

USA: RACE AND INTERSECTIONALTIY IN HISPANIC TV<sup>1</sup>

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Introduction

In a year in which inclusion, diversity, and equity programs are being questioned by the current administration, this Television Fiction Observatory has undertaken the task of reviewing the inclusion of different racial, ethnic, social class, sexual orientation, and gender identity groups from an intersectional and postcolonial perspective. This review presents a significant gap in the visibility of diversity in different areas of television fiction. The findings in this section reveal the absence of the Indigenous population and Afro-descendant groups in these narratives. It also shows an increase in the visibility of certain minoritarian social groups but embedded in a certain form linked to the narrative. In this sense, the way these groups are inserted can be interpreted, on the one hand, as more appropriate for advertising purposes what are conceived as aspirational representations. However, on the other hand, they could be seen as less threatening representations through “whitening” processes conceived as a strategy to contravene racial, gender identity, sexual, or class stereotypes established over the decades.

1. The U.S. Hispanic Audiovisual Context in 2024

1.1. Hispanic open television in the U.S.

Chart 1. U.S. national Hispanic broadcasting networks/channels

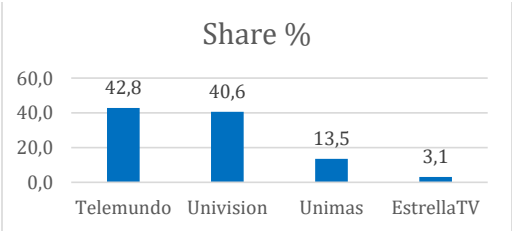
Private networks/channels
EstrellaTV
Telemundo
UniMás
Univision
TOTAL NETWORKS = 4

Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

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

<sup>1</sup> On behalf of Obitel, we would like to express our deep gratitude to Emily Vanides Senior Vice President, Client Business Partner at Nielsen, and to Elizabeth Oldis Client Solutions Director at Nielsen Media Research, for their collaboration in the realization of this study and for their invaluable contribution to the field of research in Hispanic television.

Networks	Share %
Telemundo	42.8
Univision	40.6
UniMás	13.5
EstrellaTV	3.1
	100.0

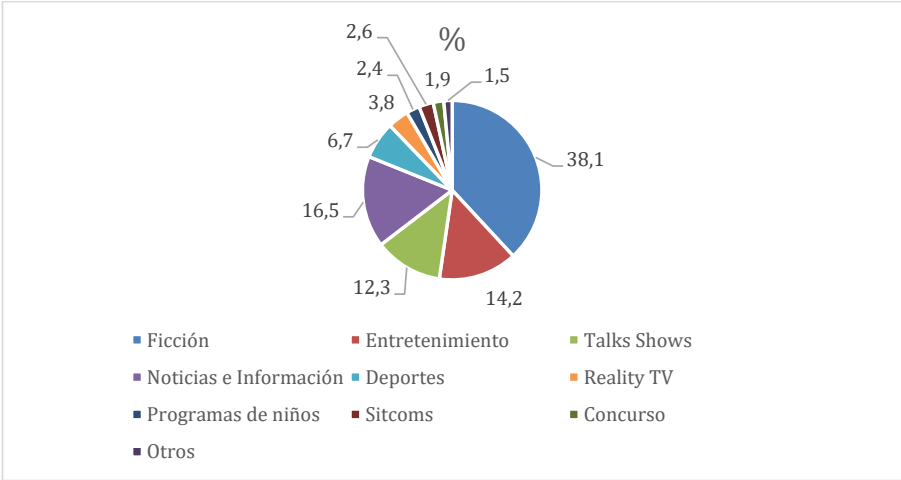


Source: Nielsen - Obitel U.S.

Graph 2: Genre and hours broadcast in TV programming

Genres	%
Fiction	38.1
Entertainment	14.2
Talk Shows	12.3
News and Information	16.5
Sports	6.7
Reality TV	3.8
Children's Programming	2.4
Sitcom	2.6
Game Shows	1.9
Other	1.5
	100.0

Source: Nielsen Obitel USA



1.2. Hispanic pay TV and VoD platforms in the U.S. in 2024

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

10 most watched Hispanic pay TV channels in the U.S.				
Channel	Genre	Origin	Unit (000)	Rating
Universon	Fiction and Entertainment	U.S.	16,939	0.09
TUDN	Sports	U.S./Mexico	14,093	0.07
ESPN Deportes	Sports	U.S.	9,839	0.05
Discovery en Español	Information	U.S.	7,424	0.04
Fox Deportes	Sports	U.S.	6,885	0.04
Galavisión	Fiction and Entertainment	U.S./Mexico	6,492	0.03
CNN en Español	News and Information	U.S.	4,226	0.02
GalaNovelas	Fiction	U.S.	3,443	0.02
Discovery Familia	Information	U.S.	2,896	0.02
beIN Sports en español	Sports	Qatar	1,282	0.01
HBO Latino	Fiction	U.S.	929	0.00

Source: Nielsen – Orbitel U.S.

