

UNITED STATES: NARRATIVES OF HISPANIC TV IN THE U.S.¹

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Introduction

This year it is once again confirmed that live television events such as sports, award ceremonies, RealityTV programs and news, continue to have a key place in television and in the role this one plays in social life. Along with them, television fiction continues to be an important carrier of ratings, but the growing division of kind of productions, genres, and plots aligned to different modalities of content distribution and their specific target demographics is clearly revealed. That is, the different offering of Hispanic fictional content between open television and streaming platforms. In 2023, Univision was the ratings leader with the return to a romantic melodrama offering in telenovelas, which have their highest audience among women over 50 years old. Meanwhile, the offer of content for younger and male audiences has moved to Vix (TelevisaUnivision's platform). Thus, romantic melodrama continues to be Univision's most important fiction formula for open television, while fictional dramatic series about secret passions, suspense thriller, dystopian scenarios or science are key in the fiction offer of the Vix platform. TelevisaUnivision's strategy of making Vix's content offer visible is evident in the company's press releases, as the promotion of Vix's premieres became central to the corporation's efforts. Telemundo, meanwhile, continues to produce narratives aimed at young and male audiences with narco-narratives and suspense telenovelas or thrillers for their open television offering. But like Univision, Telemundo also seems to establish a system in which telenovelas and melodrama remain the most important fiction for open TV, while series and drama are produced for platforms, where they are released first, in this case for Netflix, and then find a second life on open TV. In 2023, the production house Argos will no longer produce for Telemundo.

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1. The U.S. Hispanic Audiovisual Context in 2023

1.1 Hispanic open television in the U.S.

Chart 1. U.S. Hispanic national open television networks/channels

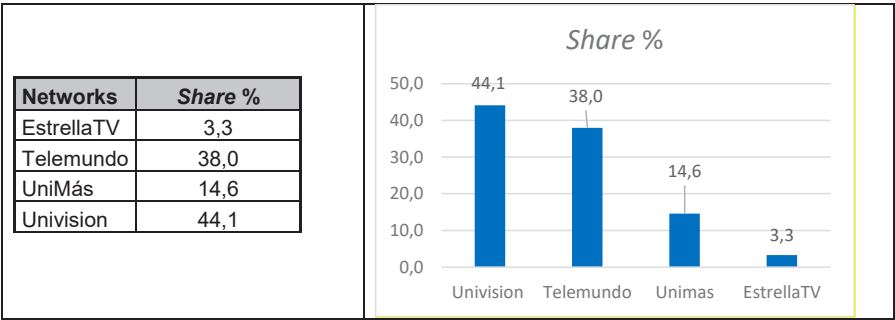
Private networks/channels
Estrella TV
Telemundo
Univision
UniMás
TOTAL NETWORKS/CHANNELS = 4

Source: Obitel U.S.

In recent years, the number of open television channels has been decreasing. With the closing of MundoMax in 2016 and Azteca América at the end of 2022, the number of television networks has been reduce to four. It is important to note that the Univision and UniMás networks are subsidiaries of the Mexican-American bi-national media conglomerate TelevisaUnivision. On the other hand, the competing television network Telemundo is a subsidiary of telecommunications and media giant Comcast/NBC. While, EstrellaTV is owned by financial firm HPS Investment Partners LLC.

In the last ten years, the opportunities provided by the digital signal through the simulcasting system have made possible the emergence of new networks. This is the case of TeleXitos, launched in 2012, which complements the programming offered by its sister network Telemundo. The network offers a full slate of movies from the 1970s to the 2000s, which are part of the NBC/Universal conglomerate’s video library, and since all its programming is in English, all the movies are dubbed. TeleXitos has positioned itself not far behind the EstrellaTV network, and if we were to consider it as a Hispanic cable network, it would be second only to TUDN (Televisa Univision Deportes Networks) in ratings.

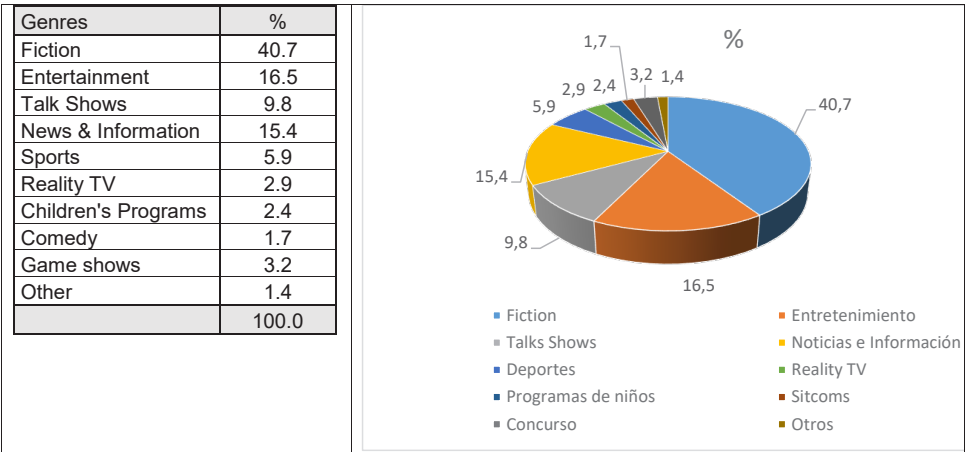
Graph 1. TV rating and share by station (rating per household)



Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

The Univision network is in first place in audience share in 2023 with a difference of 6.1 points over the second-place network, Telemundo. With 44.1 share points, Univision is up three points from the 41.1 points it had in 2022. With 38 points, Telemundo lost one point with respect to the 39.3% audience share it achieved in 2022. Meanwhile, UniMás had a slight rebound in audience share with 14.6 points compared to the 14 points obtained in 2022. The closing of the television network Azteca America did not benefit Estrella TV, as it has 3.3% audience share in 2023, down from 3.6 points it had in 2022. This year, Univision achieved a difference of 6.1 share points over Telemundo, which has not happened since 2015, when the Univision network had a comfortable 11-point lead over Telemundo.

Graph 2. Genres and hours broadcast in TV programming



Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S

With 40.7%, fiction continues to be the television genre with the most hours on screen, followed by entertainment, and then news and information in third place. Fiction was up almost three percentage points from the 37.9% it had in 2022, and is

well above the 37.1% in 2021, 36.1% in 2020, and 35.2% in 2019. In contrast, with 16.5%, the entertainment genre dropped more than 4 points from 20.7% in 2022. News and information, with 15.4%, rose slightly compared to 14.9% in 2022. The fourth category, Talk Shows, has 9.8% compared to 7.5% in 2022. Sports, in fifth place with 5.9%, was almost unchanged compared to 5.8% in 2022.

