

# MEXICO: CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES IN FICTION. GENDER VIOLENCE AND INCLUSION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GROWTH OF VIX.

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## Introduction

The year 2023 represented, with greater clarity, the reorganization of media corporations in Mexico with the Televisa-Univision merger, which is reflected in the narratives that address issues such as gender violence or the inclusion of sexual diversity, as well as in the sustained growth in the number of productions by the Vix+ platform. Although fiction maintains its high production of previous years on open television, there are several noteworthy aspects that show the changes in the audiovisual system.

Firstly, there is a decrease in the number of national premieres on broadcast television channels, which implies that the major networks are betting on production and distribution for streaming. In this sense and for the first time, the Vix+ platform, owned by TelevisaUnivision, surpassed Netflix, the dominant platform in production since 2015 when it arrived in Mexico, in number of premieres. The increase in fiction production of this international company is consolidating drama, suspense, and bioseries programming, while comedy has been reduced in the offer. Also, the bet on production and distribution for streaming has created a scenario in which more series than telenovelas are produced, in a shorter format in terms of number of episodes and duration.

This has had a twofold effect. On the one hand, the diversification in the production of stories continues: this year, for example, stories with a gender and inclusion perspective were produced, as mentioned above. On the other hand, it has meant that TelevisaUnivision's concentration of ownership has been strengthened by the acquisition of production companies such as Argos Media, one of its main national competitors.

## **1. Mexico's Audiovisual Context in 2023**

2023 has been a year of consolidation of fiction production on VOD platforms, a scenario that now seems to be a furtive space for the broadcasting of series with more modern and even daring narratives in thematic and aesthetic terms.

A conclusive fact is that only 23 new titles were premiered on national open television, while on platforms such as Netflix, Vix, Prime, HBO Max, Star, and Disney+ there were 36 premiere fictions. The reasons, as we will explain in this chapter, respond to the commitment of these platforms to attract subscribers through the production and transmission of exclusive series, but also because it is known that audiences, especially the younger ones, have increased and consolidated their consumption on other screens.

At the same time, 2023 was a hectic year in electoral terms, as the presidential pre-campaigns, which began in the middle of the year, further increased the political-media polarization and, therefore, the different media increased their coverage (in favor and—especially—against) of the so-called “Cuarta Transformación” (“Fourth Transformation”) initiated by President Andrés Manuel López Obrador and which is intended to continue through Claudia Sheinbaum, who won the 2024 presidential elections.

### **1.1. Open television in Mexico**

The six-year term of Andrés López Obrador ended without fulfilling the promise of democratizing national open television, so there are still 12 national television networks in the country. The possibility, in the case of the private networks, of having a fourth competitor was not possible, although major companies such as América Móvil showed interest.

Moreover, no review of the concessions to private networks was carried out, a matter that López Obrador said he would do after “the dirty campaign” that they ran against him in the 2018 election campaigns. It should be added that Imagen Televisión has only put into operation 63 channels out of the 123 that were assigned to it in 2015. Imagen Televisión, which belongs to Grupo Imagen, has had several crises in 2023, with lawsuits and personnel layoffs. The network has not been able to boost ratings, and its content does not engage the audience.

**Chart 1. National open television networks/channels in Mexico**

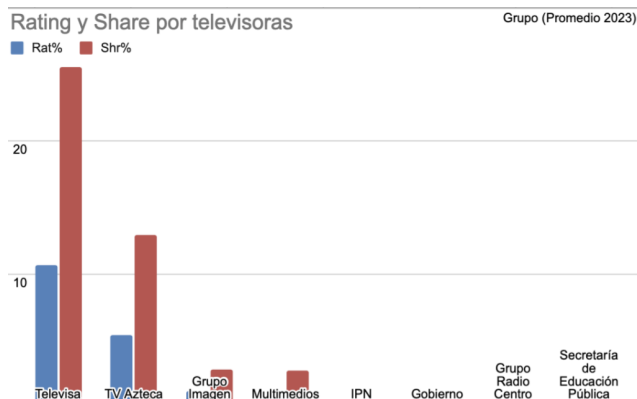
Private networks/channels (3)	Public networks/channels (3)
Televisa (Channels: Las Estrellas, 5, 9, and Foro TV)	Once TV (Channel 11 and 11.1)
TV Azteca (Channels: 1, 7, Adn 40, and A+)	Conaculta (Channel 22)
Imagen Televisión (Channel 3)	Sistema Público de Radiodifusión del Estado mexicano (Channel 14)
<b>TOTAL NATIONAL NETWORKS = 6 Channels: 12</b>	

Source: Obitel Mexico.

As shown in Graph 1, Televisa is the company with the highest rating on open television in the country. In second place is TV Azteca, and, with just over 1 percent of rating, Imagen Televisión is the 3<sup>rd</sup> one, which has chosen to include Turkish tele-novelas in its programming, while TV Azteca recently produced a series in 2023, after having quit fiction.

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

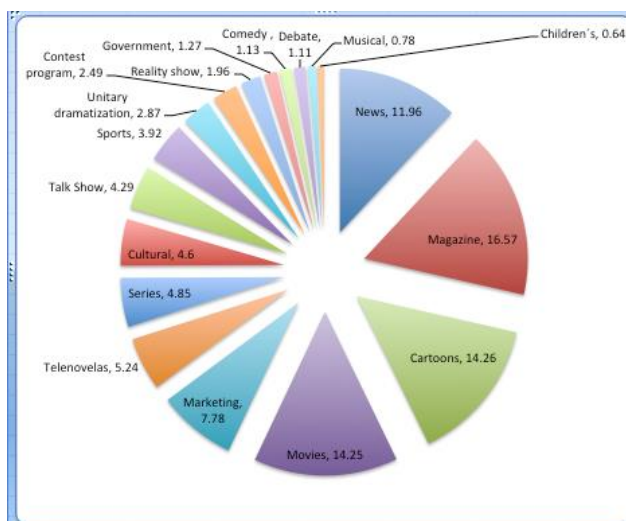
Group (2023 Average)	Households	
	Rating%	Share%
Televisa	10.65	25.53
TV Azteca	5.41	12.97
Grupo Imagen	1.19	2.86
Multimedios	1.14	2.74
IPN	0.23	0.55
Government	0.06	0.15
Grupo Radio Centro	0.04	0.1
Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretary of Public Education)	0.03	0.08
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18.75</b>	<b>44.98</b>



Source: Nielsen IBOPE México; Television Audience Base 5 Domains; MSS TV, Rat%, Shr%; 01/01/2023 - 12/31/2023, 6:00 - 24:00; Targets of people with Guest. For each target: Rank by Rat%, Group of open TV channels.

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

Genres broadcast	Hours	%
Magazine	8864:07:09	16.57%
Cartoons	7628:05:09	14.26%
Movies	7621:15:35	14.25%
News	6397:58:45	11.96%
Marketing	4160:15:15	7.78%
Telenovelas	2804:37:06	5.24%
Series	2592:16:19	4.85%
Cultural	2461:17:20	4.60%
Talk Show	2297:12:14	4.29%
Sports	2095:28:00	3.92%
Unitary dramatization	1534:45:40	2.87%
Contest program	1334:33:16	2.49%
Reality Show	1046:42:52	1.96%
Government	677:58:52	1.27%
Comedy	603:36:32	1.13%
Debate	591:08:48	1.11%
Musical	417:15:52	0.78%
Children's	341:23:04	0.64%
Religion	22:15:19	0.04%
General	00:10:00	0.00%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53492:23:07</b>	<b>100%</b>



Source: Nielsen IBOPE México; Television Audience Base 5 Domains; MSS TV, Rat%, Shr%; 01/01/2023 - 12/31/2023, 6:00 - 24:00; Targets of people with Guest. For each target: Rank by Rat%, Group of open TV channels.