While Telemundo dominates the ratings on broadcast television, its sister network on pay television, Universon, has positioned itself as the most-watched Latino network in the United States for the first time. Interestingly, both Univision and its pay channel, TUDN, moved into second place on broadcast and pay television, respectively. Another important fact is the decline in viewership on pay television. The number one network, Universon, had a 2024 audience of 16,000, while TUDN reached 22,000 in 2023. Looking at the cumulative average of the top 10 in 2024, we see a 7,342 viewership, a figure well below the 11,497 in 2023.

1.3. Sources of financing for the audiovisual sector

Mexican-American corporation TelevisaUnivision’s total revenue is expected to grow 3% to \$5.1 billion dollars in 2024, up from \$4.9 billion in 2023. In terms of advertising, programming licensing, and subscriptions, the company in the U.S. had revenue of \$3,227 billion dollars in 2024, up from \$3,159 billion in 2023. This was in addition to TelevisaUnivision’s revenue in Mexico of \$1,828 billion dollars in 2024, up from \$1,768 billion in 2023. This means that total advertising revenue grew 2% in the U.S. and 3% in Mexico (TelevisaUnivision announces, 2025).

Comcast/NBC, the parent company of Telemundo, is a global company with businesses in telecommunications and platforms, as well as media, studios, and entertainment parks. Overall, Comcast reported revenue of \$123.7 billion dollars for 2024, up slightly from \$121.6 billion in 2023. Comcast’s Media segment includes the broadcast TV channels NBC and Telemundo, a portfolio of cable channels, the

SVoD Peacock, and international television networks such as Sky Sports. Thus, revenue from the media segment in 2024 represented 22% of total revenue, totaling \$28,148 billion dollars, up from \$25,355 billion in 2023. Peacock's platform generated revenue of \$4.90 billion dollars in 2024, up from \$3.40 billion in 2023 (Comcast Annual Report, 2025). Revenue from Telemundo is not specifically reported. In the case of EstrellaTV, there is no public revenue report.

#### **1.4. Communication policies**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) revived the Net Neutrality legislation, reinstituting standards for internet broadband reliability, security, and consumer protection (FCC, 2024). In this regard, the FCC reintroduced its Title II of the Communication Act, which seeks to oversee communications infrastructure to make broadband access accessible to all. Furthermore, more than 40 states have established child protection policies regarding the use and access of social media. These policies, among other things, include age verification for users, parental consent, and regulation of their use in schools (NCL, 2024).

#### **1.5. Digital and mobile connectivity infrastructure**

Reports on Latino internet connectivity can present contradictory results, as noted in a report by the Aspen Institute (*A Glance at*, 2023). It notes that the US Census American Community Survey (ACS) report indicates that 91.9% of Latinos in the United States have access to broadband internet, slightly below the 92.8% of the country's Caucasian population. Meanwhile, the Pew Hispanic Research (PHC) reports that only 65% of Latinos have access to broadband internet services, compared to 80% of the Caucasian population. This indicates a wide gap between the two groups. This disparity stems from the way the two centers measure this variable. While the PHC reports broadband connectivity at home to computers or laptops with a landline service, the ACS report considers access through mobile phones and data plans. While it is true that a large portion of the Latino population relies on smartphones for internet access, this does not necessarily mean they enjoy broadband support due to the low stability of the connection (*A glance at*, 2023). As reported by the Aspen Institute, both the PHC and ACS agree that Latinos have a lower level of computer ownership, at 67%, while the Caucasian population has 80%. However, while there is no disparity between the two groups in terms of smartphone ownership, the difference is reflected in their dependence on internet access: only 12% of the Caucasian population relies on their smartphones, while for 25% of Latinos, the telephone is their only means of accessing internet and broadband services (*A glance at*, 2023).

2. Analysis of the year: National and Ibero American premiere fiction in 2024

New releases have already shown a consistent decline over the past three years. Thus, in 2024, with 26 new released titles, it showed a slight decrease compared to the 29 titles released in 2023, and below the 35 titles released in 2022. Fiction production has not been able to match the number of titles from 2019, pre-pandemic times, when there were 45 new releases.

TABLA 1. Premiere fiction titles broadcast in 2024  
(national, foreign Obitel area, and coproduction)

<b>NATIONAL PREMIERE TITLES - 5</b>	<b>FOREIGN PREMIERE TITLES- 21</b>
<b>Telemundo</b>	<b>Telemundo</b>
1. <i>El Conde: Amor y Honor</i> (telenovela)	1. <i>Lo Que Callamos las Mujeres</i> (unitario-Mexico)
2. <i>El Señor de los Cielos 9</i> (telenovela)	
3. <i>Vuelve a Mi</i> (telenovela)	<b>Univision</b>
4. <i>Sed de Venganza</i> (telenovela)	2. <i>La Lola</i> (series-Argentina/Israel)
	3. <i>Pedro el Escamoso 2</i> (telenovela-Colombia)
<b>Univision</b>	4. <i>El Amor no Tiene Receta</i> (telenovela- Mexico)
5. <i>Casados con Hijos</i> (sitcom)	5. <i>EL Ángel de Aurora</i> (telenovela- Mexico)
	6. <i>Como Dice el Dicho</i> (unitary -Mexico)
	7. <i>Gloria Trevi: Ellas Soy Yo</i> (series-Mexico)
	8. <i>¿Es Neta, Eva?</i> (sitcom-Mexico)
	9. <i>Esta Historia me Suena</i> (unitary-Mexico)
	10. <i>Fugitivas</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	11. <i>Gallo de Oro</i> (series-Mexico)
	12. <i>La Historia de Juana</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	13. <i>Marea de Pasiones</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	14. <i>Minas de Pasión</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	15. <i>Precio de Amarte</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	16. <i>Príncipe del Barrio</i> (sitcom-Mexico)
	17. <i>Rosa de Guadalupe</i> (unitary-Mexico)
	18. <i>Tu Vida es mi Vida</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	19. <i>Vencer la Culpa</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
	20. <i>Vivir de Amor</i> (telenovela-Mexico)
<b>COPRODUCTIONS – 0</b>	<b>UniMás</b>
	21. <i>Nadie Como Tu</i> (telenovela – Mexico)
	<b>TOTAL PREMIERE TITLES -26</b>