1.2. Hispanic pay TV and VoD platforms in the U.S. in 2023

In pay-TV, the landscape of the networks that dominate the market has been more or less stable over the last decade. In 2023, TUDN maintained the leadership it achieved in 2022, moving up from a second place it had held for five years. The most significant change was that Galavisión, which lost its leadership for the first time in more than 30 years when it moved to third place, moved now to fourth place among the ten most watched cable networks in 2023. Universo rises from third place in 2022 to second place in 2023

Chart 2. Hispanic pay-TV channels in the U.S.

10 most watched Hispanic pay TV channels in the U.S.				
Channel	Genre	Country of origin	Unit (000)	Rating
TUDN	Sports	U.S./Mexico	22.143	0.02
Universo	Fiction and Entertainment	U.S.	18.989	0.02
Discovery en Español	Information	U.S.	13.302	0.01
Galavisión	Fiction and Entertainment	U.S./Mexico	11.525	0.01
ESPN Deportes	Sports	U.S.EE.UU.	10.501	0.01
Fox Deportes	Sports	U.S.	8.762	0.01
Discovery Familia	Information	U.S.	4.666	0.00
GalaNovelas	Fiction	U.S.	4.190	0.00
CNN en Español	News and information	U.S.	3.743	0.00
HBO Latino	Fiction	U.S.	1.644	0.00

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

It is important to highlight the dominant position of the sports genre offering in pay-TV, not only with the first place, but with three positions among the six networks with the highest ratings. Fiction is the main genre on four of the ten networks, and information and/or news on three of the ten dominant pay-TV channels. It is important to note that none of the four fiction networks had premiere titles, as they are only complementary to open TV networks (Universo, Galavisión, GalaNovelas), or for Spanish-language versions of premium English-language networks (HBO Latino).

In 2023 Netflix, Amazon Prime, Max, Disney+, Star+, Starz, Paramount+, Peacock, and Vix continue to dominate the SVoD landscape in the United States. It is important to stress that the emergence and maintenance of these platforms is based on the power of big technology corporations and media conglomerates. With the exception of Netflix—which dominated the market early on due to its ‘first-mover advantage’ from which it continues to benefit globally—, technology infrastructure giant Amazon underpins the production of Prime Video, Warner Media underpins Max, Disney underpins Disney+ and Star+, Paramount Global underpins Paramount+, Comcats/NBC underpins Peacock, and TelevisaUnivision underpins Vix+.

1.3. Sources of financing for the audiovisual sector

The total revenue for the Mexican-American TelevisaUnivision corporation grew 5%, from \$4.6 billion dollars in 2022 to \$4.9 billion in 2023. In terms of advertising, programming licensing and subscriptions, in the U.S. the company had revenue of \$3 159.7 million dollars in 2023, slightly down from \$3 193.4 million in 2022. This was offset by TelevisaUnivision’s same revenues in Mexico of \$1,768.3 million dollars in 2023, up from \$1,518.5 million in 2022. This means that total advertising revenues grew by 6%. While in the U.S. advertising revenue decreased by 1%, advertising revenue in Mexico grew by 18% (TelevisaUnivision announces, 2024).

Comcast/NBC, the corporation that owns Telemundo, is a global company with businesses in telecommunications and platforms, as well as media, studios and amusement parks. Overall, Comcast reported revenue of \$121.6 billion, up slightly from \$121.4 billion last year. Comcast’s Media segment includes the broadcasting TV networks NBC and Telemundo, a portfolio of cable channels, the SVoD Peacock, and international TV networks such as Sky Sports. Thus, revenue in the Media segment in 2023 was \$25.4 billion, down from \$26.7 billion in 2022 (Comcast, 2024). The corporation does not report specific revenues for the Telemundo network. In the case of EstrellaTV, there is no public revenue report.

1.4. Communication policies

An effort to regulate social media, particularly at the state level, has begun, triggered on the one hand, to an increasing crisis of youth mental health issues; and on the other hand, a possible ban on the TikTok App based on the perceived threat to national security by a platform owned by the Chinese conglomerate ByteDance. The above would lead the U.S. Congress to pass a ban on the use of TikTok in state and government institutions.

The decisive emergence of the innovative use of artificial intelligence in all development sectors, including the media, also led to a concern about its possible misuse

or what could be its unintended consequences in various areas, which generated calls for regulation of this technology. This led at least 25 states in the United States to introduce bills for its regulation (Artificial Intelligence 2024).

1.5. Digital and mobile connectivity infrastructure

By January 2024 in the U.S. there were 331 million web users, with an internet penetration of 97.1%. Of these, around 239 million were social media users, representing 70.1% of the total population. There are a total of 396 million cell phones which is equivalent to 116.2% of the country's population (Kemp, 2024). 97% of Hispanics have access to the Internet, which is equivalent to the access of the general population. 91% of Latinos in the U.S. own a smartphone, one point above 90% of the general population. However, only 75% of Hispanics have a broadband connection, down from 80% of the general population. In this context, 20% of Latino adults are "phone-dependent" by not having a broadband connection at home, up from 15% of adults in the general population (Gelles-Watnick, 2024).

2. Analysis of the year: National and Iberoamerican premiere fiction in 2023

In 2023, the production of premiere titles had a decline with the release of 29 titles, down from the 35 titles released in 2022, only up from 24 in 2021, and 28 in 2020; however, fictional production has not been able to match the number of titles in 2019, in pre-pandemic times, when there were 45 titles released.

Table 1. Premier fiction titles broadcast in 2023
(national, foreign—OBITEL area—, and coproductions)

NATIONAL PREMIERE TITLES - 8	
Telemundo	
1. <i>Doctor del Pueblo</i> (unitary)	14. <i>¿Es Neta Eva?</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
2. <i>Juego de Mentiras</i> (telenovela)	15. <i>Esta Historia me Suen</i> a (unitary, Mexico)
3. <i>La Reina del Sur 3</i> (telenovela)	16. <i>Eternamente Enamorándonos</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
4. <i>Secreto Familia Greco</i> (series, U.S.-Argentina)	17. <i>La Madrastra</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
5. <i>El Señor de los Cielos 8</i> (telenovela)	18. <i>Mi Camino es Amarte</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
6. <i>El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos</i> (miniseries)	19. <i>Minas de Pasión</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
7. <i>Vuelve a mí</i> (telenovela)	20. <i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
Univision	
8. <i>La Fuerza de Creer</i> (web-series)	21. <i>Renta Congelada</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
FOREIGN PREMIERE TITLES - 21	
Univision	
9. <i>Amor Dividido</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	22. <i>Rosa de Guadalupe</i> (unitary, Mexico)
10. <i>Amor Invencible</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	23. <i>Tal para Cual</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
11. <i>Cabo</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	24. <i>Tierra de Esperanza</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
12. <i>Como Dice el Dicho</i> (unitary, Mexico)	25. <i>¿Tú Crees?</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
13. <i>Corazón Guerrero</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	26. <i>Una Familia de Diez</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
	27. <i>Vecinos</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
	28. <i>Vencer la Ausencia</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
	29. <i>Vencer la Culpa</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
TOTAL PREMIERE TITLES: 29	

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

With seven titles Telemundo continues to be the leading producer of national premiere fiction, while Univision, with 21 foreign titles, continues to be the leading distributor of Obitel fiction in the U.S. It is important to note that national production has been stable with eight titles in 2023, 2022, and 2021, but below the nine titles produced in 2020, and well below pre-pandemic times with 12 productions in 2019, and 20 in 2018. While foreign production had 21 premiere titles, down from 27 productions in 2022, up from 16 in 2021, and 19 in 2020, but well below the 33 productions in 2019, before the pandemic.