As we can see, magazine programs are the preferred choice of private television stations, representing 16.6% of the total number of genres produced and broadcasted, while telenovelas are in fifth place and unitary dramatizations in eleventh place. Televisa is the company that produces the most telenovelas in Mexico, while TV Azteca, as we have pointed out in previous years, almost completely abandoned the production of this genre in favor of reality shows.

## 1.2. Pay TV and VoD platforms in Mexico in 2023

**Chart 2. Pay TV Channels in Mexico**

10 most watched pay TV channels in México			
Channel	Genre	Country	Household ranking
Disney Channel	Children's	USA	28%
Discovery Channel	Information	USA	23%
TNT	Fiction	USA	18%
HBO	Information	USA	17%
National Geographic	Information	USA	17%
De Película	Fiction	Mexico	17%
Cartoon Network	Children's	USA	16%
Star Channel (FOX)	Fiction	USA	16%
History Channel	Documentary	USA	14%
ESPN	Sports	USA	13%

Source: Statista (2023)<sup>1</sup>.

In Mexico, there is a prevailing taste for television from U.S. networks, transmitted through pay TV, especially in the following genres: children's, movies, documentaries and sports. Chart 2 shows only one platform from Mexico (De película), while more Mexican companies appear in SVoD, such as Vix, Casa Canibal, Claro-Video, Filmoteca, among others, which are becoming more popular among Mexicans, mainly VIX.

**Chart 3. Main SVoD platforms in Mexico**

Vix (TelevisaUnivision)	Movistar+ (Telefónica)
Netflix	Star+ (Walt Disney Company)
Max (Warner Bros Discovery)	Apple TV (Apple Inc.)
Filmoteca (UNAM)	Cinépolis Klic (Organización Ramírez)
Disney Plus (Walt Disney Company)	Claro-Video (América Móvil)
DAZN (Perform Group)	Pluto TV (Paramount Global)
Prime Video (Amazon)	Paramount + (Paramount Global)
Acom-TV (AMC Networks)	Curiosity Stream (Amazon Prime)
Crunchyroll (Sony Group Corporation)	Filminlatino (IMCINE) - Mexican
Fox Premium (Fox Corporation)	Tubi (Fox Corporation)
Mubi	Plataformacine
Fox Play	YouTube (Google)
Casa Canibal (Cine Canibal, Mexican)	

Source: Prepared by the authors.

<sup>1</sup> <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1188311/canales-television-paga-mexico/>

### 1.3. Sources of financing for the audiovisual sector

The year 2023 stands out due to the decrease in revenues of the most important private television stations in Mexico. Televisa, in 2023, had a total loss of 10.236 billion pesos (approximately 602 million USD). In 2022, the same company had profits of 44.7 billion pesos (2.63 billion USD), so the figure is significant. On the other hand, TV Azteca has been characterized for presenting unstable financial data, due to its high indebtedness (around 488 million USD), the fall in advertising in the domestic market and, also important, the drop in the reception of revenues from official advertising (Vidal Bonifaz, 2024)<sup>2</sup>.

### 1.4. Communication policies

One of the main communication policies developed in Mexico in 2023 was the Public Site Connectivity Program 2023, which aims to: “identify and locate public sites throughout the national territory with free Internet connectivity needs, in order to achieve universal coverage” (PCSP, 2023)<sup>3</sup>.

These connectivity points are planned to be installed in 5 088 priority public sites, distributed, mainly, in the south of Mexico, specifically in indigenous communities in the states of Oaxaca, Veracruz, Puebla and Chiapas (PCSP, 2023).

As mentioned above, the expected communication policies focused on the democratization of the broadcasting and telecommunications sector did not materialize, allowing the continuation of a policy in which the major players in the sector: América Móvil (which includes Telmex and Telcel), Grupo Televisa, Grupo Imagen and Grupo Salinas maintained their economic supremacy.

### 1.5. Digital and mobile connectivity infrastructure

In Mexico, by 2023, the increase in Internet penetration was maintained, reaching almost 100 million users in a country of 126 million inhabitants, with a notable increase of 16 million Internet users, from 82.8 million in 2021 to 98.6 million (Statista, 2023)<sup>4</sup>.

This is a considerable increase, however, there are still almost 30 million people without Internet access in the country. With the arrival of CFE (Federal Electricity Commission) in the telecommunications sector, it is expected that this gap will be reduced. Men are the most connected (51.8%) while women are slightly less (48.23%). Users connect through smartphones (95%) and computers (42%) while digital television is gaining more and more ground every day (23%). The most popular times to connect are in the afternoon and evening. 83% of users maintain an

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<sup>2</sup> <https://revistazocalo.com/tv-azteca-el-principio-del-fin/>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/791995/PCSP\\_2023.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/791995/PCSP_2023.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1171866/usuarios-de-internet-mexico/#:~:text=En%202022%2C%20se%20estim%C3%B3%20que,de%20usuarios%20registrados%20en%202021.>

active Facebook account, but TikTok is gaining more users every day, especially among young people (Infobae, 2023)<sup>5</sup>.