Source: Nielsen – Obitel U.S.

Telemundo offered four national titles and one foreign title, remaining the main producer of national premiere fiction, while Univision, with its offering of 19 foreign titles and one national title, remains the main distributor of Obitel fiction in the US. It is important to note that national production has shown a decline with only five premiere titles, below the yearly average of eight to nine tiles release in

2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020, and well below pre-pandemic times with 12 in 2019, and 20 in 2018. While the exhibited foreign production, with 21 premiere titles, shows the same number as in 2023, that number is below the 27 in 2022. However, these numbers are still well below the 33 of 2019 in pre-pandemic times. It’s worth noting that 53 rerun titles were included in 2024, which continue to play a very important role in programming strategies.

**TABLE 2. Formats of national premiere fiction in 2024  
and its evolution in the five-year period.**

Format	Titles						Hours					
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	T	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Telenovela	7	6	4	4	4	25	342:40	387:00	194:00	238:20	239:26	1400.1
Series	1	1	2	2	0	6	10:00	19:00	11:00	9:00	0:00	49:00
Miniseries	0	0	2	1	0	3	0:00	0:00	11:00	3:00	0:00	14:00
Sitcom	1	1	0	0	1	3	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	4:00	4:00
Unitary	0	0	0	1	0	1	14:00	14:00	0:00	5:00	0:00	33:00
Docudrama	0	0	1	0	0	1	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	5:00	0:00	0:00	0:00
TOTAL	9	8	9	8	5	39	366:40	420:00	216:00	255:20	243:26	1501:20

Source: Nielsen Obitel U.S.

Telenovelas remain the most important premiere format. Although declining, domestically produced telenovelas have stabilized for the past three years, with just four new titles. It’s worth noting that the difference in the number of premieres in 2024 compared to 2023 was the result of the inclusion of two series and one miniseries produced for platforms that year.

TABLE 3. Premiere fiction broadcast in 2024: countries of origin

Country	Titles	%	Hours	%
NATIONAL (total)	5	19.0	243:26	11.7
OBITEL COUNTRIES (total)	21	81.0	1206:05	88.3
Argentina	1	3.8	5:00	0.3
Brazil	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
Chile	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
Colombia	1	3.8	23:00	1.6
Ecuador	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
Spain	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
U.S. Hispanic	5	19.2	243:26	16.8
Mexico	19	73.1	1178:05	81.3
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)	(1)	(2.8)	(74:52)	(5.2)
National coproductions	(1)	(2.8)	(74:52)	(5.2)
Obitel countries coproductions	0	0.0	0:00	0.0
TOTAL	26	100.0	1449:51	100.0

Source: Nielsen Obitel U.S.

In 2024, 1,449 hours of fiction were released, slightly higher than the 1,412 hours of 2023, but lower than the 1,637 hours of 2022, and also lower than the previous two years. But the sharpest difference is seen in relation to the 2,548 hours released on 2019 in pre-pandemic times. Mexico remained the most important provider of fiction for the US Hispanic market, dominating the screen with 1,178 hours, representing 81% of total releases in 2024. Slightly higher than the 1,156 hours that accounted for 82% of total releases in 2023.

TABLA 4. Formats of national and Ibero American fiction broadcast in 2024

Format	Titles				Hours			
	National	%	Rest of Obitel area	%	National	%	Resto of Obitel área	%
Telenovela	4	80.0	12	57.1	239:26	98.4	814:00	67.5
Series	0	0.0	3	14.3	0:00	0.0	36:12	3.0
Miniseries	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0	0:00	0.0
Telefilm	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0	0:00	0.0
Unitary	0	0.0	4	19.0	0:00	0.0	349:05	29
Docudrama	0	0.0	0	0.0	0:00	0.0	0:00	0.0
Other	1	20.0	2	9.5	4:00	1.6	6:30	0.5
Total	5	100.0	21	100.0	243:26	100.0	1206:05	100.0

Source: Nielsen Obitel U.S.

The telenovela is the dominant format in both national and other Obitel productions. However, unlike national productions, in Obitel productions, unitaries play an important role within the programming. Thus, in Obitel productions, telenovelas account for 67.5% of the total hours aired, while fiction unitaries represent 29% of the total hours aired, with sitcoms within Others accounting for 0.5% of Obitel hours.