Table 1b. Reruns broadcast in 2023
(national, foreign—OBITEL area—, and coproductions).

NATIONAL RERUNS – 54	
EstrellaTV (1) 1. <i>Jennie Vida de una Diva</i> (series)	UniMás 30 25. <i>Abismo de Pasión</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
Telemundo (5) 2. <i>Betty en Nueva York</i> (telenovela)	26. <i>Amorcito Corazón</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
3. <i>Decisiones</i> (unitary)	27. <i>Apuesta por un Amor</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
4. <i>Enemigo Íntimo</i> (telenovela, U.S.-Mexico)	28. <i>Como Dice el Dicho</i> (unitary, Mexico) *
5. <i>Historia de la Virgen Morena</i> (telenovela, U.S.-Mexico)	29. <i>Enamorándome de Ramón</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
6. <i>La Querida del Centauro</i> (telenovela, U.S.-Mexico)	30. <i>Esta Historia me Suena</i> (unitary, Mexico) *
Univision (2) 7. <i>La Fuerza de Creer 2</i> (series)	31. <i>La Fea Mas Bella</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
8. <i>Amor en Navidad</i> (miniseries)	32. <i>Lo Imperdonable</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
UniMás (1) 9. <i>Dani Who?</i> (series, U.S.-Mexico)	33. <i>Isla Brava</i> (series, Mexico) **
	34. <i>La Madrastra</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
	35. <i>Mañana es para Siempre</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
	36. <i>María Félix</i> (miniseries, Mexico) **
	37. <i>Montecristo</i> (miniseries, Mexico) **
	38. <i>La Mujer del Diablo</i> (series, Mexico) **
FOREIGN RERUNS - 45	39. <i>María Mercedes</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
Univision (15)	40. <i>Niña Amada Mía</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
10. <i>Como Dice el Dicho</i> (unitary, Mexico) *	41. <i>Nosotros los Guapos</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
11. <i>Esta Historia me Suena</i> (unitary, Mexico) *	42. <i>Papá a Toda Madre</i> (sitcom, Mexico)
12. <i>Familia Peluche</i> (sitcom, Mexico)	43. <i>Por Ella Soy Eva</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
13. <i>Los González</i> (sitcom, Mexico)	44. <i>El Privilegio de Amar</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
14. <i>Heridas de Amor</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	45. <i>Rebelde</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
15. <i>María de todos los Ángeles</i> (sitcom, Mexico)	46. <i>Rosalinda</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
16. <i>Marimar</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	47. <i>Simplemente María</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
17. <i>Nosotros los Guapos</i> (sitcom, Mexico)	48. <i>Soñadoras</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
18. <i>Quiero Amarte</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	49. <i>Soy tu Dueña</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
19. <i>Renta Congelada</i> (sitcom, Mexico)	50. <i>Tres Veces Ana</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
20. <i>Ringo</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	51. <i>Triunfo del Amor</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
21. <i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i> (unitary, Mexico) *	52. <i>Un Gancho al Corazón</i> (telenovela, Mexico)
22. <i>Una Familia de Diez</i> (sitcom, Mexico) *	53. <i>Una Familia de Diez</i> (sitcom, Mexico) *
23. <i>Vecinos</i> (sitcom, Mexico) *	54. <i>Vecinos</i> (sitcom, Mexico) *
24. <i>Vino el Amor</i> (telenovela, Mexico)	
* Reruns of past seasons, but which also have premiere episodes.	

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

Reruns continue to play a central role in the networks’ fiction programming, with 54 rerun titles in 2023, only three titles below the 57 reruns in 2022. However, above the 35 rerun titles in 2021, 46 in 2020 and 37 in 2018, which shows that the number of reruns is higher than previous years.

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

Format	Titles						Hours					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Telenovela	8	7	6	4	4	29	466:20	342:40	387:00	194:00	238:20	1628:20
Series	3	1	1	1	2	8	33:00	10:00	19:00	6:00	9:00	77:00
Miniseries	0	0	0	2	1	3	0:00	0:00	0:00	11:00	3:00	14:00
Sitcom	0	1	1	0	0	2	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Unitary	1	0	0	0	1	2	13:00	14:00	14:00	0:00	5:00	46:00
Docudrama	0	0	0	1	0	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Other	0	0	0	1	0	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	5:00	0:00	5:00
Total	12	9	8	9	8	46	512:20	366:40	420:00	216:00	255:20	1770:20

Source: Nielsen - Orbitel U.S.

The telenovela continues to be the most important format in national fiction, however, it decreased from eight productions in 2019 to four in 2023, this trend is in accordance with the general decline of national production. In this new division of labor in which the networks produce the telenovelas, and the series are mostly produced by the platforms, it is important to highlight the modality and conditions of the inclusion of two premiere series and one miniseries in the national production in 2023. One of Telemundo’s series, *El Secreto de la Familia Greco*, is a production that was made for Netflix and later premiered on open-TV on Telemundo. While Telemundo’s three-episode miniseries *El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos* premiered first on the streaming platform Quibi in 2021, to be later released on open-TV in 2023. And finally, *La Fuerza de Creer*, with five episodes, is the fourth season of a series that was born as a webseries in its first season, premiered on Univision’s web portal, and then premiered on broadcast television.

Table 3. Premiere fiction broadcast in 2023: countries of origin

Country	Titles	%	Hours	%
NATIONAL (total)	8	28.0	255.20	18.1
OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)	21	72.0	1156.39	81.9
Argentina	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Brazil	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Chile	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Colombia	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Ecuador	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Spain	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
U.S. Hispanic	8	28.0	255.20	18.1
Mexico	21	72.0	1156.39	81.9
Peru	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Portugal	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Uruguay	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Venezuela	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
COPRODUCTIONS (total)	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
National coproductions	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
Obitel countries coproductions	0	0.0	0.00	0.0
TOTAL	29	100.0	1412.0	100.0

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

In 2023, 1412 hours of fiction were released, below the 1637 hours in 2022, 1628 hours in 2021, and 1610 hours in 2020, and well below the 2548 hours in 2019 in pre-pandemic times. Mexico remained the most important provider of fiction for the U.S. Hispanic market, dominating the screens with 1156 hours that accounted for 82% of the total premiere fiction hours in 2023. For the first time in the count of fiction produced in Obitel countries, no other country had premiere fiction titles on Spanish-language networks. The lack of fiction from Colombia and Brazil are the most notable absences.

