.U.E.C.O.</i> (miniserie - Mexico)
03. <i>Días de Gallos</i> (series - 2nd season)		03. <i>Una Navidad para C.H.U.E.C.O</i> (special - Mexico)
04. <i>El Jardín de Bronce</i> (series – 3rd season)		Prime Video (1)
Netflix (3)		01. <i>Barrabrava</i> (miniseries)
05. <i>División Palermo</i> (miniseries)		
06. <i>El Reino</i> (series – 2nd season)		
07. <i>El Amor Después del Amor</i> (miniseries)		
Flow (4)		
08. <i>Familia de Diván</i> (miniseries)		
09. <i>Gamer, una Vida Más</i> (miniseries)		
10. <i>Parte de una Religión</i> (miniseries)		
11. <i>Frágiles</i> (miniseries)		
Disney (2)		
12. <i>Entrelazados</i> (serie - 2nd season)		
13. <i>FreeKs</i> (miniseries)		
Star+ (6)		
14. <i>Ringo. Gloria y Muerte</i> (miniseries)		
15. <i>Planners</i> (miniseries)		
16. <i>Diciembre 2001</i> (miniseries)		
17. <i>Los Protectores</i> (series - 2nd season)		
18. <i>Nada</i> (miniseries)		
19. <i>El Encargado</i> (series - 2nd season)		
Total: 19		Total: 4

Source: Obitel Argentina

First to establish itself in the market in 2011 and to produce national content in 2018, Netflix has since released 13 original productions, a number similar to what Star+ achieved in just three years with an aggressive content production policy in Argentina. The rest of the platforms released at least two to four Argentine productions in 2023. All of them are miniseries of between 8 and 13 episodes.

3.4. Características narrativas del VoD en 2023

In 2023, second seasons of *Iosi, el espía arrepentido* (Prime Video), *El Reino* (Netflix), *Entrelazados* (Disney+), *Los Protectores* (Star+) and *El Encargado* (Star+) and the third season of *El Jardín De Bronce* (HBO) were released. The continuity of some productions with new seasons may be an indicator of their good performance, given the absence of reliable measurements on the consumption of these series on each platform.

The phenomenon of series based on the lives of celebrities from the world of music, politics or sports had its continuation with the release of the miniseries on the life of musician Rodolfo 'Fito' Paez *El Amor Después del Amor* (Netflix) and *Ringo. Gloria y Muerte* (Star+), which portrays the life of boxer Oscar 'Ringo' Bonavena. Also, about political events in recent national history, the miniseries *Diciembre 2001* (Star+), which recounts the moments leading up to the fall of Fernando De la Rúa's government and the concomitant social outbreak, stands out.

Two series had a special impact on the media conversation: one, the comedy *División Palermo* (Netflix), which tells the story of a group of people who join a group for the prevention of infractions and minor crimes called by the government of the city of Buenos Aires. All of them have in common their belonging to a minority usually discriminated against. The comedy deals ironically with the absurdities of forced and artificial inclusion in the working world. The other, *Nada* (Star+), stood out for its careful staging, the exaltation of the most attractive spots in Buenos Aires, and in particular the participation of Robert De Niro in a supporting role, which nevertheless required the American actor's visit to the country to film some scenes.

Prime Video, Flow and Disney+, on the other hand, offered at least one locally produced release series for young and pre-teen audiences. The acquisition of distribution rights for the telenovela *Floricienta* (2004-2005), which was incorporated into HBO's catalog (now renamed Max), is along the same trend. According to the report "What We Watched: A Netflix Engagement Report", which lists the most watched series and movies globally in the first half of 2023, the Argentine children's series *GO! Vive a tu manera* (2019) is the second most watched national content on that platform (17,800,000 viewing hours) just behind *El Amor Después del Amor* (2023), which reached 21 million viewing hours in two months.

4. Interactivity and audience participation

In the context of the growing offer of series and miniseries in streaming or VOD platforms, a miniseries with high media impact and very modest repercussion in social networks at the time of its release was selected for analysis. However, the miniseries *División Palermo* (Netflix) became a sort of cultural reference for scenes that comment on the political reality of our country. It is a comedy that narrates the actions carried out by a special division of the local police. Its particularity is that it is proposed as an institutional tool to revert the discriminatory image of the police force. To this end, all its participants represent a minority (people with motor disabilities, people of short stature, people of retirement age, people with some maturity retardation, etc.).