## 2. Analysis of the year: National and Iberoamerican premiere fiction on open TV

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

<p><b>National premiere titles: 34</b></p> <p><b>Televisa: national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>El Colapso</i> (miniseries)</li> <li>2. <i>Eternamente amándonos</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>3. <i>Tierra de Esperanza</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>4. <i>Perdona nuestros pecados</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>5. <i>Pienso en Ti</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>6. <i>Vencer la Culpa</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>7. <i>Golpe de suerte</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>8. <i>Minas de pasión</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>9. <i>Nadie como tú</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>10. <i>El Maleficio</i> (series)</li> <li>11. <i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy yo</i> (series)</li> <li>12. <i>Se llamaba Pedro Infante</i> (series)</li> <li>13. <i>Como dice el dicho 13</i> (unitary dramatization)</li> <li>14. <i>La Rosa de Guadalupe 18</i> (unitary dramatization)</li> <li>15. <i>Esta historia me suena 6</i> (unitary dramatization)</li> <li>16. <i>Senda Prohibida</i> (series)</li> <li>17. <i>Una familia de diez 10</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>18. <i>Vecinos 14 y 15</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>19. <i>40 y 20 10</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>20. <i>Tal para cual 2</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>21. <i>Relatos mascabrothers 6 y 7</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>22. <i>Renta congelada 5</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>23. <i>¿Tú crees? 2</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>24. <i>Bola de locos</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>25. <i>Chócalas compayito</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>26. <i>Está libre</i> (sitcom)</li> <li>27. <i>¿Es neta Eva?</i> (sitcom)</li> </ol> <p><b>TV Azteca: national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28. <i>Dra. Lucía, un don extraordinario</i> (series)</li> <li>29. <i>El rey Vicente Fernández</i> (series)</li> <li>30. <i>Lotería del crimen</i> (series)</li> <li>31. <i>Pancho Villa: El centauro del norte</i> (series)</li> <li>32. <i>Un día para vivir</i> (unitary dramatization)</li> <li>33. <i>Rutas de la vida 3</i> (series)</li> <li>34. <i>Lo que callamos las mujeres</i> (unitary dramatization)</li> </ol> <p><b>Imagen TV: 0 national titles</b></p> <p><b>Canal Once: 0 national titles</b></p> <p><b>Canal 22: 0 national titles</b></p> <p><b>COPRODUCTIONS - 0</b></p>	<p><b>Foreign premiere titles OBITEL: 3</b></p> <p><b>Televisa: 2 imported titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35. <i>El Doctor del Pueblo</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>TV Azteca: 0 imported titles</b></p> <p><b>Imagen TV: 2 imported titles:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36. <i>Sansón y Dalila</i> (miniseries)</li> <li>37. <i>Amor de Madre</i> (telenovela)</li> </ol> <p><b>Canal Once: 0 imported titles</b></p> <p><b>Canal 22: 1 imported title</b></p> <p><b>Non OBITEL foreign titles: 6</b></p> <p><b>Televisa: 1 imported title</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>38. <i>¿Qué culpa tiene Fatmagul?</i> (telenovela)</li> </ol> <p><b>Imagen TV: 3 imported titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>39. <i>Golden Boy</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>40. <i>Tres hermanas</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>41. <i>El Sultán</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>Canal 22: 0 imported titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>42. <i>Medici: Maestros de Florencia</i> (series)</li> <li>43. <i>Carlo Magno</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>Reruns national titles: 9</b></p> <p><b>Televisa</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>44. <i>Teresa</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>45. <i>Marimar</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>46. <i>María la del barrio</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>47. <i>El privilegio de amar</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>48. <i>Soñadoras</i> (telenovela)</li> <li>49. <i>Hoy voy a Cambiar</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>TV Azteca: 1 title</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50. <i>Hasta que te conocí</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>Imagen TV: 0 titles</b></p> <p><b>Canal Once: 2 titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>51. <i>Soy tu fan</i> (series)</li> <li>52. <i>XY</i> (series)</li> </ol> <p><b>Reruns imported titles: 1</b></p> <p><b>TV Azteca</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>53. <i>Yo soy Betty la fea</i> (telenovela)</li> </ol>
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Source: Obitel Mexico.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.infobae.com/educacion/2023/03/29/como-son-los-habitos-de-los-mexicanos-en-internet/>

In 2023, the number of fictions grew from 30 to 34 due to an increase in the production of sitcoms by Televisa, a genre that is very popular among Mexican audiences. This genre even surpasses the telenovelas produced by the network. It should also be noted that all of these sitcoms are original productions.

Imagen TV, the third TV network, does not generate its own fiction; instead—as can be seen in the table—it opts for the purchase and transmission of Turkish telenovelas. What is noteworthy is the consolidation of fiction production, specifically series, in TV Azteca, something it has been doing since 2021, after a period of more than three years in which it stopped producing fiction. This year it aired on its main channel: *Dra. Lucía, un don extraordinario*.

Something else to point out is that the production of bioseries continues to be in vogue in 2023, fictions were produced on the lives of singers Pedro Infante, Vicente Fernández and Gloria Trevi.

**Table 2. National premiere fiction in 2021 and its evolution in the five-year period**

Format	Titles						Hours					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
<b>Telenovela</b>	14	5	12	11	8	50	750:00	426:00	775:00	695:00	739:00	3385:00
<b>Series</b>	9	5	1	6	9	30	455:00	298:30	249:10	50:00	300:00	1352:40
<b>Miniseries</b>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	8:00	8:00
<b>Sitcom</b>	0	3	3	10	11	21	0:00	0:00	0:00	71:50	72:00	143:50
<b>Unitary</b>	2	0	0	0	5	7	167:00	231:00	324:00	313:00	476:00	1511:00
<b>Docudrama</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
<b>Other</b>	0	0	1	0	0	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>1372:00</b>	<b>955:30</b>	<b>1348:10</b>	<b>1129:50</b>	<b>1595:00</b>	<b>6399:90</b>

Source: Obitel Mexico.

In 2023, more series were produced than telenovelas, and in the production of the latter, there was a decrease in the number of chapters per title, which implies the decision to produce shorter formats, which—according to the ratings—seems to be more to the liking of Mexican audiences.

In terms of production in Obitel countries, only three products were premiered in 2023 (from the United States, Brazil and Peru), although it should be noted that five of the ten most watched titles are scripts from the Obitel area.

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

Pais	Titles	%	Hours	%
<b>NATIONAL (total)</b>	<b>34,00</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>1595:00</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>99:00</b>	<b>6</b>
Argentina	0	0	0:00	0
Brazil	1	4	19:00	1
Chile	0	0	0:00	0
Colombia	0	0	0:00	0
Ecuador	0	0	0:00	0
Spain	0	0	0:00	0
USA Hispanic	1	4	6:00	0
Mexico	34		1595:00	100
Peru	1	4	74:00	5
Portugal	0	0	0:00	0
Uruguay	0	0	0:00	0
Venezuela	0	0	0:00	0
<b>COPRODUCTIONS (total)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>0</b>
National coproductions	1	4	3:55	0
Obitel countries Coproductions	0	0	0:00	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1697:55</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Obitel Mexico.

**Tabla 4. Formats of national and Iberoamerican fiction broadcast in 2023**

Format	Title				Hours			
	National	%	The rest of Obitel area	%	National	%	The rest of Obitel area	%
<b>Telenovela</b>	8	23.6	1	5.3	739:00	46.3	74:00	74.7
<b>Series</b>	9	26.4	1	5.3	300:00	18.8	6:00	6.1
<b>Miniseries</b>	1	2.9	1	5.3	8:00	0.5	19:00	19.2
<b>Sitcom</b>	11	32.4	0	0.0	72:00	4.5	0:00	0.0
<b>Unitary</b>	5	14.7	16	84.1	476:00	29.9	0:00	0.0
<b>Docudrama</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0	0:00	0.0
<b>Other</b>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0	0:00	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1595:00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>99:00</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Prepared by OBITEL with national data supplied by Nielsen Ibope México, S.A. de C.V. Software MSS TV, Base "Rating regular 5 dominios +Dish. Total television programming during 2023.

As in 2022, unitary programs (*La Rosa de Guadalupe* and *Como Dice el Dicho*) and telenovelas are the formats with the highest number of episodes and hours. Telenovelas continue to be the predominant format, although this year the series increased the number of titles and broadcast hours, as did sitcoms. Table 4 shows that although sitcoms represent 32.4% of the total number of national fiction titles, telenovelas are the ones that have the largest number of production hours: 46,3%.

On the other hand, as can be seen in Table 5, only one series managed to enter the Top Ten of the most watched titles, while the telenovela and the unitary dramatization continue to dominate in the top ten, all of them Televisa productions.