Table 4. Formats of national and Iberoamerican fiction broadcast in 2023

Format	Titles		Hours	
	National	The rest of Obitel area	National	The rest of Obitel area
Telenovela	4	12	238.2	793.2
Series	2	0	9.0	0.0
Miniseries	1	0	3.0	0.0
Telefilm	0	0	0.0	0.0
Sitcom	0	6	0.0	36.0
Unitary	1	3	5.0	327.5
Docudrama	0	0	0.0	0.0
Other	0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	8	21	255.20	1156.39

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

The telenovela is the dominant format in both national and Obitel production. But unlike national production, in Obitel production unitary programs play a very important role within the programming. Thus, while telenovelas account for 69% of the total hours broadcast, fiction unitary programs represent 28% of the total hours broadcast, and sitcoms 3% of Obitel hours.

Table 5. Ten most watched titles in 2023

Title		Channel	Producer (country)	Format/genre	Number of episodes in 2023	Time-slot	Rating %	Share %
1	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	61	Prime time	6.2	23.5
2	<i>Mi Camino es Amarte</i> **	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	66	Prime time	6.1	20.2
3	<i>Amor Invencible</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	78	Prime time	5.8	20.8
4	<i>Cabo</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	85	Prime time	5.6	21.3
5	<i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	89	Prime time	5.6	19.5
6	<i>Vencer la Ausencia</i> **	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	41	Prime time	5.5	18.3
7	<i>La Madrastra</i> **	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Drama	9	Prime time	5.3	20.6
8	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	81	Prime time	5.2	22.3
9	<i>Eternamente Amándonos</i>	Univision	Televisa/Univision Mexico	Telenovela/Melodrama	84	Prime time	4.8	18.9
10	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 8</i> *	Telemundo	Telemundo/U.S.	Telenovela/Narco-melodrama	88	Prime time	4.7	15.5
National scripts: 1				Foreign scripts: 9				
10%				90%				

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

(*): National production

(**): The broadcasting began in 2022 and continued in 2023.

Univision dominated the list with nine of the ten most watched fictions of 2023. Traditional melodrama dominates the top three positions on the list, while the “Vencer” telenovela franchise returns to the top ten most watched with *Vencer la Ausencia*

in sixth place, having ranked ninth in 2022. This franchise, with *Vencer el Pasado* occupied second place in 2022, and was also second place with *Vencer el Desamor* in 2021. For its part, *La Madrastra*, a production of “La Fábrica de Sueños” franchise ranked seventh, having taken tenth place in 2022. From this franchise, titles such as *Los Ricos También Lloran* ranked sixth in 2022, or *Rubí*, which ranked second in 2020, and likewise *La Usurpadora* ranked second in 2019.

Since 2020, and for three years, all ten of the most watched fictions were Univision productions, and it was not until 2023 that Telemundo managed to enter again the list with *El Señor de los Cielos 8*, in tenth place. It is worth noting that Telemundo’s wager with *El Señor de los Cielos* and its eight seasons continues to yield ratings results. It should be remembered that only with the exception of the first season, from the second season on, all the seasons of *El Señor de los Cielos* have been in the list of the most watched. The success of this telenovela secured the production of its ninth season in 2024.

Table 5a. Ten most watched national titles in 2023

Title		Channel	Producer (Country)	Format/genre	Number of episodes in 2023	Time slot	Rating %	Share %
1	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 8</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Telenovela/ Narco-melodrama	88	Prime time	4,7	15,5
2	<i>La Reina del Sur 3 *</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Telenovela/ Narco-melodrama	15	Prime time	3,5	12,1
3	<i>Juego de Mentiras</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Telenovela/ Melodrama suspense	50	Prime time	3,2	11,8
4	<i>Vuelve a Mi</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Telenovela/ Drama	57	Prime time	3,1	11,9
5	<i>El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Telenovela/ Narco-melodrama	3	Prime time	2,5	11,1
6	<i>Doctor Pueblo</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /U.S.	Unitary/Melodrama	5	Prime time	2,1	8,8
7	<i>Fuerza de Creer 4</i>	Univision	Univision/ U.S.	Webseries/ Melodrama	5	Tarde	1,4	10,9
8	<i>Secreto de la Familia Greco *</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo /Underground U.S./Argentina	Series/Drama	4	Prime time	0,8	5,9
Foreign scripts: 1				National original scripts: 6				
14%				86%				

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.
(*): The broadcasting began in 2022 and continued in 2023.

In the context of national productions, *La Reina del Sur 3* is in second place. While its predecessor, *La Reina del Sur 2*, achieved first place in the general list of the ten most watched, and *La Reina del Sur 1* reached sixth place. In this 2013, *La Reina del Sur 3* did not make it to the general list of the most watched. Neither did Telemundo’s Miami productions, such as *Juego de Mentiras* and *Vuelve a Mi*, achieve ratings results. In particular, *Vuelve a Mi* with the return of William Levy and his star power failed to make an impact in the ratings. The same happened with the unitary program, the series and miniseries produced by Telemundo, which have the lowest positions on the list due to their low ratings

Table 6. Profile of the audience of the 10 most watched titles: gender and age

Title		Channel	Gender%	
			Women	Men
1	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	Univision	65	35
2	<i>Mi Camino es Amarte</i>	Univision	63	37
3	<i>Amor Invencible</i>	Univision	66	34
4	<i>Cabo</i>	Univision	64	36
5	<i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i>	Univision	65	35
6	<i>Vencer la Ausencia</i>	Univision	61	39
7	<i>La Madrastra</i>	Univision	62	38
8	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Univision	66	34
9	<i>Eternamente Amándonos</i>	Univision	67	33
10	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 8</i>	Telemundo	54	46

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

Title		Age %						
		2 a 11	12 a 17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50 a 54	55-+
1	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	6	4	6	7	21	11	45
2	<i>Mi Camino es Amarte</i>	8	5	6	8	20	8	44
3	<i>Amor Invencible</i>	6	4	5	7	19	10	49
4	<i>Cabo</i>	7	5	6	8	23	9	43
5	<i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i>	5	5	6	7	18	8	50
6	<i>Vencer la Ausencia</i>	8	6	7	8	21	9	42
7	<i>La Madrastra</i>	7	5	6	9	22	10	41
8	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	5	4	4	6	20	10	51
9	<i>Eternamente Amándonos</i>	5	4	5	8	20	10	48
10	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 8</i>	8	4	7	13	27	11	31

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

The demographic profile by gender makes it very clear that the female segment comprises the largest percentage of the audience. The list and top position spots represent on average 65% of the female audience, with only 35% male audience, which is consistent with the 2022 audience report, in which the percentage of the ten most watched was 63% and 37%, respectively, and with the 65% female and 35% male in the 2021 most watched fictions audience. This contrasts with the audience trends

shown in the cases of narconovelas, as exemplified by the seventh season of *El Señor de los Cielos* which had a 54% female audience and 46% male audience.