TABLE 5: 10 Ten most watched titles in 2024

Title		Channel	Producer Country	Format/genre	No. of epis. 2024	Time Slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Univision	Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	26**	Prime Time	5.23	23.2
2	<i>Gallo de Oro</i>	Univision	W Studios Televisa	Telenovela/drama	17	Prime Time	4.49	17.9
3	<i>El Conde: Amor y Honor *</i>	Telemundo	Sony Pictures Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/drama	75	Prime Time	4.45	21.89
4	<i>El Amor no Tiene Receta</i>	Univision	Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	95	Prime Time	4.25	19.01
5	<i>Vencer la Culpa</i>	Univision	Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	36**	Prime Time	4.09	15.93
6	<i>Tu Vida es mi Vida</i>	Univision	Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	87	Prime Time	3.98	15.28
7	<i>La Historia de Juana</i>	Univision	W Studios Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	54***	Prime time	3.69	16.06
8	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 9 *</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/narcodrama	94	Prime time	3.65	16.08
9	<i>Fugitivas</i>	Univision	Televisa	Telenovela/melodrama	60***	Prime time	3.63	15.36
10	<i>Vuelve a Mi *</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/melodrama	34**	Prime time	3.62	14.29
National scripts: 3				Foreign scripts : 7				
30%				70%				

Source: Nielsen – Obitel U.S.

(\*): National production

(\*\*): The broadcasting started in 2023 and continued in 2024

*El Gallo de Oro* was premiered in Vix first as well as *Casados sin Hijos*.

Univision dominated the list with seven of the ten most-watched fiction titles of 2024, but Telemundo managed to place three of its titles among the top ten. Traditional melodrama continues to dominate the top three spots on the list, with *Minas de Pasión* in first place, a Televisa production broadcast by Univision. Similarly, the melodrama *El Conde: Amor y Honor*, co-produced by Sony and Telemundo Studios, was its most-watched fiction series, ranking third on the list. A notable mention goes to the drama series *El Gallo de Oro*, a Vix production by W Studios for Televisa-Univision, which ranked second on the list. Meanwhile, the telenovela franchise “Vencer” is back on the top ten list with *Vencer la Culpa* in fifth place. Meanwhile, *La*



*Historia de Juana*, a W Studios production similar to the remakes of the “La Fábrica de Sueños” franchise, managed to place seventh. Telemundo’s nine-season venture with *El Señor de los Cielos* continues to yield ratings results. *El Señor de los Cielos* 9 in 2024 ranked eighth on the list. Another Telemundo production that made the list was *Vuelve a Mi* in tenth place, with the stellar return of William Levi.

TABLE 5a: Ten most watched national titles in 2024

Title		Channel	Producer Country	Format/genre	N. of eps. (in 2024)	Time Slot	Rating	Share
1	<i>El Conde: Amor y Honor</i>	Telemundo	Sony Pictures Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/drama	75	Prime Time	4.45	21.89
2	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 9</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/narcodrama	94	Prime time	3.65	16.08
3	<i>Vuelve a Mi</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo Studios	Telenovela/melodrama	34*	Prime time	3.62	14.29
4	<i>Sed de Venganza</i>	Telemundo	Telemundo	Telenovela/melodrama	34**	Prime time	2.56	11.04
5	<i>Casados con Hijos</i>	Univision	Sony Pictures	Series/Comedy	4	Prime time	9.8	23.7
Foreign scripts: 4				National scripts: 1				

Source: Nielsen – U.S.

(\*) The broadcasting started in 2023 and continued in 2024

(\*\*) The broadcasting did not finish in 2024, and continued in 2025

*Casados con Hijos* was partially distributed through the Vix platform

Among domestic productions, the new addition is that the melodrama *El Conde: Amor y Honor*, starring Fernando Colunga, took first place among domestic productions. For the first time, *El Señor de los Cielos* did not occupy first place; instead, its ninth season became the second most-watched domestic production. The Telemundo production *Vuelve a Mi* did not make the 2023 list, but in 2024 with its final 30 episodes earned it a spot at number 10 most watched year’s list.

TABLE 6: Profile of the audience of the ten most watched: gender and age

Titles		Channel	Gender %	
			Women	Men
1	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	Univision	66	34
2	<i>El Gallo de Oro</i>	Univision	69	31
3	<i>El Conde: Amor y Honor</i>	Telemundo	65	35
4	<i>El Amor no Tiene Receta</i>	Univision	71	29
5	<i>Vencer la Culpa</i>	Univision	65	35
6	<i>Tu Vida es mi Vida</i>	Univision	67	33
7	<i>La Historia de Juana</i>	Univision	65	35
8	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 9</i>	Telemundo	54	46
9	<i>Fugitivas</i>	Univision	65	35
10	<i>Vuelve a Mi</i>	Telemundo	63	37

Title		Age cohort %						
		02-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-49	50-54	55-+
1	<i>Minas de Pasión</i>	6	4	4	6	19	11	51
2	<i>Gallo de Oro</i>	4	4	3	5	19	12	54
3	<i>El Conde: Amor y Honor</i>	3	2	4	5	15	11	60
4	<i>El Amor no Tiene Receta</i>	5	4	3	6	20	11	52
5	<i>Vencer la Culpa</i>	5	4	4	6	20	11	50
6	<i>Tu Vida es mi Vida</i>	4	4	4	5	19	10	53
7	<i>La Historia de Juana</i>	4	6	5	6	21	11	47
8	<i>El Señor de los Cielos 9</i>	5	4	5	7	23	12	43
9	<i>Fugitivas</i>	3	6	5	7	22	12	45
10	<i>Vuelve a Mi</i>	4	3	4	7	19	10	53

Source: Nielsen Obitel U.S.