This proposal assumes that, as stated by Alejandro Modarelli (2023)

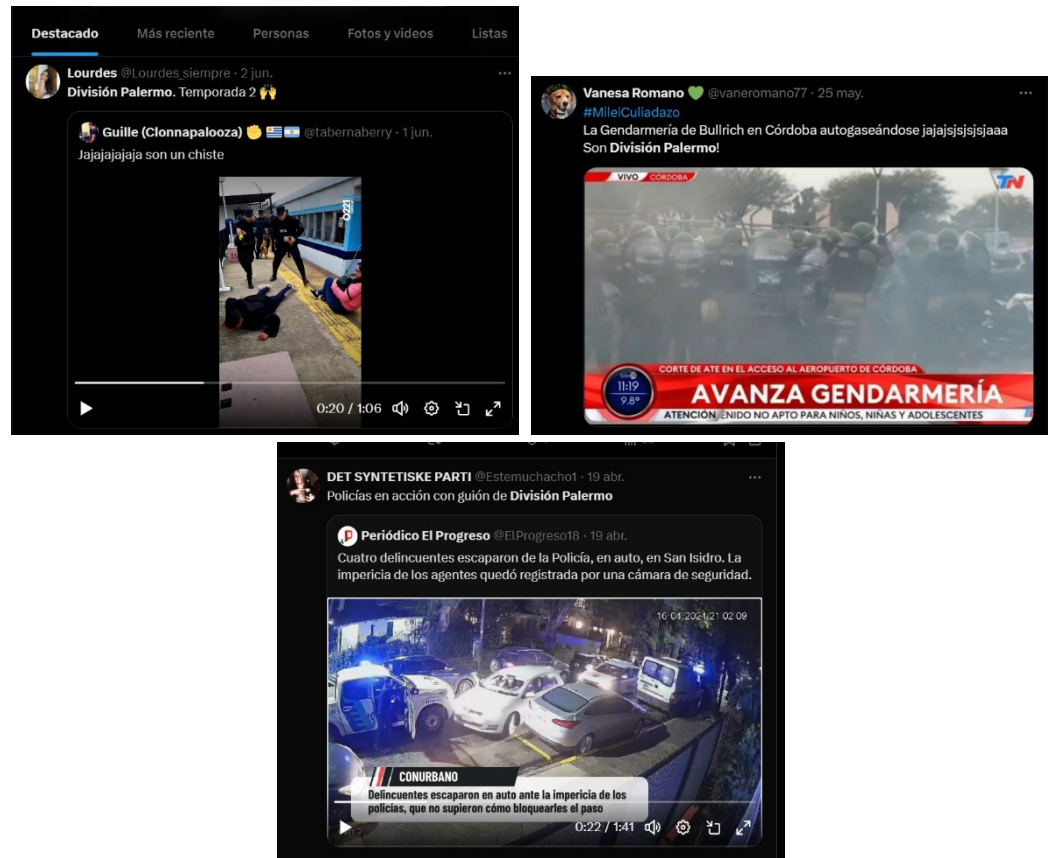
La corrección política, y la incorrección, no son apenas las dos caras de una misma moneda sino un debate social y cultural sobre la libertad de expresión en el que estamos inmersos desde hace décadas. Y recrudece cuando la única revolución posible pareciera ser la de las formas, y las bastillas urgentes por tomar son los medios de comunicación o los libros para las infancias. El éxito de la serie *División Palermo* en Netflix -una Guardia Urbana formada por friquis contratados en la ciudad neoliberal como instrumentos de maquillaje de las verdaderas políticas represivas- plantea la encrucijada del humor, donde un Micky Vainilla pudo ser celebrado, es lógico, por el progresismo de izquierda, pero a la vez sirvió, sin buscarlo, a la juventud reaccionaria como un espejo gracioso donde se reconocía muy a gusto. (S/P)¹⁵

Thus, *División Palermo* attacks in its narrative the progressive common sense, which strives for inclusion -in an extreme stance, everywhere-. Simultaneously, it also attacks a neoliberal government -very similar to that of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires- that makes only politically correct decisions without effect. The strategies of the laughable (Fratlicelli 2023: 27) have been extended in contemporary mediatization.