**Table 5: Ten most watched titles in 2023**

	Title	Channel	Produced by	Format/genre	Number of episodes in 2023	Time-slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Unitary dramatization / Drama	159	Prime time	13.58	21.87
2	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	60	Prime time	13.29	21.37
3	<i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	90	Prime time	12.34	21.45
4	<i>Pienso en Ti</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	75	Prime time	12.30	18.63
5	<i>Eternamente Amándonos</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	120	Prime time	12.06	23.42
6	<i>Como dice el Dicho</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Unitary dramatization / Drama	65	Afternoon	12.00	21.98
7	<i>Vencer la Culpa</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	80	Prime time	11.50	18.51
8	<i>Golpe de Suerte</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	92	Prime time	11.26	17.24
9	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Telenovela / Drama	107	Prime time	10.84	18.53
10	<i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy Yo</i>	Las Estrellas	Televisa	Series /Drama	50	Prime time	10.78	17.43
Total national productions: 10				Foreign original scripts: 5				
100%				50%				

Source: Prepared by OBITEL with national data supplied by Nielsen Ibope México, S.A. de C.V. MSS TV Software, Base "Rating regular 5 dominios +Dish. Total television programming during 2023.

As has been the case in recent years, Mexican audiences remain highly loyal to *La Rosa de Guadalupe*, as this unitary program is once again the most watched. It is followed by the prime time telenovelas broadcast on El Canal de Las Estrellas, many of these telenovelas were liked by the audience despite the fact that they are productions whose original scripts come from Chile, the United States and Turkey.

**Table 6: Profile of the audience of the 10 titles most watched:  
gender, age, socio-economic status**

Title		Channel	Gender %		Socio-economic status %			
			Women	Men	ABC+	C	D+	DE
1	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	Las Estrellas	8.69	4.99	8.18	14.64	16.23	23.83
2	<i>Tierra de Esperanza</i>	Las Estrellas	8.24	4.78	9.14	12.47	13.97	22.56
3	<i>Perdona Nuestros Pecados</i>	Las Estrellas	7.45	3.86	7.22	13.84	15.41	19.43
4	<i>Pienso en ti</i>	Las Estrellas	7.81	4.8	6.73	12.64	15.07	20.22
5	<i>Eternamente Amándonos</i>	Las Estrellas	7.16	3.52	8.93	11.56	13.91	18.06
6	<i>Como dice el Dicho</i>	Las Estrellas	7.11	3.60	7.38	12.73	14.1	18.81
7	<i>Vencer la Culpa</i>	Las Estrellas	7.58	4.49	7.70	10.61	12.96	20.50
8	<i>Golpe de Suerte</i>	Las Estrellas	6.93	4.53	6.34	10.36	13.81	19.69
9	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Las Estrellas	6.33	3.68	7.18	10.89	13.06	17.45
10	<i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy yo</i>	Las Estrellas	7.30	3.90	7.39	10.81	12.16	18.54
Title		Age group %						
		04 - 12	13-18	19-29	30-44	45+	-	-
1	<i>La Rosa de Guadalupe</i>	6.67	5.14	5.64	6.14	9.77	-	-
2	<i>Tierra de esperanza</i>	5.59	5.04	4.35	5.97	10.24	-	-
3	<i>Perdona nuestros pecados</i>	5.46	4.83	4.27	5.11	9.20	-	-
4	<i>Pienso en ti</i>	6.33	5.27	5.08	5.49	9.43	-	-
5	<i>Eternamente amándonos</i>	4.57	5.01	3.89	5.06	8.41	-	-
6	<i>Como dice el dicho</i>	4.83	4.89	4.01	5.01	8.16	-	-
7	<i>Vencer la culpa</i>	5.64	5.17	4.45	5.50	9.26	-	-
8	<i>Golpe de suerte (h)</i>	5.45	5.22	4.29	5.37	8.34	-	-
9	<i>Minas de pasión</i>	4.25	4.30	4.15	4.50	7.83	-	-
10	<i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy yo</i>	5.21	4.74	4.22	5.77	7.72	-	-

Source: Prepared by OBITEL with national data supplied by Nielsen Ibope México, S.A. de C.V. MSS TV Software, Base "Rating regular 5 domains +Dish. Total television programming during 2023.

As in previous years, those who consume fiction in Mexico are women over 45 years of age belonging to socioeconomic levels D+ and DE; that is, the lowest socio-economic status, while the socioeconomic group that consumes the least telenovelas is the ABC.

It is remarkable that *La Rosa de Guadalupe* is the fiction product most watched by all socio-economic levels and all age groups, which means a high consumption loyalty, specially among women between 30 and 44 years of age, and those over 45, because in the program's narratives they find possible answers to the problems experienced by Mexican children and adolescents.

### 3. VoD Monitoring 2023

#### 3.1 VoD Platform market in 2023

In 2023 there was growth in Video on Demand services, although not as high as in previous years. In 2022, subscription accounting totaled 12.6 million, an increase of 8.1% over 2021. By the end of 2023, the number of subscribers of video on demand platforms totaled 13.4 million in Mexico according to the study: “Consumption and Contracting of Video on Demand Services”, carried out by the consulting firm The Competitive Intelligence Unit 4T-2023<sup>6</sup>, which represents an increase of 3.1% and a deceleration (Rodríguez, 2024) compared to the years of confinement during the pandemic by Covid-19, when growth was 18% in twelve months. The streaming market in Mexico continues its diversification and fragmentation, with persistent competition among platforms such as Netflix, Disney+, Max, Vix+, Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+, Paramount+, Claro-Video, Starz+—the most important ones—, competition that seems to consolidate the market in 2024 by way of subscription bundling.

According to a study by The CIU, in 2023, 43 million consumers opened an account, and 69% of them shared their password. Internet users are overcoming the barriers of multiple offers and are looking for more alternatives to access audiovisual content. “Although the increase in tariffs or the lack of budget makes users think twice about it, the maturity and fragmentation of services make it increasingly complicated, in addition to the impossibility of sharing accounts with friends, partners or acquaintances” (Rodríguez, 2024).

Faced with the slowdown in subscribers, Netflix and other platforms such as Vix+ have eliminated their strategies to attract subscribers to the “basic plan”, leaving available only the cheapest option, the “standard plan with ads” at a price of \$99 pesos per month (\$5 USD) and a limited catalog. According to the consulting firm The Competitive Intelligence Unit, Netflix still maintains its prevalence with 53% of total subscriptions—a loss of 8 percentage points compared to 2022. The growth from 2022 to 2023 was in Disney+ (13.5% of SVOD subscriptions) and Max (11.8%), which registered an increase in subscriptions of 0.7 (Netflix), 1 (Disney) and 1.5 (Max) percentage points. However, the arrival of TelevisaUnivision, owner of Vix+, has represented an important alternative in the streaming offer, since by the end of 2023, the platform had quadrupled its market share by achieving 7% of total subscribers in Mexico. The Vix+ company offers a free plan with advertisements, and also affordable prices or economic plans: the Vix Premium plan costs \$99 pesos per month (5 USD) while the annual plan is \$499 pesos (30 USD), that is, it has a discount of 65%.

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<sup>6</sup> Available on <https://www.theciu.com/publicaciones-2/2024/2/6/streaming-por-suscripcion-contratacion-y-preferencia-de-plataformas>

Platforms such as Disney+ and Max keep various plans and special offers that allow access to several devices on the same account, with prices ranging between \$150 and \$200 pesos per month (\$7 and \$10 USD), which can also be reduced with subscriptions to cable companies such as Izzi, or electronic purchases on Mercado Libre. The other platforms that have a presence in Mexico—Star+, Apple TV+, Claro Video and Mubi—have a combined market share of 4.7% of total subscribers. At the end of 2023, Lionsgate+ announced the closure of its operations in Mexico and the rest of Latin America. According to the company, the decision to leave Mexico responds to its intention to strengthen production and offering in English-speaking regions.