The demographic profile by gender makes it very clear that the female segment dominates the audience numbers. As in 2023, in 2024 the list shows that the average audience of the top 10 most-watched shows sees an average of 65% female viewers, with only 35% male viewers. This contrasts with the audience trends over the years shown by narco-novela titles, as exemplified by the ninth season of *El Señor de los Cielos*, with 54% female viewers and 46% male viewers.

In the segmentation of audiences by age, there is a sustained growth trend in audiences of those over 50. In 2024, the percentage of audiences aged 50 and over grew, with 64% of the top 10 most-watched list, well above the 54% of audiences aged 50 and over in 2023. In summary, the demographics of fiction are predominantly women, at 65%, and those over 50 years old (50-54 and 55+) at 62%.

### **3. VoD Monitoring 2024**

#### **3.1 VoD platform market in 2024**

The SVoD platform market continues to grow robustly, revealing a crowded market with large corporations engaged in fierce competition for audiences. This market includes both large media conglomerates and the tech giants of the Silicon Valley industry, which have spearheaded the media and industrial disruption we are experiencing. In 2024, new subscriptions exceed cancellations, with 173 million new subscriptions versus 147.8 million cancellations (Karrer, n.d.). In terms of SVoD service penetration per household in the United States in 2024, Netflix and Amazon Prime were the most present services with 59% and 58% of households respectively, followed by Hulu with 39%, Disney+ 31%, Peacock 28%, Paramount 25%, Max 24%, AppleTV 16%, ESPN 14%, Discovery+ 8%, Starz 6%, Other SVoD 5%, Crunchyroll 4%, BET+ 4%, MGM 2%, and Vix 1% (Dixon, 2025). While Vix already shows a presence with 1%, it is still very marginal if we take into account that the Latino population represents 20% of the population in the US.

#### **3.2. Local VoD platforms offering in 2024 (national, regional within the country)**

According to the S&P Global Market Intelligence Kagan's US Consumer Insights surveys, preferences in content consumption in distributed SVoD are shown in which the greatest demand was for Original TV Series, followed by Other Originals, followed by Recent Movies, On-Air TV Series, Past TV Series, Old Movies, Live Sports, and others (Bacon, 2024). Although the content offered is Original TV Series, in 2024 there was a decrease in its preference compared to 2023. For example, on Netflix the preference for Netflix Original TV in 2023 was 51%, dropping to 30% in 2024. Although in the third place of preference, Recent Movies was the category that increased the most from 2023 to 2024, from 17% to 21% (Bacon, 2024).

#### **3.3. VoD analysis in 2024: national premiere fiction and coproductions**

The Hispanic United States presents an exceptional case in the SVoD sector, one that has been consistent for several years. On the one hand, SVoD platforms in the US have become the most important center for fiction production for platforms globally. On the other hand, these platforms seem to find no incentive to produce Spanish-language content in the U.S. for their Hispanic population. Similarly, the platforms show a lack of interest in productions aimed at the English-speaking Latino population. This is explained by the strategy of US platforms to produce content from Latin America that will later return to the US catalog. Thus, the multi-million dollar investment in content generation in Latin America has as its primary market the country in the region where the production is commissioned (mainly Argentina,

Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico), and as its secondary market, the Latino population in the US.