¹⁵ Political correctness and incorrectness are not just two sides of the same coin, but a social and cultural debate on freedom of expression in which we have been immersed for decades. And it intensifies when the only possible revolution seems to be that of the forms, and the urgent bastilles to take are the media or books for children. The success of the series *División Palermo* on Netflix -an Urban Guard formed by freaks hired in the neoliberal city as make-up instruments of the real repressive policies- raises the crossroads of humor, where a Micky Vainilla could be celebrated, logically, by the progressive left, but at the same time served, without looking for it, to the reactionary youth as a funny mirror where they recognized themselves at ease. (S/P)



We said before that the repercussion in networks does not necessarily come from the series itself (which was awarded at the Platinum Awards and obtained a good level of audience and social conversation), but from the fiction. Many social actions reported are commented as belonging to “División Palermo”, either because of their precariousness or because of their mismatch with what is expected (because they are funny, exaggerated or clumsy). In this way, the reception is expressed by producing memes (Fratlicelli, 2023) extending the humor proposed by the fiction.



Thus, an X user commenting on the series relates it to the animated series *The Simpsons*, with an image showing a disuniformed group of Springfields bravely going on a mission that will fail due to the very makeup of the group.

But X users produce humor about humor: In one case, it is the retaking of the broadcasting of a training simulation of the Argentine Federal Police for the use of Taser guns. The staging and its rehearsal quality in terms of the failure itself and the lousiness of the scene makes a user relate what is filmed with a possible continuity of the fictional series. The same happens when the National Gendarmerie confronts demonstrators in the Province of Córdoba. In an attempt to disperse the demonstrators, the gendarmes fired tear gas without calculating that the wind blew the cloud towards them, so that the security forces themselves had to disperse. This circumstance generates a situation that is both funny in the retaking of the user of X and critical of the Minister of Security of the Nation (Patricia Bullrich). Finally, the clumsiness of the security forces in intercepting those who steal a car and escape driving on the sidewalk, despite being surrounded by security forces. For several X users this seems to be a fragment of the series, or even more, a joke discarded as implausible for fiction.

It is interesting to note that this group of posts are from the year 2024 and that the narrative, but above all, the playful-critical tone of the series is kept alive as a reading criterion by users to question reality.

5. Highlights of the year

In 2023, only two full-length fictions will be released for the linear screen and both were produced by Pol-ka and broadcast by El Trece. One of them, sequel to a hit; *Argentina. Tierra de amor y venganza*. The first part of the telenovela aired in 2019 came to average in total fiction 13.6 rating points with peaks of 17 points. Betting on the still fresh memory of the viewers of the first season, the second round of the period fiction did not obtain the expected results. As pointed out by Pablo Mascareño (2023) in *La Nación* newspaper, “ATAV 2 subió sus números cerrando su promedio en 6,2 puntos y tocando un máximo de 7,8 puntos. Si bien no son cifras demasiado altas, se trata de un considerable repunte para la única ficción de producción nacional actualmente en el aire de la TV abierta”¹⁶. (S/P) It was a period fiction that sought to include themes that allowed connecting the present with the past; being a narrative set in the 1980s, many of the characters recreated in the fiction are still part of the media universe. This quality increased the social conversation about the fiction, especially due to the representative adaptations of the characters anchored in well-known personalities.

These correlations were encouraged by the use of television archive material of the time and by the continuity of past events reconstructed in fiction. Thus, the interest was less in the melodramatic plot than in the possibility of judging the

¹⁶ ATAV 2 increased its numbers, closing its average at 6.2 points and reaching a maximum of 7.8 points. Although these are not very high figures, it is a considerable rebound for the only nationally produced fiction currently on broadcast TV.

veracity of the facts staged: the so-called “Vedette War” that took place in one of the TV lunches hosted by Mirtha Legrand recreated in fiction brought the protagonists of the fight at that time to the show programs, recalling the reasons, the past confrontations and whether the ways in which the original tense fight was expressed in ATAV2 were adjusted to the facts or not.

In an inflationary national context, with a fiction that bet on production quality and period reconstruction, the overall performance of the fiction was very poor. Nevertheless, Pol-ka sustained the more than one hundred chapters of the fiction.

From this point on, Pol-ka and El Trece change the bet. They produce a telenovela with police overtones featuring a choral cast characterized by the youth of its actors. It moves away from the usual melodramatic tone for telenovelas and seeks to seduce a younger audience. It is the story of a group of friends who, in order to avenge the attempted abuse of one of them, rob the house of the aggressor, who happens to be a thug, who, upon discovering the perpetrators of the robbery, extorts money from them to put them at his disposal. In the group of friends, now a labor force for crime, there is the son of a prosecutor, the daughter of a police commissioner, so that the threats of denunciation are always a possibility of narrative deterioration. At the same time, *Buenos Chicos* deals with multiple themes that are articulated with the social agenda and social merchandising: it narrates the gender transition of one of the members of the group -and the family’s rejection of their self-perception-, the unwanted pregnancy of another of the members, the difficulty of overcoming the alcoholism of two of the group’s fathers. In addition to the crimes to which the group of young people are subjected, other themes of the genre are also narrated: amorous deception, adultery, the difficulty of love’s correspondence and its triumph, in some cases.