The access to different SVoD platforms that offer audiovisual content via subscription, the additional charge for account sharing and the increase in platform fees continues to increase the average annual expenditure of the Mexican Internet user<sup>7</sup>, which is around \$50 USD, estimating revenues of \$1.45 billion dollars for this sector in 2023, according to Statista consulting firm<sup>8</sup>.

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

The offer of VoD platforms in Mexico continues to diversify; however, the domestic market presents a different media landscape. A year after the commencement of its operations, thanks to the merger of Grupo Televisa and Univision, the company Vix+ has grown its relevance with an extensive catalog of original content—in terms of production of premiere titles it surpassed the dominant company, Netflix. This is mainly explained by the acquisition of Epigmenio Ibarra's Argos Media Group by TelevisaUnivision.

It is worth recalling that Argos had produced series and telenovela content for companies such as Netflix and Telemundo. According to reports, Argos Media Group suffered financial losses after losing several contracts with Telemundo-NBC and the exit of Grupo Inbursa as a shareholder, owned by millionaire Carlos Slim, with a 30% stake. Bankruptcy was imminent despite having obtained a loan of 150 million pesos, granted by Bancomext in 2020<sup>9</sup> during López Obrador's administration. Epigmenio Ibarra negotiated his place in Argos' Board of Directors and remains as a minority shareholder.

With this acquisition, TelevisaUnivision increased its production capacity for a market of 600 million Spanish speakers with the reach of Vix+. Televisa produces more than 86,000 hours per year with 17 studios located at the San Angel television station in Mexico City. Thus, the purchase of the Argos company means a significant increase in production capacity by gaining access to the eight studios located in Tlalnepantla.

<sup>7</sup> Available on <https://expansion.mx/empresas/2023/09/19/los-mexicanos-gastan-casi-70-mas-en-plataformas-de-streaming-de-video>

<sup>8</sup> Available on <https://es.statista.com/estadisticas/1187537/plataforma-streaming-video-principales-mexico/>

<sup>9</sup> Available on <https://www.proceso.com.mx/reportajes/2023/6/25/de-activista-de-la-4t-al-fracaso-epigmenio-ibarra-pierde-el-control-de-argos-309423.html>

In addition, the Vix+ company has kept the business model of basic and free plans, a model similar to that of Netflix. Advertising is starting to become an important factor in both companies' figures. As a result, Vix+ has stepped up its bet on live events with the transmission of Liga MX matches, and also by expanding its offer of reality shows and bioseries.

Claro-Video, the streaming platform owned by América Móvil, whose main shareholder is Carlos Slim, has decreased its presence in Mexico in recent years. In 2017, Claro-Video ranked as the second largest video-on-demand (SVoD) platform in the country, above Prime Video and below Netflix; by 2023 it ranks between eighth and ninth place, below Paramount+ whose share is 2.3%. It continues to be free of charge to subscribers who contract some telephony, cable and internet service packages from Slim's company. However, in view of regulations and new policies of the Federal Telecommunications Institute (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, IFT) in telephony services, which imply a sharing of infrastructure with the competition, América Móvil has decided to invest in Latin American countries, especially in its Brazilian unit Claro, with an amount of 7.7 billion dollars. Claro Brazil represents 114 million mobile and fixed subscriptions, including voice, video and data, and with a more stable economy than the Mexican one<sup>10</sup>.

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

In 2023 we observed a significant increase in national premieres on streaming platforms compared to the previous year. The increase in productions from 2022 to 2023 has been considerable: from 27 to 36 original productions, 32 of them premieres and the remaining four are second or third season series. For the first time, Vix+, owned by TelevisaUnivision, has more productions (13 premiere titles) than Netflix (10 premiere titles), although it should be noted that the premieres are both national and international if we consider the U.S. Hispanic market, where the offices of what was Univision before the merger are located. In 2022, Vix+ started in Mexico with four productions; in 2023 it increased its relevance with the offer of serialized telenovelas and premiering biographical series.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/empresas/Slim-invertira-7700-millones-de-dolares-en-Brasil-para-for-talecer-servicios-de-Claro-20240422-0078.html>

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

NATIONAL PREMIERE TITLES	COPRODUCTIONS
<p><b>Netflix: 10 national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Contra las cuerdas</i> (Series)</li> <li>2. <i>El elegido</i> (Series)</li> <li>3. <i>Triada</i> (Series)</li> <li>4. <i>El niñoero</i> (Series)</li> <li>5. <i>Pacto de silencio</i> (Series)</li> <li>6. <i>Ojitos de huevo</i> (Series)</li> <li>7. <i>La viuda de los jueves</i> (Series)</li> <li>8. <i>Los casi ídolos de Bahía Colorada</i> (Series)</li> <li>9. <i>Cindy La Regia</i> (Series)</li> <li>10. <i>Madre de alquiler</i> (Series)</li> </ol>	<p><b>Disney +: 1 title</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>C.H.U.E.C.O</i> – (Series)-Argentine.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Vix +: 13 national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <i>Las pelotaris 1926</i> (Series)</li> <li>12. <i>Se llamaba Pedro Infante</i> (Series)</li> <li>13. <i>Ella camina sola</i> (Series)</li> <li>14. <i>El gallo de oro</i> (Series)</li> <li>15. <i>Volver a caer</i> (Series)</li> <li>16. <i>Gloria Trevi, Ellas soy yo</i> (Series)</li> <li>17. <i>Isla Brava</i> (Series)</li> <li>18. <i>Senda prohibida</i> (Series)</li> <li>19. <i>Los artistas: primeros trazos</i> (Series)</li> <li>20. <i>Cualquier parecido</i> (Series)</li> <li>21. <i>El colapso</i> (Series)</li> <li>22. <i>Montecristo</i> (Series)</li> <li>23. <i>Noche de chicas</i> (Series)</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Prime Video: 3 national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24. <i>La cabeza de Joaquín Murrieta</i> (Series)</li> <li>25. <i>De brutas, nada</i> (Season 3, Series)</li> <li>26. <i>Mala fortuna</i> (Series)</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Disney+: 2 national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27. <i>Viaje al centro de la tierra</i> (Series)</li> <li>28. <i>Papás por Encargo</i> (Season 2, Series)</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Max (HBO): 4 national titles</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29. <i>Vgly</i> (Series)</li> <li>30. <i>La narcosatánica</i> (Series)</li> </ol>	

Source: Obitel Mexico.

### 3.4. Narrative features of VoD in 2023

Two platform companies dominated the production of original series in 2023: Vix+ and Netflix. The increase in productions from 2022 to 2023 has been considerable again compared to 2021 and 2022: from 25 to 36 original productions, 33 of them are premieres and only three are second or third season series.

The series that returned with second or third seasons belong to the comedy, drama and suspense genres. For example, *Papás por encargo* (Disney+) and *De brutas nada* (Prime Video) keep combining comedy and drama. The first one includes, in the production of each episode, music and covers of songs by iconic artists such as Luis Miguel, in the journey through Mexico as an adventure. The second series presents the scenario of living as a couple; previous seasons presented this search by the characters, where everything seems to go wrong. In the case of *Los enviados* (Paramount+), the narrative focuses on a series of murders and intrigues that two priests must solve.