In the audience segment by age, there is a sustained trend towards an increase in audiences over 50 years of age. For the first time, in 2023, the audience of the ten most watched fictions surpassed the 50 years old line, with 54% of audiences over 50 years old. This aging trend of the audience segment has been clear in recent years with 48% in 2022, 49% in 2021, 44% in 2020 and 41% in 2019. A further indication of this trend is that in 2015 only 31.5% of the audience was over 50 years old. Similarly, in 2023 the only difference was marked by *El Señor de los Cielos 8*, which had only 42% of audiences over 50 years old. In the end, fiction demographics are mostly made up of women over 50 years old.

3. VoD Monitoring 2023

3.1. VoD Platform market in 2023

According to *Forbes*, despite the growth of SVoD platforms, 2023 was a year in which the inflow of new subscribers declined sharply (Folk, 2024). The SVoD market has left its expansion stage behind as the bubble caused by the pandemic burst, with a marked slowdown for platforms in 2023, with only 10.1% growth, well below the 21.6% in 2022. One of the important factors in this was the number of cancellations of streaming services during the year, in a dynamic where the consumer subscribes to a streaming service to watch a particular piece of content, only to cancel it at the end of its consumption and sign up for another service. At the same time, with the emergence of new platforms, there is a “rebalancing of the market” with the presence of new players in the SVoD. Netflix, which by 2019 had 48% of the SVoD market, now only accounts for 29%, and Hulu, which had 23% of subscriptions, now only has 14% (Folk, 2024).

By the end of December 2023, the number of Netflix subscriptions globally was 247 million, followed by Prime Video with 200 million, Disney+ in third place with 150 million, Max in fourth place with 95 million, Paramount+ in fifth place with 63 million, Hulu (Star+ in Latin America) in sixth place with 48 million, Peacock in seventh place with 28 million, ESPN in eighth place with 26 million, Apple+ in ninth place with 25 million, and Starz in tenth place with 16 million (Bastarrica, 2023).

3.2. Local VoD platforms offering in 2023 (national, regional within the country)

In the context of the surge of different SVoD platforms, an important case is the emergence of Vix, a platform owned by TelevisaUnivision. The platform’s production dynamic was revealed when, in 2023, the platform premiered 18 titles which almost tie the corporation’s 22 open TV premiered titles.

3.3. VoD analysis in 2023: national premiere fiction and coproductions

The SVoD production for Latinos in the U.S., whether in English or Spanish, has always had discouraging numbers, this downward trend has been reinforced by the strategies of the different platforms to produce from Ibero-America, both for the regional market in Spanish and Portuguese, as well as for the domestic Latino market in the U.S. With this strategy and the emergence of new SVoD platforms with interest in the region, the U.S. is widely leading fiction production in the region.

Table 7. National fictions and coproductions on VoD platforms during 2023

U.S. LATIN PREMIERE TITLES (6)	
Netflix (2)	30. <i>L-Pop</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
1. <i>Freeridge</i> (Series, Comedy)	31. <i>El Coro: Éxito Alla Voy</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)
2. <i>Neon</i> (Series, Comedy Musical)	32. <i>Mila in the Multiverse</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)
Hulu (1)	33. <i>It's All Right</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)
3. <i>This Fool 2</i> (Series, Comedy)	34. <i>C.H.U.E.C.O.</i> (Series, Argentina/Mexico/U.S.)
Amazon Prime (3)	Star+ (Hulu/Disney) (12)
4. <i>Primo</i> (Series, Comedy)	35. <i>Horario Estelar</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
5. <i>The Horrors of Dolores Roach</i> (Series, Comedy)	36. <i>El Grito de las Mariposas</i> (Series, Spain/Argentina/U.S.)
6. <i>With Love 2</i> (Series, Comedy)	37. <i>Ringo, Gloria y Muerte</i> (Series, Argentina/U.S.)
U.S. PREMIERE PRODUCTIONS IN IBEROAMERICA (66)	
Netflix (8)	38. <i>Diciembre 2001</i> (Miniseries, Argentina/U.S.)
1. <i>Elite 7</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	39. <i>Pancho Villa</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
2. <i>Valeria 3</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	40. <i>El Mantequilla: Maestro de la Estafa</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
3. <i>The Snow Girl</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	41. <i>Máscara Contra Caballero</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
4. <i>El Elegido</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)	42. <i>Nada</i> (Series, Argentina/U.S.)
5. <i>Berlin</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	43. <i>Cómo ser un Carioca</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)
6. <i>Sagrada Familia</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	44. <i>Soy tu Fan 3</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
7. <i>Un Cuento Perfecto</i> (Series, U.S./Spain)	45. <i>Planners</i> (Series, Argentina/U.S.)
8. <i>Ojitos de Huevo</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)	46. <i>Dos Tiempos</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)
Amazon PrimeVideo (10)	Lionsgate+ Starz (2)
9. <i>Novela</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)	47. <i>Nacho</i> (Series, Spain/U.S.)
10. <i>Dom 2</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)	48. <i>Yellow</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)
11. <i>Amar es para los Fuertes</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)	Vix+ (18)
12. <i>Melody</i> (Serie, Argentina/U.S.)	49. <i>La Mujer del Diablo 3</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
13. <i>Sin Huellas</i> (Series, Spain/U.S.)	50. <i>Volver a Caer</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
14. <i>Barrabrava</i> (Series, Argentina/Uruguay/U.S.)	51. <i>El Colapso</i> (Miniseries, U.S./Mexico)
15. <i>Chavorroco</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	52. <i>Las Pelotaris 1926</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico/Spain)
16. <i>P#t@s Redes Sociales</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	53. <i>Montecristo</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
17. <i>Memento Mori</i> (Series, Spain/U.S.)	54. <i>Más Alla de Ti</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
18. <i>Los Farad</i> (Series, Spain/U.S.)	55. <i>Senda Prohibida 1, 2, y 3</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
HBOMax (6)	56. <i>Paraíso Blanco</i> (Series, Colombia/U.S./Mexico)
19. <i>Mariachis</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	57. <i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas Soy Yo</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
20. <i>Candy Cruz</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	58. <i>El Gallo de Oro 1</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
21. <i>Pollos Sin Cabeza</i> (Series, Spain/U.S.)	59. <i>La Hora Marcada</i> (Anthology, U.S./Mexico)
22. <i>Vgly</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	60. <i>Pacto de Sangre</i> (Anthology, U.S./Mexico)
23. <i>Te Quiero y Me Duele</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	61. <i>Se Llamaba Pedro Infante</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
24. <i>Días de Gallos</i> (Series, Argentina/U.S.)	62. <i>Viva la Comedy</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
	63. <i>Cualquier Parecido</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)

Paramount+ (2)	64. <i>Pinches Momias</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
25. <i>Marcelo, Marmelo, Martelo</i> (Series, Brazil/U.S.)	65. <i>Un Buen Divorcio</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
26. <i>Los Enviados 2</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	66. <i>Ana</i> (Series, U.S./Mexico)
Disney+ (8)	
27. <i>Viaje al Centro de la Tierra</i> (Series, Mexico/U.S.)	
28. <i>Gina Yei</i> (Series, Puerto Rico/U.S.)	
29. <i>El Club de los Graves</i> (Series, Colombia/U.S.)	
	Total: 72

Source: Obitel U.S.