This production ended up giving less results than expected (it averaged 5.3 rating points), which led Pol-ka to make the decision to discontinue fiction production since they had no projects for linear television fiction for 2024-2025. Thus, the main television fiction production company closes its doors, evidencing the catastrophic situation in which the industry finds itself.

As mentioned in previous years, the success of fictions for platforms and the shift of national fiction to fictions from other countries (especially Turkish) ended up leaving the linear screen without national fiction production.

6. Theme of the Year: What is happening with the narratives in Ibero-American television fiction?

In order to think about the ways in which Argentine fiction survives and its strategies to attract audiences, the following series released on VOD platforms will be analyzed:

Iosi, el espía arrepentido (series - 2nd season), Prime Video; *El Reino* (series - 2nd season) and *El Amor Después del Amor* (miniseries), Netflix; *Nada* (miniseries) and *El Encargado* (series - 2nd season) from Star+.

Three of those selected are continuity from previous seasons. But they are selected for the place and social repercussion they had as well as for the narrative diversity they present.

6.1 Characters

In the selection of series, we find a wide range of protagonists, from those who slightly cross fiction and non-fiction, as is the case of the second season of *Iosi, el espía arrepentido* which presents José “Iosi” Pérez (played by Gustavo Bassani), who infiltrates the Jewish community, initially pretends to be Jewish, but then adopts the religion (season 1) and marries a member of the community. He keeps secret his work as a spy for the Argentine Federal Police and tells the story of his participation in the bombing of the Israeli Mutual Amia on July 18, 1994 (two years after the bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Argentina), the role of the state in the sale of weapons to Ecuador, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during the presidency of Carlos Menem and produced by the state-owned Fabricaciones Militares. Both the reconstruction of the period and the characterization of the main characters realistically account for a set of common places linked to the perception of the Jewish community in Argentina, the intelligence services and power. As it is a fiction based on real events, both the characters and their physical environments build a strong realistic plausibility.

In a completely different narrative, *El amor después del amor* also presents a period reconstruction, with clearly identifiable characters, as it narrates the path to success of musician Rodolfo “Fito” Páez. In this case, as in *ATAV2*, controversy also arose over the fairness of the portrayals of the characters and their conflicts. The case of the singer Fabiana Cantilo, former partner of Páez who made statements against her portrayal as only his backup vocalist and dependent of the singer. So much so that Cantilo shared a video of her relationship with Páez during the 80’s saying “Antes de ir a girar por Europa, les dejo la posta”¹⁷. However, critics acclaimed the series and particularly the performances of its protagonists, both for their resemblance to the characters they play and for the period reconstruction. Once again, the correlation between fictional narrative based on real events and their correspondence with historical events are brought into play. The characters of both come out of the comparison with flying colors.

El Reino, *Nada* and *El encargado* are not presented by reworking characters or stories referenced as real. The characters play with a degree of eccentricity that distances them, in the first instance, from the temptation of similarity. Especially the

¹⁷ “Before going to tour Europe, I pass on the mantle to you”

case of the building manager, Eliseo -Guillermo Francella- in *El encargado* (2nd season). He is an apparently good and affable character who, in reality, takes advantage of his position and false helpfulness to profit in illegal ways (he rents the apartments of the building when their owners are not there, he takes deliveries that do not correspond to him, he sets traps to achieve his goals by deceiving the owners). On this occasion, the consortium hires Eliseo again, who, due to an inheritance, ends up being the owner as well. In this context, the conflicts become more hyperbolic, since he also decides as an employer about his work. The innocent mischief that Eliseo performs is what gives the series its laughable tone, which would otherwise turn into a cruel narrative.

In *Nada*, Luis Brandoni plays Manuel, a fussy, sybarite, upper-class art critic with no money. Nada narrates Manuel's misfortunes after the death of his employee, on whom he depended for everything in his life. He finds himself alone, clumsy and unable to continue his life, until Antonia (Majo Cabrera) shows up to work in his house. Despite Manuel's rejection, Antonia gradually earns her place and gains the affection of her employer. Manuel's misfortunes (economic, social and amorous) are threaded together by the presence of Vincent (Robert De Niro) who translates terms - generally localisms and insults - from Buenos Aires into English. Vincent visits Manuel in Buenos Aires and ends up winning over his ex-wife. Although he is a haughty, bohemian and well-to-do character, as might be imagined of a Buenos Aires elite of half a century ago, the appearance of the foreigner translating is a clear attempt to globalize the comedy.