There were several productions that stood out in terms of viewing in Mexico, *Madre en alquiler*, *Cindy la Regia: La serie*, and *Ojitos de Huevo* (Netflix), *Se llamaba Pedro Infante*, *Las Pelotaris 1926* (Vix+), and *Vgly* (Max). Netflix had the most-watched premiere fiction series with *Cindy la Regia: La serie*, the story of a teenage girl from a wealthy family about romances and rivalries in the high school years. The series has seven episodes and was produced by Draco Filmes for Netflix. This production is the serialized version of the famous comic book character designed by Ricardo Cucamonga and is the prequel to the movie *Cindy La Regia*, which was released in 2020 with good box office takings.

Another outstanding comedy is *Ojitos de Huevo*, produced by Perro Azul and distributed by Netflix, which is about the life of Alexis Arroyo, a blind man who aspires to become a stand-up comedian despite the obstacles of his disability and people's disbelief. *Madre en alquiler* was the most watched Argos production for Netflix, which is a 24-episode serialized telenovela of the melodrama and suspense genre. The series tells the story of an indigenous woman of modest origin who is forced to act as a surrogate mother through lies and blackmail by a powerful and unscrupulous family to protect their reputation in society.

Other productions worth mentioning are biographical series (bioseries), a format that presents the life of a famous character or artist. In 2023, Vix+'s proposal was *Se llamaba Pedro Infante*, the actor and singer considered the most recognized in Mexican cinema, and *Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy yo*. The first one is a Rubén Galindo production for TelevisaUnivision that lasted five years in development and consists of eight episodes. The series addresses the life of Pedro Infante, from his origins in his native Sinaloa to his tragic death in a plane crash. Along the way, it depicts a character who influenced the masculinity of the Mexican man, his identification with Mexico's poorest classes, the sufferings of love and the death of his daughter. *Gloria Trevi: Ellas soy yo* is the work of well-known telenovela producer Carla Estrada for TelevisaUnivision and has 50 episodes. The series premiered on Vix and a month later on Televisa's Canal de las Estrellas, where it was one of the most watched programs in 2023. The series is narrated by singer Gloria Trevi and addresses both

her artistic origins and her controversial period with Sergio Andrade, leader of a “sect” characterized by the corruption of minors and sexual abuse.

Finally, Max’s standout series is *Vgly*, a production of Exile Content Studio, Asco Media and Warner Bros. for HBO Latin America. The series tells the story of a group of young people who try to stand out in the competitive world of urban music listened to in the lower-class neighborhoods of Mexico City.

#### 4. Interactivity and audience participation

Although Obitel analyzes television and streaming fiction, we consider that the greatest interactivity and audience participation in Mexico is not in telenovelas, but in series and reality shows. That is why we decided to report on how the audience participated in one of the programs that caused the greatest controversy and interactivity through social networks: *La Casa de los Famosos*.

##### 4.1 *La Casa de los Famosos*

The program is very similar to the reality show *Big Brother VIP*—aired in 2000: 14 celebrities stay inside a house, equipped with a dining room, kitchen, meeting rooms, swimming pool, two bedrooms (team “hell” and team “heaven”). In the style of John de Mol’s trademark reality shows, the set is full of cameras (about 50), and 60 microphones, through which the audience could see and hear what was happening in that house. The audience was able to watch through Vix Premium what happened in the house 24 hours a day.

The star host was Galilea Montijo, for the Sunday galas and the nomination, while for the rest of the days the hosts were Odalys Ramírez, Cecilia Galiano, Mauricio Garza, and Pablo Chagra; the producer was Rosa María Noguerón. The most notable feature of the reality show was the inclusion of a trans character, represented by Wendy Guevara, influencer, belonging to the team “hell” led by Sergio Mayer (actor and politician) and Poncho de Nigris (former *Big Brother* contestant). Wendy Guevara was the winner and became the first trans woman to win a program of this kind in Mexico and the rest of Latin America, and the second worldwide<sup>11</sup>.

The program was the talk of the virtual public sphere, especially because of Wendy Guevara and the rest of the *Infierno* team. The audience turned to social networks to comment and share the stories about Wendy, the fights and arguments within the reality show (evidently planned by the scriptwriters), the personalities of other contestants of the show, which made the audience get hooked on the content.

The company chose to use social networks such as Instagram and TikTok as a strategy to present the highlights of the reality show. On Instagram, the program

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<sup>11</sup> <https://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/espectaculos/54985.html>

reached more than 1,300,000 followers on its official account, while on TikTok it reached 4,100,000 followers. Therefore, this social network is where the greatest interactivity of both the production team and the audience took place.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/lacasafamososmx/?hl=es>



Source: <https://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/espectaculos/54985.html>

Wendy and team hell's followers were pleased with the victory. Among the comments posted on IG are the following, expressing support for the winner:



Translation of text in the image:

...Thank you, Wendy, Thank you

**Territoriofit:** Wendy won from start to finish. Unbelievable.

**Gersonzerpa:** Undoubted triumph... she won and so did her story, she won more than money and she still doesn't know it... super happy for her.

**Lady\_nicoleg:** At last, wins someone who gives a show and not a victim

**Kenore.6:** Queen

Wendy Guevara lived a complicated life before the reality show and being an influencer; a life full of economic deprivation; her story was narrated by herself in the show and that was the goal: to hook the audience with her story. The influencer rose to fame when she published a post with her friend Paola Suarez, where they said they were lost in a hill. This video had thousands of views. Thanks to that she was called by Televisa to participate in the program, and this goes hand in hand with the policy (and strategy) that the network has promoted to be more inclusive, by integrating characters from the LGBT+ community in their programs. This breaks with what Televisa had avoided for decades: giving space to other communities and sexual genders in a leading role.

#### 4.2 Ojitos de Huevo

*Ojitos de Huevo* (Egg eyes) is a Netflix original production in Mexico, premiering on November 17, 2023, with eight episodes. It was made by Perro Azul for Netflix, a Mexican production company with years of experience and work done for Netflix, and recently for Vix+. Its association with Netflix includes the drama/suspense *¿Quién mató a Sara?* (2021-2022), and the detective series *Belascoarán* (2022), and with the Vix+ platform, the dystopian drama *El Colapso* (2023).

*Ojitos de huevo* tells the story of Alexis, a young blind man whose dream in life is to be a stand-up comedian. The story unfolds when Alexis and Charlie, his best friend who suffers from cerebral palsy, decide to move from Querétaro to Mexico City to become independent from their parents. Thus, with Charlie's help, Alexis seeks to become a professional stand-up comedian. The two young men will have to face the circumstances of a metropolis and society that are not yet prepared to welcome people with disabilities or different abilities, both in terms of infrastructure and disability culture. They will also have to face the vicissitudes of the domains and night scene of stand-up, a difficult and competitive profession in the field of comedy. The cast is formed by Alexis Arroyo and Kike Vázquez, who live with disabilities in real life and are professionally dedicated to stand-up. Alexis Arroyo, whose professional name is "Ojitos de huevo" defines his comedy as inclusive, and mentions that a good part of the stories portrayed in the series and in his stand-up comedy he had experienced in his life, even more, several comic routines in the series were inspired by his participation in Comedy Central programs (2015) as well as in Telehit's Stand Wars, in 2017, where he won the first place.