3.4. Narrative features of VoD in 2023

The dominance of the ‘series’ format in production for SVoD platforms is evident. There has been a division of labor in relation to this, in which the platforms have bet mostly on the short format of series or miniseries, leaving the production of long-form formats such as telenovelas to the broadcast television networks. However, Vix is experimenting with a modality in which the format is displayed in a hybrid way, both as a short-form series and as a telenovela. This is the case of *La Mujer del Diablo* and *Senda Prohibida*, both series consisting of three seasons. The important thing is that the premiere of these series is almost sequential and follows the logic of the telenovela long format. For example, *La Mujer del Diablo* premiered in July and October 2022, and January 2023, while *Senda Prohibida* premiered the first season in June and the following two seasons in September 2023. It is important to highlight that the production team of these two series has a long trajectory in telenovela production.

4. Interactivity and audience participation

4.1. Social Interactivity

On September 11, the Telemundo network issued a press release announcing the premiere of a spin-off of its popular series *El Señor de los Cielos* (ESDLC), a prequel titled *El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos*. Since the year 2019, the filming of the miniseries of 15 chapters of ten minutes each began, then titled *Natural Born Narco*, and designed for distribution on the recently launched platform for short content Quibi. Unfortunately, the Quibi platform was shut down less than six months after its launch and so the miniseries did not achieve much visibility. But thanks to Quibi’s initial agreement with Telemundo in which the network retained the copyright, it was able to air the miniseries a couple of years after its premiere on the platform.

Telemundo's press release specifies that the series consists of three episodes that will air on September 13, 14 and 15 on its channel, and thereafter will only be available through the Peacock platform and the Telemundo app. The network states that "audiences will be able to witness the transformation of the legendary Aurelio Casillas as he goes from an ordinary boy to a powerful and enigmatic figure whose story has become a cultural phenomenon in Hispanic television". This press release was reproduced on Telemundo's different local sites in the country and by several Hispanic and Latin American media outlets such as *People en Español*, *TodoTVNews*, *Produ*, *TiempoLatino*, *El Comercio*, among others.

The aforementioned press release has a link to the official Instagram page of *El Señor de los Cielos*, where the trailer of the miniseries can be seen, and which has 1.7 million followers, with 4972 posts. Most of the posts on this Instagram account range from 15 to 70 thousand "likes" each. It is a site that has remained active through many seasons, including the eighth season, premiering in 2023. Meanwhile, on the *El Señor de los Cielos* Facebook page, which has 11 million followers, the specific post about *El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos* has 708 thousand followers. On the other hand, Telemundo did not post or upload the miniseries to its official YouTube channel, but others will do so as part of what—in this section—we call Social Participation.



4.2. Social Participation

The link to the Instagram of *El Señor de los Cielos* that the network included to promote the miniseries *El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos* was posted on September 12, 2023, the trailer had 34 thousand likes, however, it is on Facebook and YouTube where the most intense social participation takes place, since these two social networks offer, in different modalities, access to the episodes of this miniseries.

Facebook. As for Facebook, there is an official *El Señor de los Cielos* site with 11 million subscribers, where they posted: "TONIGHT everyone stay tuned to discover the origins of Aurelio Casillas and how he became the biggest drug lord 🇵🇪 🌟 SPECIAL EVENT starting TONIGHT at 10PM/9C on Telemundo. ARRE!! [#ESDLC](#)", including the trailer for the miniseries, which garnered 10,000 likes and 326 comments. Regarding the specific post announcing the prequel *El Señor de los Cielos: Sus Comienzos*, it has 721 thousand members. But it is on a Facebook fan-page titled "Aurelio Casillas Fans" where the complete chapters were uploaded, with

210 thousand followers, 17 thousand likes. However, a lack of information about the miniseries caused a great impact on interactions on three levels: one, the lack of knowledge about where the miniseries is available to watch; two, confusion about the number of chapters and how long the miniseries lasts; three, when Quibi fails, the miniseries remains unfinished, and many think that there are more episodes or another season, but it is not so. In contrast, regarding comments on the plot, these are almost unanimously very favorable: “Megafan of this series”, “Very good”, “I liked it a lot like all this series”, “Good arre”, “Very good” “The best of the best 🍷🍷”. And one of the Internet users admits: “I love it, for me is like a drug, I can’t live without watching it”

YouTube. Reviewing the distribution of the miniseries on YouTube, the following channels stand out: Lucas Giménez with 181K subscribers, Lerma Noticias with 105K, Mr. Cormac with 18K, Info Series with 5K, El Canal del Mero Mero with 1500 subscribers, and Mrbeaast with 1400. On the one hand, the channel of Mr. Cormac, who makes a summary and contextualization of the series, and uses the miniseries to make a narration and act as a reporter of the fiction, is noteworthy. And, on the other hand, the channel with the widest reach for distribution and reactions is that of Lucas Giménez. In his account with 174K followers, Lucas Giménez uploaded 21 short videos that vary between 1 to 4 minutes, whose order does not correspond with the narrative line, so it is the audience that has to make sense of the story that is being told. The cumulative total of video views is 8.539 million, with an average of 407K views per episode. Reactions total 13,385 likes, averaging about 700 likes per video. On YouTube the questions from users about where to watch the miniseries continue, as does the acknowledgement of the quality of the series and the performances: “So Good🍷”, “Don Cleto’s performance is great” and “That kid is a Darth VADER”. But, mainly, here the audience have debates to negotiate the content of what the miniseries presents to them in contrast with what they know from the ESDLC different seasons: “That’s where Aurelio and Chacorta el Narco started”, “So Aurelio killed the father of the letrudo?”. Some called attention to certain contradictions in relation to ESDLC, the super series. “There is a lot of contradiction here about grandfather Heriberto in the third season”. Others emphasized the plot and its relation to the development of the ESDLC seasons: “Who would have thought that one day he would kill his creator, the one who made him?”.

5. Highlights of the year 2023

As has been consistent over the years, live special events were the top-rated television programs for the year. The highest rated events on Hispanic television in 2023 were *Premios lo Nuestro*, broadcast on Univision, with a rating of 8.3 points,

followed by *Premios Juventud* with a rating of 7.6 points; in third place, broadcast on Telemundo, was *Miss Universe* with 7.4 points, and in fourth and fifth place, broadcast on Univision, were the *Latin American Grammy Awards* with 7.4 and the *Latin American Music Awards* with 6.6 rating points. The other event category with the highest ratings on Spanish-language television is sporting events, particularly soccer games. The CONCACAF Mexico vs. Panama game had 3 million viewers on Univision; while the Mexico-USA friendly game, broadcast on Telemundo, generated great ratings for the network with 1.5 million viewers in April 2023.