TABLE 7. National fictions and coproductions on VoD platforms in 2024

US NATIONAL PREMIERE TITLES	
<b>Netflix – N° national titles</b> 1. <i>Griselda</i> (Biopic - Series)	<b>Disney+ – N° titles</b> 12. <i>La Partitura Secreta</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.) 13. <i>Ayla y los Mirror</i> (series - Spain/U.S.) 14. <i>Invisible</i> (series – Spain/U.S.)
<b>COPRODUCTIONS</b>	
<b>Netflix – N° titles</b> 1. <i>Bandidos</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.) 2. <i>Luz: The Light of the Heart</i> (series – Brazil/U.S.)  <b>Amazon – N° titles</b> 3. <i>Porno y Helado</i> (series – Argentina-U.S.) 4. <i>Tengo que Morir Todas las Noches</i> (series - Mexico/U.S.) 5. <i>Nadie nos va a Extrañar</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.)  <b>Max – N° titles</b> 6. <i>Astronauta</i> (mini series – Brazil/U.S.) 7. <i>Desde el Puente Hasta Aquí</i> (series - Brazil/U.S.) 8. <i>Juventud Dividida</i> (series – Brazil/U.S.) 9. <i>Belleza Fatal</i> (telenovela, Brazil/U.S.)  <b>AppleTV – N° titles</b> 10. <i>Las Azules</i> (mini series – Mexico/U.S.) 11. <i>Familia de Medianoche</i> (series - Mexico/U.S.)	<b>Star+ – N° titles</b> 15. <i>Desejos S.A.</i> (anthology – Brazil/U.S.) 16. <i>Fabricantes de Ovnis</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.)  <b>Hulu – N° titles</b> 17. <i>La Maquina</i> (mini series – Mexico-U.S.) 18. <i>El Encargado 3</i> (series - Argentina/U.S.) 19. <i>La Mujer que Limpia</i> (series – Argentina/U.S.)  <b>Vix – N° titles</b> 20. <i>Paraíso Blanco</i> (series – Colombia/U.S.) 21. <i>El Gallo de Oro 2</i> (series - Mexico/U.S.) 22. <i>El Extrano Retorno de Diana Salazar</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.) 23. <i>Juegos Interrumpidos</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.) 24. <i>Consuelo</i> (series - Mexico/U.S.) 25. <i>Profe Infiltrado</i> (series – Mexico/U.S.)
<b>National total: 1</b>	<b>Total co-productions: 25</b>

Fuente: Obitel EE.UU.

3.4. Narrative features of VoD in 2024

Following proven formulas, it’s interesting that the only Latino production across all platforms was a Spanish- and English-language miniseries following the life of a notorious drug trafficker: *Griselda*. A production starring Sofia Vergara herself, who has gained worldwide renown through her recurrent use of stereotypes in her narratives. This year, Max decided to make its first telenovela, *Belleza Fatal*, for streaming,

with the help of Brazilian producer Coração da Selva. This will be the second time that a US SVoD platform ventures into the production of a telenovela without the involvement of a broadcaster. The first was Netflix's *Donde Hubo Fuego* with Argos in 2022. It's important to remember that Netflix and Amazon have worked on telenovelas involving their first over-the-air distribution with Televisa, Univisión, and Telemundo. It should be noted that Max's commitment to this telenovela is supported by the traction it could have in the Brazilian domestic market. In contrast, the Vix platform, owned by TelevisaUnivision, emphasizes its strategy of producing telenovelas for airtime, and series and miniseries for its SVoD platform. This division of labor and distribution in relation to formats has been evident in the original production decisions for platforms, in contrast to broadcast networks.

#### 4. Interactivity and audience participation

To highlight audience engagement and interactivity, we will focus on the Telemundo telenovela *El Conde: Amor y Honor*, a fictional serial that ranked first in national releases and was the third most-watched of 2024. *El Conde: Amor y Honor* is a Sony Pictures Televisión production for Telemundo, based on the classic Alexandre Dumas novel *The Count of Monte Cristo*. In 2022, the cast of the telenovela was announced through the NBCUniversal Village website, and filming took place in Mexico from June to October 2022. *El Conde* premiered on Telemundo on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2024, and its final episode aired on October 21st. The telenovela garnered strong ratings by becoming popular with the public, according to Nielsen data, but also due to audience conversations about the story on social media.

##### 4.1. Social interactivity

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, through its press releases, Telemundo published previews of the upcoming telenovela premiere. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, it launched another press release to promote the telenovela's premiere, highlighting Fernando Colunga's participation as the protagonist of the new story. This information was echoed in various news publications. This was accompanied by a full-fledged institutional promotion by Telemundo through social media.

On Facebook, 24,000 posts with the hashtag #elconde can be seen, along with 72 promotional posts from Telemundo for #elcondeamorygloria. On its YouTube channel, Telemundo Novelas, with 11.6 million subscribers, the network has the 75 episodes of the telenovela in condensed 15-minute installments. Telemundo also has a telenovela channel called Telemundo in English. This channel offers all 74 episodes of the telenovela, with videos of around 15 minutes featuring English subtitles. Telemundo launched a promotional campaign for the telenovela on Instagram,

including 237 posts from May 15<sup>th</sup> to October 21<sup>st</sup>. This included a pre-premiere promotion that began with four posts in May, which intensified in June with a promotion based primarily on the A-list cast, with daily posts that amounted to 32 posts in June. This campaign intensified in late June with three or four posts each day. Beginning with its premiere in July, Telemundo made 68 posts during that month, followed by 83 in August, 42 in September, and 36 in October.

#### 4.2. Social Participation

If we focus on Telemundo's Instagram strategy, from the outset, it centered itself on the importance of actors from the *Star System* of telenovelas, such as Fernando Colunga, Chantal Andere, Sergio Sendel, Helena Rojo, Víctor García, Ana Brenda Contreras, and Marjorie Souza. To this end, actors were promoted daily, actor by actor, so the comments focused on the visibility of these actors through the remarks of their fans. In this sense, comments were made about their physique, beauty, and handsomeness, but also about their acting capacities. One of the elements that emerged was criticism of their age, framed within a romantic narrative, and with it, the demand that new actors not be given the opportunity. The strategy later focused on the discussion of the telenovela's plot, where the audience commented on specific points about the characters or recent events in the plot. It's important to note that a constant theme in the comments was how much they enjoyed the telenovela, and how they considered it to be a very good production, doing an excellent job on the setting, as well as discussing the display of the acting talents of the protagonists. However, while this social network provides a measure of the enthusiasm the telenovela generates, it is very limited to what the network proposes as a topic of conversation.