For its part, *El reino* (2nd season) continues the story of Emilio Vázquez Peña (Diego Peretti) evangelical pastor and president of the republic, his wife Elena Vázquez Peña (Mercedes Morán) on the one hand, and Tadeo Vázquez (Peter Lanzani) and Johnatan (Uriel Nicolás Díaz) who return to the country, spreading the word and leading a socio-religious revolution. It is necessary to remember that Johnatan has performed miracles, but in the escape (end of the first season) he must hide his powers so as not to be discovered. The flight of Tadeo and Johnatan is the counterpart of Emilio's rise to power in the first season. In this one, the narrative arc tells the story of the fall of the pastor-president and the church managed by his wife in parallel with the social rebirth of Tadeo as a political-religious leader who opposes the violence established by the government. Although this story has no pretension of being linked to the events that took place and were denounced, some allegorical and comparative readings of the character of Emilio as a non-democratic and neo-liberal power-grabber have appeared with some characters of the Argentine reality.

In all cases, the main characters and most of the supporting characters are played by nationally and internationally renowned actors and actresses. This is an element of seduction for local and foreign markets, so that the platforms reinforce a local starsystem that guarantees a return on investment and attracts global audiences. Robert De Niro's inclusion strategy in *Nada* is an eloquent example.

6. 2. Themes

The five fictions narrate very different themes, but it may be thought that there are some common places in *Nada* and *El encargado* (2nd season), for example, in relation to the characterization of the porteño as a lively character, given to certain minor corruption who takes advantage of it. *El Reino* (2nd season), in turn, presents a corrupt and degrading government, as opposed to the journey of the dispossessed, poor, from the interior of the country, who are honest, hard-working and carry the light and the word. This contrast alone makes the fiction evidences its manic and melodramatic character.

For its part, *El amor después del amor* is released in the same year that marks the 30th anniversary of the release of the homonymous album that launched Fito Páez to international stardom. The series accompanies the singer's tours (national and international). Likewise, the biopic continues the trend begun years ago with the stories of famous personalities (Maradona, Tevez, Sandro, Monzón, etc.), which have also been produced this year (Ringo. Gloria and Muerte by Star+). The presentation of Páez's early career themes migration, the initial difficulties to achieve recognition, and finally success, fame and love. In doing so, it also provides a glimpse into the lives of the artists who accompanied his path: Fabiana Cantilo, Carlos Baglietto, Charly García, Luis Alberto Spinetta, Cecilia Roth, among others.

The reconstruction of the past as a theme is dominant in *Iosi, el espía arrepentido* (2nd season) and in *Diciembre 2001* (Star+). In these fictions based on real events, speculations about how the events would have happened prevail. To make this effect possible, fictions work with elements of verisimilization: references to other identifiable characters, clothing or furniture. These glances at the past focus especially on unresolved issues such as the attacks on Jewish institutions or the fall of the radical government headed by De la Rúa. It is a recent and traumatic past of which the narrative seeks to take charge by suturing the historical hiatus. They present an explanatory speculation. Although they may be of interest as pure fiction for an expectation that does not know Argentine history, the local reading cannot disregard the responsibilities that fiction assigns.

6.3. Narrative and Stylistic Resources

The five fictions present technical-aesthetic values of high production quality while building coherent narrative and stylistic universes. Each one, with its tone and form, plays the game of internationality. They are fictions produced to be sold globally. Their realistic, measured, careful style and great editing work seek to escape the local contingency. In all cases, the plots also present subplots that feed the main story, giving them dynamism, depth and interest. It can be interesting to see the link between Páez and Spinetta, for example, or to find in *Iosi's* references and encounters a familiar face, a person responsible for those whose responsibility is still being

debated in court. The series and miniseries not anchored in real events also allow reading allegories of the present: a neoliberal president who leads the country to a crisis could be read non-fictionally; a rich man who is saved by friends and a sensitive soul as well. Finally, the case of the building caretaker embodied by Francella in this second season appears more hyperbolic in his features than in the first season, avoiding the criticism and anger that the first appearance aroused on the part of the building workers' guild and its workers. This new adventure series is better placed in the plane of comic fiction and accentuates the character of the laughable, so that the link with the comparative reading is left out of the comments and experiences of the viewers.

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