In the competition for ratings, RealityTV programs along with fiction are the highest rated program offerings on television, particularly for Telemundo. In 2023, *La Casa de los Famosos*, with 4.69 points, in a technical tie with *El Señor de los Cielos* 8, with 4.66 points, had the highest rating of any program on the network. *Los 50*, *Exatlón* and *Top Chef* had better ratings than the other fiction productions, only with the exception of *La Reina del Sur* 3. It should be noted that probably the most important television event of the year did not happen in the US but in Mexico, but with a binational impact, with Wendy Guevara winning *La Casa de los Famosos Mexico*, a television's ratings and social media milestone not seen in the last two decades.

6. Topic of the year: The narratives of fiction

The fictions produced by TelevisaUnivision in Mexico and premiering in 2023 continue the tradition of romantic melodrama that has been successful for years for the network. Narratives about secret identities, comebacks to avenge past injustices, love doomed by class differences, romances in rural settings, among others, dominated the screen. Thus, while this formula has allowed Univision to retain its ratings leadership, it has been at the cost of a slippage in audience demographics to a group made up of more than 60% women, and more than 50% people over 50 years of age. This strategy seems to be complemented by Vix's strategy of premiering drama-themed series, in subgenres such as crime drama, crime, or dystopian, more innovative and with riskier themes in terms of sexuality, that seem to be aimed at other types of audiences made up of young men.

For its part, national fiction is led by Telemundo. After the success of *La Reina del Sur* in 2011, the network gradually abandoned the romantic melodrama prepared under the neutral formula of Miami as the main engine of the stories. In this sense, the network changed the formula and opted for the reglocalizing model (Piñón, 2014), which are narratives that travel thanks to plots that happen in different cities simultaneously, and that intertwine, counting with casts of actors and characters of different nationalities (Mexican, Colombian, Venezuelan, Cuban, Spaniard, U.S.

Latinos), with very local Spanish accents and clearly culturally identifiable, showing an idea of the region, designed from Miami for global consumption (reglocal). The narratives that allowed the implementation of this formula have been mostly based on stories of drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime in general, having as context real historical events or being based on real characters, with a touch of semi-historical document, and a treatment of thriller, suspense, action, police drama, international crime drama. The premiere and success of *El Señor de los Cielos* in 2013 strengthened this strategy, which will lead the network to a rise in ratings it had never experienced before, becoming a real competitor to the previously hegemonic Univision network. Narco-centric narratives, with several successful seasons such as *La Reina del Sur*, *El Señor de los Cielos* and *Señora Acero*, among the most outstanding, will lead the network's ratings. Other crime and prison thrillers such as *Enemigo Intimo*, *El Recluso*, or *Prisionero No. 1*, will be on the network's narrative offering.

Telemundo has also made fictions dealing with migration as a social reality, and the challenges of migrants to adapt and assimilate to the social, cultural and linguistic dynamics of this country. In particular, certain differentiated dynamics are pointed out between the foreign-born and their children as U.S. Latino citizens. Some of the titles that address these dynamics are *Bajo el Mismo Cielo*, *Al Otro Lado del Muro*, or *Mi Familia Perfecta*. The network has also increasingly included characters from the LGBTQ community, who have had the role of not only making these minorities visible but also informing and teaching about their citizenship rights, such as the case of trans girl Leonor in *Sangre de mi Tierra*, and trans boy Ale in *100 Días para Enamorarnos*.

Telemundo's content division for broadcasting TV and streaming platforms seems to show a strategic move similar to that of Televisa/Univision and Vix, as Telemundo will continue with its production of telenovelas for open TV, and will work on short drama series to be released on platforms. It should be noted that Telemundo tried to integrate drama with miniseries to its open-TV offer with *El Recluso* and *Jugar con Fuego* (Piñón, 2019). Telemundo worked in 2019 with Spanish production company Isla Audiovisual in the production of *No te Puedes Esconder*, for Netflix, and in 2023, produced with Underground Studios *El Secreto de la Familia Greco*, also for Netflix. In this way, Telemundo produces drama series that will be released first on platforms and then have a second life on Spanish-language broadcast television in the United States.

In 2023, eight national titles premiered, seven on Telemundo and one on Univision. For purposes of variety in the type of narratives, in this section I will analyze three fictions, two produced by Telemundo and one by Univision.

A. *El Señor de los Cielos 8* (Telemundo, telenovela)

B. *Juego de Mentiras* (Telemundo, telenovela)

C. *La Fuerza de Creer* (Univision, webseries)

A. *El Señor de los Cielos 8*

I. Format/genre and theme: telenovela, narco-narratives, organized crime and politics.

El Señor de los Cielos 8 falls within this set of narratives produced by U.S. corporations about drug trafficking from Latin America, with a problematic vision assumingly inherent to the economic, political and cultural dynamics of the global south. However, being a production made in Mexico and Colombia, it distances itself from the vision presented in U.S. series such as *Narcos*, since in ESDLC the U.S. agencies themselves, such as the CIA, the FBI or the DEA, are part of the network of corruption and complicity of this international criminal network.

II. Vehicles of identity: social class, race, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The narrative is mostly based on the lives of the upper classes who obtain their money or power in illegal ways, on the one hand, through organized crime such as drug trafficking, money laundering, arms trafficking; on the other hand, from positions of power in government, diplomacy, the military, or the secret services, through corruption, bribery or extortion. The transnational nature of drug trafficking in the Ibero-American region and the United States makes it possible to present a multinational, multicultural melting pot through casting and characters.

A multiracial spectrum is added to the multinational and multicultural mosaic. The narrative of *El Señor de los Cielos*, where the highest levels of economic and political power have been shown mostly as white or light-skinned mestizos. Aurelio Casillas himself and his family who become, throughout the seasons, the central characters (Ximena, Chacorta, Rutila, Victor, Luz Ma, Doña Alba) are white Mexican actors (some blondes), or mestizos of light complexion. This also happens when representing the spheres of power in Mexican government and business, using mostly white or light-skinned men. The racial spectrum opens up when the leaders and members of rival criminal gangs, the guerrillas, the militia, and prisoners in jails enter the equation. It is within this marginal universe where we find the presence of dark-skinned mestizo characters, characters with indigenous, mulatto, or Afro-Latin American features.

Although the LGTBQ community has been absent from the narrative of *El Señor de los Cielos*, undisclosed male homosexuality and female bisexuality have appeared strategically under certain highly problematic conditions. Bisexual women are sexualized, in order to create attractive scenes for the male audience; in contrast, male homosexuality is treated in an undisclosed condition, or as a trait of a corrupt or deviant behavior.