If we focus our attention on YouTube, the audiences' agency can be seen a little more clearly; a search on the social network indicates that under the hashtag #elcondeamoryhonor there are 488 videos in around 50 channels. A list of the creators of these videos reveals 45 channels/content creators under the hashtag #elcondeamoryhonor, ranging from 300 to 50,000 subscribers. Most of them simply present trailers, and of the few that present more original content, [@juraci\\_li](#) stands out with 95,000 subscribers, which provides news coverage of the actors, behind-the-scenes footage, and Telemundo promotions. [CHULIS VIRAL](#), with 32.8 thousand subscribers, provides a kind of entertainment journalism. In this context, we are offered a summary of the plot, but also a characterization of the characters. Or [Carlita Laime](#), with 4.09 thousand subscribers, a channel dedicated to Fernando Colunga, in which his scenes are set to music and romantic montages are made.

## 5. Highlights of the year

Although Univision's serialized fiction series dominates the list of the 10 most-watched fiction programs in 2024, the highlight of this year is undoubtedly the fact that Telemundo won the ratings war against Univision in audiences over 2 years old. This historic achievement for Telemundo was not achieved with fiction, but with reality TV programs, such as *La Casa de los Famosos*, *Exatlón*, *La Isla*, and *Los 50*. This underscores the sustained presence of reality TV competition programs that have successfully established themselves in the prime-time schedule. Live sporting events continue to generate high viewership numbers, as do major events such as award ceremonies, musical performances, and beauty pageants.

Some important developments in the fictional programming included the removal of the telenovela *Vino el Amor* from prime time on Univision, and replacing it with *La Rosa de Guadalupe*. The possibility of a telenovela failing to perform has already occurred in previous years, but the inclusion of the anthology-unitary series *La Rosa de Guadalupe* only underscores the historical relevance of this unitary series and how its format allows it to be flexibly placed within the programming. Another important development was the inclusion of both seasons of the Vix series *El Gallo de Oro* in the broadcast schedule but tied together as if they were a continuous serial.

## 6. Topic of the year: Postcoloniality: race/ethnicity and otherness in television fiction

Television has played a fundamental role in the modernization process of Ibero-America since the 1950s. Fiction, and telenovelas in particular, have been a key vehicle for this process, in which Nation-States, with television corporations, have sought to establish certain forms of narratives, certain types of social interaction, and the portrayal of lifestyles considered desirable within the region's modernizing project as hegemonic (Martin-Barbero, 1993). Telenovelas, in particular, become textual spaces with which audiences interact, and at the same time, they incorporate a vision of the nation and the desirable citizen behavior, which also has been constructed based on specific vectors of identity (race, social class, gender and sexual orientation). Within this framework, fiction also establishes the characteristics of the type of citizen that this modernizing project aspired to. What is represented in fiction became a guide to ideal citizenship for the social groups that comprise the nation's social space (Lewkowickz, 2011). In this sense, the representation of this ideal citizenship will also be defined by the presence or absence of certain social groups and the specific way in which their lifestyles are incorporated into the narrative. From very early on, commercial private television was established as the



television model to be developed, closely linked to large American business capital and technology (Sinclair, 1999). This decision also led to a significant structuring of the fiction offering and its content through the system of sponsors and advertising, which was significantly influenced by the presence of large American corporations (Sinclair, 2005). This dual condition of establishing fiction, on the one hand, to strengthen the nation's modernization process and, on the other hand, doing so based on the dynamics and aspirations of the capitalist system through its transnational corporations, defined a very specific approach to the visibility of certain ethnic or racial groups as aspirational, and the elimination of other groups or their presentation as "deficient."

The representational dynamics we find on television did not originate with it, but are, in many cases, a reflection of a historical social trajectory that persists from colonial times to the present day. Postcolonial studies and decolonization efforts are consistently exposing the sediments of power structures established many centuries ago, but persistent in our modern societies.

The postcolonial reality in Latin America reflects the social hierarchies established during the colonial period as a mechanism for securing economic and political power through the notion of race as a defining category, all of this from a Eurocentric perspective in which the white race is placed at the center of the conception of the development of modernity. This is the basis on which, throughout Latin America, the social relations that differentiated the different racial or ethnic groups, primarily whites, indigenous people, and Afro-descendants, were established (Mignolo, 2005).

Guadalupe Nettel (2021) reminds us that colonial dynamics continue in the hands of their descendants and cultural heirs. Indigenous peoples have been largely represented through folklore, a strategy that places them in a different timeframe and degrades them. This reminds us that colonization has been called progress and modernity, and that countless atrocities have been committed in its name. As Muñoz (2021) reminds us, colonialism was based on the denial of the existence of entire populations, and on colonizers positioning themselves as the "universal 'I' that can and should be replicated as the sole guarantor of development" (2021, p. 7). Therefore, the analysis proposed in this section addresses citizenship through representation, in which the sediments of coloniality are expressed through the different vectors that make up identity and in the recognition of its intersectionality. It will be understood as the configuration of social and cultural power as a reflection of the ideal citizen of the modern nation.