The promotion of *Ojitos de huevo* in media and social networks was based on the comedy associated with stereotypes about visual impairment and placing the characters as heroes in promotional videos broadcast on X, YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. A comedy series that challenges what is politically correct regarding functional diversity.



Translation of text in the image:

“You will laugh, you will be moved”... this is how Alexis “Ojitos de huevo” reacted to your comments on the trailer of the new series ‘Ojitos de huevo’ available on November 17th.

Source: <https://twitter.com/NetflixLAT/status/1722662546073608505>

Another promotional strategy for the premiere was to use Alexis' humor: the "laughing at oneself" kind of humor, and learning to accept oneself, in the face of the negative moods and low self-esteem.



Translation of text in the image:

**Netflix Latinoamérica:** Eyes wide open, "Ojitos de huevo" arrives on November 17th

**Gabo Montiel:** I hadn't seen the trouble you were making, you crazy @ojitosdehuevo. I mean, you didn't either, haha, but what a cool thing to do. #TheBlindManInTheStadium  
(On the yellow sign) This referee is more blind than me

Source: <https://twitter.com/NetflixLAT/status/1721032845638979989>

The audience of *Ojitos de huevo* expressed their appreciation to the series for addressing the issue of functional diversity. The audiences with disabilities identified with the characters and situations.



Translation of text in the image:

**AtomicJorge:** Hello, I surfed a disease with many complications, I was more than 10 months in the Guillain Barré hospital, you have helped me to make this new stage of my life more pleasant, thank you, I love you. From: Jorge “Ivory statue”.

Source: <https://twitter.com/atomicjorge/status/1754954688116535509>

The topic of visual impairment led to active participation in social networks, with most users expressing their respect for the comedian Alexis Arroyo.



Translation of text in the image:

**Markoquin9219:** My respects, Alexis, what a great series, I hope there will be another season, everyone’s performances are top notch, and the script is perfect. Now I see as you see... with ojitos de huevo.

**Jesusarroyo8314:** I am already watching it and it is very good.

**User-pjdel2um8z:** It's a good series, it motivates you and makes you see from another perspective, how others live and that they don't want to be treated differently!!!

**Claudia-Abundis-pu8pj:** I love you, ojitos

**cOmOdOrOIOKO2:** I didn't feel like seeing it, but I think I'm on my way there.

Source: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFzswYR-XE8>

In the comments, users of these social networks pointed out the relevance of “knowing other perspectives” and reflecting on “how they do not want to be treated differently”. They also emphasized the importance of the series as an example of the non-stereotypical representation of people with disabilities, on the contrary, they commented their liking for the voluntary mockery of stereotypes, they are “an example to follow”.

## 5. Highlights of the year 2023

A significant aspect for 2023 is the increasingly strong inclusion in the narrative of the gender perspective and diverse groups of the LGBT+ community. As we have mentioned in previous years, the issue of gender violence has been increasingly present in Mexican telenovelas, but also in streaming. The series *Vencer* (Overcoming), which until 2023 has five productions (*Vencer el Miedo*, *Vencer el Desamor*, *Vencer el Pasado*, *Vencer la Ausencia*, *Vencer la Culpa*) and has not only marked an important change in the way women are represented on screen, but also LGBT+ groups. This year, in *Vencer la Culpa* (Overcoming guilt), a trans character was the central theme of the story. *Gloria Trevi: Ellas Soy Yo* is a bioseries about the life of the singer who was accused of kidnapping, sexual abuse and human trafficking at the beginning of the new millennium. The series, aired by Vix and El Canal de las Estrellas, tells the story from the singer's point of view. As they have done in *Vencer*, also in this bioseries, a campaign was included at the end of each chapter for people who suffer any kind of harassment, bullying or problems exposed in the fiction to denounce and receive psychological help. Vix has also presented us with series that address current women's issues and how they are solved, as well as the representation of gender equality and violence against women in other times, such is the case of *Las Pelotaris 1926*. An independent production company, Argos Media, which has produced for Netflix, but also for Vix and other platforms, has decided to create and produce content with a gender perspective. Undoubtedly, this perspective is very strong in Mexican fiction.

*La Rosa de Guadalupe* once again occupies the first place in terms of audience preferences for broadcast television. We also observe that the Marian element continues to be very present in Mexican narratives. Therefore, it continues to stand out as a central theme every year, since 2008, in Mexican fiction.

*Se llamaba Pedro Infante*, from the Vix+ platform, strengthens the format of the bioseries of the idols of other eras in Mexico. This is the first production about the life of Pedro Infante, the great icon of Mexican popular culture who lives on in the collective memory of several generations. His permanence and mythical status were largely due to Mexican television and its Sunday programming, where grandparents, parents, and grandchildren would gather to watch his movies and listen to his songs. This bioseries depicts his life, from his rise to the top of the golden age of Mexican cinema to his tragic death in a plane crash. Beyond the production and the narrative, in this series one can still contemplate the keys to Mexicanness and culture, as Carlos Monsiváis said when he wrote about this actor and singer.

## **6. Topic of the year: Gender Violence and Inclusion in Mexican fiction narratives**

Here we focus on analyzing the narratives in fiction presented in 2023. What do the stories say about ourselves, do they have anything to do with what is happening in the country's immediate environment, and what aspects stand out in the narratives about our history and identity?

Mexican telenovelas have a long history of productions since the very first telenovela aired in 1958 (*Senda Prohibida*). It has been 65 years of a trajectory in which hundreds of stories have been told, characters, stereotypes have been built, beliefs have been reinforced; telenovelas have served to reproduce the patriarchal system in which we live, by normalizing what it is to be a woman, what it is to be a man, and the beliefs that dominate (and have controlled) us as a nation.

In a context in which violence against women and the gender gap seem to be a permanent problem in Mexico and many other countries, 2023 left us a series of fictions in which female empowerment has remained as a central theme, as we have been discussing in previous paragraphs. We observed this characteristic in the fictions of 2023, so we decided to present an analysis (albeit brief) of some of the characteristics of the narratives in Mexican fiction, both in broadcast television and streaming platforms.

Both national television and VoD production companies have found a representational niche that not only allows them to frame the debate around gender violence, but also to provide alternative narratives that complement the debate through topics of female interest: diseases such as breast cancer, taboos around menstruation, trafficking in women, or even female transgender characters, for example.

The selection of relevant fictions to present an analysis for the topic of the year included productions of broadcast television, VoD platforms and international co-productions, including *Las Pelotaris 1926* (TelevisaUnivision / Vix, The Mediapro Studio, 2023), *El Niñero* (Netflix, La Granja TV, 2023), *El Amor Invencible* (TelevisaUnivision, 2023) and *Vencer la Culpa* (TelevisaUnivision, 2023). In these, the common factor is the thematic centrality of what we could call “female empowerment”.

The narrative of *Vencer la Culpa*, part of the *Vencer* franchise, focuses on problems related to being a woman, and puts guilt at the center of women’s lives to address, through four characters, the difficult relationships with children, full of claims to motherhood, marital violence, parental control over the relationships of daughters and the pressures to meet social expectations.