IV. Characters to analyze: Aurelio Casillas, Rutila Casillas, Eunice Lara “La Felina”.

Aurelio Casillas “El Señor de los Cielos” (The Lord of the Skies)—a character inspired by Mexican drug trafficker Amado Carrillo, leader of the Juarez Cartel—became the driving force behind the plot of this series, now in its ninth season. Aurelio Casillas is a drug trafficking criminal leader whose power emanates from his sharp strategic intelligence, his bloodthirsty and ruthless nature, and his ability to camouflage and escape. On the one hand, Aurelio Casillas represents an uninhibited masculinity of unbridled sexual desire and enjoyment of sensual pleasures, while exercising control over everything and everyone, he represents a life of luxury and success. On the other hand, Aurelio Casillas is the character who, as a confessed criminal, unmasks the cynicism of the governmental apparatus and its profound corruption.

While throughout many seasons the soap opera has used the resource of sexualization and objectification of women, particularly as beings that can be disposed of, it is also important to note the presence of strong women in search of control of their lives in the context of a highly macho and patriarchal environment such as the world of narco and organized crime.

The case of Rutila Casillas, daughter of Aurelio Casillas, is interesting because the audience has seen this character grow since she was a child, and all the efforts she made to get out of her father’s business. This attempt leads her to confront her father several times, from which she will always come out alive because she is his daughter, but at the same time we see how she herself becomes, in a way, a female version of her own father. Rutila, a beautiful woman, not only finds the courage and guts to face a man’s world, but also her sexual power, just like her father. In this season we see Rutila determined to establish a relationship, on equal terms, with the Colombian guerrilla known as Super Javi.

Eunice Lara, known as “La Felina,” is probably the only truly empowered female character in the entire narco-novela. Since her appearance, she handled both male allies and adversaries as an equal. Eunice is presented to us as a mature, intelligent, assertive, beautiful and sensual woman. This character, introduced in season 4 of the super series, is killed off last season, only to be revived to share adventures with Aurelio Casillas in season 8.

The character of Mónica Robles deserves a special mention, one of the most important examples of what it means to be an intelligent and empowered woman despite her flaws. But since Monica no longer appears in season 8, I decided to include “La Felina,” as she is a character that represents the power, the agency of women.

B. *Juego de Mentiras*

I. Format/genre and theme: crime thriller telenovela

In a couple that marries in love, the wife grows dissatisfied with her marriage and her obligations as a mother, only to disappear and create a circumstance in which her husband is accused of her disappearance and possible death. To avoid being unjustly imprisoned, Cesar sets out to investigate his wife's disappearance, which along the way will lead him to find an endless web of lies and intrigue. This telenovela represents a vein of the suspense or crime thriller subgenre that Telemundo has previously used under the Miami Model formula (Acosta-Alzuru, 2009). This model implies the development of the plot in upper class settings, with a neutral position in terms of culture, there is no recognition that the characters are part of the U.S. Latino community, there is nothing that defines a Latino culture or identity despite developing in California. This formula has already been used successfully in *¿Dónde Esta Elisa?* in which, as the plot progresses, the investigations uncover dark secrets, and we discover that the characters are not what we initially believed.

II. Vehicles of identity: social class, race, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The telenovela takes place mostly in the Del Rio mansion. The mansion itself becomes a character with the drone shots, in each opening sequence, reminding us of the level of opulence and social power of this family. But it contrasts with the modest middle-class home of Cesar Ferrer, the husband of the missing Adriana. Most of the actors are Hispanic or white Mexican, and light-skinned. The only presence with Afro-Caribbean features, but also light-skinned, is Linda Marques, a police officer.

III. Characters to analyze: Renata del Río, Cesar Ferrer and Detective Barros

Renata del Rio, the matriarch of the family, plays the role of villain with verisimilitude. Renata is an empowered woman, she feels in control of the properties, the people, and the destinies of all the members of her family. Interestingly, sex is an important part of the intrigues in the plot, from her cheating husband, like most of the characters around her, but she, in the midst of her power, is a de-sexualized character and mostly stripped of a space of sensual intimacy. It would seem that, within the strategy of representation of this character, to give her sexual life would be to give her vulnerability.

Cesar Ferrer, the husband of the missing Adriana, is the protagonist of the story. He is portrayed as an honest man, a family man in love with his wife and daughter, and respectful of his mother. Throughout much of the plot Cesar is presented as the tragic hero who seems to be made to pay for crimes he did not commit by fate and the wickedness of others only to redeem himself after much resilience and finally find love.

Detective Barros. The first one in charge of enforcing the law will be the first one to break it. From the beginning of the plot, Detective Barros will become an enemy who will seek to put Ferrer in jail in any way he can. This character and his characterization represent the corruption of the system, the power of the rich over institutions, and the vulnerability of people without economic resources to defend themselves against false accusations. The character is presented as a macho white male, who insults his subordinates if they do not follow the script he expects them to follow.

C. La Fuerza de Creer 4: Dulce Sazón

I. Format/genre and theme: webseries, family melodrama of social adaptation.

The social adaptation of Latino families to U.S. realities has been a theme rarely addressed by Televisa's fiction. This webseries produced by Univision in the United States is the saga *La Fuerza de Creer* which, without mentioning migration, but with it in the background, presents a melodramatic tale impregnated with magical realism. At stake are the pride of Latin American traditions in the context of intergenerational differences and the realities and modernity of American society in Los Angeles. The plot revolves around the Carrascos, and the survival of the family restaurant in the context of changing times and traditions.

II. Vehicles of identity: social class, race, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The plot is set in a middle-class, multicultural and multiracial family. An immigrant couple: Antonio, from Mexico, and his wife Dulce, from the Dominican Republic, which shows a racial melting pot of mestizo, indigenous and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds in their daughters and grandchildren. In this sense, this fiction breaks with the traditional invisibility of Afro-Latin features in telenovelas, particularly those produced by Televisa.

III. Characters to analyze: Antonio Carrasco and his daughters: Santa, Altagracia, and Milagros.

Antonio Carrasco, the widowed patriarch of the family, loves his daughters and grandchildren, and tries to balance the values of family and cooking, which is at the heart of the family business. He is a first-generation immigrant who represents the goodness of hard work, family values and the preservation of traditions. Antonio is a sullen but loving and generous man. His relationship with his daughters is defined by love and tradition, as well as the need for change and adaptation.

Santa Carrasco is a cook who joins the restaurant kitchen and pushes for changes in the menu and presentation to be competitive. After reluctance, Antonio accepts the changes with mixed results. Santa Carrasco is separating from her husband and finds love in a restaurant customer who had been despised by her father. Altagracia

Carrasco, the professional chemist, is the one with the most impulsive temperament, and, at the same time, the one who shows the greatest attachment to gender dynamics, with a supportive husband. Milagros Carrasco, the youngest, still a student, with singing skills, will find love in the restaurant.

Each of them represents a value: Santa is pragmatic, Altagracia is professional, Milagros is a dreamer. While the grandchildren represent curiosity and change, challenging the traditional gender schemes and demonstrating an interest in scientific knowledge.

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