On the other hand, revenge is the narrative’s main driver of *El Amor Invencible*. Leona Bravo seeks to avenge the death of her children at the hands of a powerful transnational beer businessman. In search of redress, she finds independence, overcomes the humiliations of class and gender, and becomes a seeker of justice who frees women from a white slavery gang. Together with *Las Pelotaris 1926*, these are the fictions where the idea of empowerment goes hand in hand with that of violence. Through violent female characters such as Leona Bravo or Idoia, the productions leave open a path towards financial independence, the overcoming of gender violence, the restitution of lost motherhood or the control of one’s own body through the treatment of taboos such as birth control or menstruation.

Because of being a period fiction, *Las Pelotaris 1926* allows us to compare one period with the other regarding specific themes such as marriage of convenience, homosexuality, lesbianism, abortion, the gap between social classes and their intersection with gender. The narrative resources to make temporal replays, such as flashback or temporal markers, make memory and the location of the audience in the temporal course play a fundamental role in the narrative. These resources are also used in *El Amor Invencible* and *Vencer la Culpa*, and seem to maintain a trend, increasingly visible in streaming platforms, of using the past as a hook for the audience, the narrative and a series of values associated with diverse pasts.

In a sitcom format, *El Niñero* focuses on the story of a successful woman who, requiring a nanny for her children while trying to become president of the family business in spite of all the obstacles placed by men, including her father, hires a male nanny, of peasant origin. The series again associates women’s empowerment with financial success, and along the way, various “funny” obstacles allow us to identify the class and gender gaps, the difficulties of women’s professional success and single motherhood, and, on the other hand, the prejudices regarding masculinity in the care of children.

All these plots contribute to the topic of the year from different perspectives that are built on the meshing of diverse narrative resources. But one is evident, as men-

tioned above, the link between the central theme and the management of diegetic time, between past and present of the plot or between past and present of the audience. Here we will address some of the obvious resources. First, the narrative structure of three of the four cases analyzed includes time jumps. As mentioned above, the use of flashback and flashforward, accompanied by visual resources such as turning the screen to black and white or using transition markers, support the emphasis on certain themes through the tracing of their origin in the past. Guilt, revenge or violence have a causality that arises from a milestone in time. Thus, while the past becomes a cause, the diegetic present becomes a solution, placing audiences in a replay of memories that are activated through national or international events (the mention of the Cristero War in the context of *Las Pelotaris 1926*, for example), emotional memories in the national audience (like cooking fried fish to eat it in front of the Pacific coast in *El Amor Invencible*) or emotional memories in the national audience (such as cooking fried fish to eat off the Pacific coast in *El Amor Invencible*) or recognizable places (such as Mexico City in *Vencer la Culpa*), and which are linked to the specific reasons for revenge, guilt or violence. Although in the case of *El Niñero* this does not happen, it is important to note that these jumps are more between spaces, countryside/city, to highlight the character's origin and the contrast of social classes.



Source: Google images.

Jumps in time sometimes go along with markers. Unlike previous television fiction in Mexico, the current trend privileges the location of stories in space, giving a certain idea of context. For this purpose, literal space/time markers are essential (recurrent in cases such as *Las Pelotaris 1926*, where the jump between stories is constantly distinguished through signs that indicate the location in Mexico City or the Basque Country) or space markers (the use of recognizable public spaces in Guadalajara, Mexico, in *El Niñero*, for example); besides the use of costumes that provide temporal context.

All these elements add up to create a sense of transparency in the stories they tell, of lack of mediation between the audience's time and that of the plot, allowing identification with the central theme of female empowerment in a context of gender inequality that extends to the present, which is materialized in the constant obstacles that men impose on women in the plots of the different fictions analyzed.

These oppositions, which mark the rhythm of the empowerment process, are evidenced in clear identities. National fiction, despite the influence of new narrative strategies driven by North American series, maintains melodrama as the privileged genre to build characters. In this selection of 2023 successful productions, it is possible to note essential class oppositions, which mark the dynamics of the distance between genres and the obstacles that the protagonists must face. Thus, characters such as Gabriel (peasant) and Jimena (businesswoman) in *El Niñero* or Leona Bravo (lower class) and Gael Torrenegro (successful businessman) in *El Amor Invencible*, create identity oppositions that make evident the tensions faced by the protagonist in her transformation process. In this case, given the central theme that brings together the different productions, it is evident that the category of class intersects with that of gender; although more complex narratives are a possibility in the new formats of national television, these types of associations are kept, having, in a certain sense, flat identities that only become more complex depending on the obstacles faced by characters.

However, despite this resource of easy connection with the audience, characters are included (as it was already being done) disruptive in terms of identity. Itzi, a Spanish lesbian pelotari who marries her gay Mexican best friend. This type of identities allows to reinforce secondary plots linked to the central one, in this case the gender inequalities happening in their temporal context, despite being two members of the elites of their respective countries. Similarly, characters such as Dulce in *Vencer la Culpa*, a trans girl who must face the rejection of her own father, allow us to put on the table questions about paternity in the current context.

Finally, in terms of character building, it should be noted the innovative inclusion of Ro in *Vencer la Culpa*, a character created with artificial intelligence that appears in capsules during the development of the plot, strengthening the explicitly anti-machismo message of the series.

On the other hand, it would be worth noting that, in tune with fiction productions in the world, created not only for export but also for their permanent presence in the digital cloud, available to transnational audiences, national fictions include marks of transnationalism in the plots. It is not only about shared formats and genres, but also about plots that take place in multiple national spaces, as in the case of *Las Pelotaris 1926*, which takes place in Mexico and Spain, or phenomena that incorporate the transnational element in the central theme itself, as in the case of white slavery in *El Amor Invencible*. On the other hand, the inclusion of actors of

diverse origins (often without hiding national accents) and of different age groups, who incorporate a transnational language with words such as: dude, date, bro, etc. (spoken in English), leave marks of the relationship between the production and potential transnational audiences.

As can be seen, the narratives in Mexican fiction are evolving, representing more and more problematic issues according to reality, although without leaving aside romantic love—Televisa's characteristic stamp. We also observe that the bet for including transnational themes and characters is growing. This, we understand, is a strategy to reach audiences that only consume audiovisual content via the Internet. Undoubtedly, narratives are evolving, as well as the formats and the way of narrating and consuming stories.

### **Closing: what's next?**

We believe that Netflix does have a strong competitor in Mexico with Vix. This platform is positioning itself more and more in the country, obtaining more subscribers with its special promotions (7 million subscriptions and 40 million unique users in its free version<sup>12</sup>) compared to Netflix's 10 million. We anticipate that eventually subscriptions will even out between both platforms, but Vix in its free version will undoubtedly have more unique users.

The consequences of the U.S. Hollywood screenwriters' strike on the Mexican audiovisual industry will be seen in the coming years. One strategy of U.S. film and television production companies was to work with Mexican screenwriters and even move some series projects to Mexico to lower their production costs, on a smaller scale. In 2023, this was the case of Netflix, HBO and other distributors, who, faced with salary pressures from their screenwriters, chose to hire Mexican creative and technical personnel who were not unionized in the United States, and with lower salaries. Likewise, U.S. audiovisual production will seek tax incentives to work in Mexico and thus globalize the production market—to the detriment of U.S. screenwriters.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://expansion.mx/empresas/2023/11/01/estrategia-vix-para-incrementar-suscripciones-premium>

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