To achieve this goal, a study was conducted of the ten most-watched fiction programs of 2024 on Spanish-language television in the United States.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that three of these titles are Telemundo productions and seven are Televisa-Univision productions, but all were made in Mexico, which significantly permeates the racial, ethnic, and national spectrum of the Latino actors, mostly Mexican, and their characters. The analysis focused on studying the racial and social class composition of the characters, how they develop from an intersectional perspective, and the narratives or environments in which they acquire visibility in the fiction.

I. Casting Strategy: Race/Ethnicity and Social Class

II. Character Development: Heroes and Villains

III. Methods of Including Different Social Groups

A first approach to casting strategies will have to do with two fundamental initial decisions, as they are related to seemingly visible factors: the characters' characteristics and the way they are represented as a performance of race, ethnicity, or social class. Given that the racial definition of an actor or their character is largely a social construction, in the context of a racially mixed nation, the decision for this reading depends on how the actor-character's appearance is interpreted, in relation to the combination of their skin color and facial phenotype, in some cases also partly determined by the intentionality of makeup, hairstyle, and hair dye, to "whiten" or "darken." In this context, white Latino and mestizo actors with light skin can be read as white. Meanwhile, a dark-skinned character with an Indigenous, Afro-Latino, or East Asian phenotype does not qualify for this reading of what constitutes whiteness.

Regarding the way social class is formed within these fictions, there are two elements inherent to the social logic of this stratification. On the one hand, it establishes and reinforces the idea of a meritocratic state of social logic, according to which those who work, strive, and possess the necessary talent and discipline achieve a high social status. It is thus assumed that, with the exception of wealth obtained through crime or corruption, social position is earned and, if inherited, must be maintained through hard work and discipline. On the other hand, it offers a racialized image of those who occupy and have occupied spheres of power and wealth, rooted in a kind of common sense of the state of affairs. This element clearly shows both the reality and the perception of the sediments of "colonial power," which remain in force even in the postcolonial period.

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<sup>2</sup> This analysis is based on the first 30 episodes from each of the ten most watched fiction. In these episodes the structure of the narrative is established, along with the positionality and morals stature of each character.

## 6.1 Casting strategy

In this section, we will have to identify the trends shown in fiction in terms of the selection of talent from different racial groups and their social class position, in relation to their place of importance as: leading couple, main cast, secondary or tertiary characters.

### *Leading couple: race/ethnicity and social class*

Establishing that there is a clear leading couple in nine fictions, we are talking about 18 characters and the actors who played them. Of these, 15 were white Latino actors and three were light-skinned actors, meaning that these actors can pass as white and that none of the leading couples are read as brown, Indigenous, or Afro-Latino. The social class affiliation of the leading couples, meanwhile, reveals that seven white Latino characters, one of light-skinned, belong to the upper class, while seven white Latino characters and two light-skinned characters belong to the middle, lower-middle, and lower classes, and only one very poor character is white. This means that of the leading couples who are white Latino or light-skinned, eight characters are rich, nine are from the lower class, and one is in extreme poverty. This class division defines the scenario in which the ten lower-class characters, read as white, can speak and are granted citizenship, not by class but by race. For the most part, these characters, given the narrative's context, are poised to climb up the social ladder and escape their economic situation. They are honest, hardworking, and represent what is assumed to be modern rationality. Therefore, by the end of the fictions, they will enter a different upper or upper-middle class. They will become the ideal dream and the example the audience should follow for possible future success.

### *Main Cast*

Following the cast hierarchy established for each fiction on its website, the main cast of the 10 most-watched fictions comprises an average of 9 to 10 characters. Looking at the total cast of these fictions, we're talking about 95 characters. Of these, 72 actors are white Latinos, 12 are light-skinned, and 12 are brown-skinned. This means that 84 of the 96 main supporting characters can be interpreted as white, representing 89% of the total main cast. Regarding their social class status, white upper- and upper-middle-class characters represent 53%, while white middle- and lower-class characters represent 47%. Looking at the social class of white or light-skinned Latino characters, the overrepresentation is greater, with 58% being upper- and upper-middle-class and 42% being middle- and lower-class. In the case of the 10 dark-skinned characters, only 10% are upper class, while 90% are middle and lower class.

## 6.2 Secondary Characters

In the universe of supporting characters, the racial and ethnic spectrum offers little diversity. Of the 204 supporting characters counted, 122 were white Latinos, 43 were light-skinned, 35 were brown-skinned, one was dark-skinned, two Indigenous, and one was Afro-Latino. This means that 165 of the 204 characters can be interpreted as white, representing 80% of these characters. Among the inclusion of characters of color, two Indigenous and one Afro-Latino stand out, representing only 1.5% of the total supporting characters.

Regarding their social class, 45% of the white characters are upper- and upper-middle class, 52% are middle- and lower-class, and 3% are undefined. Meanwhile, among the spectrum of light-skinned mestizo people, only 19% are upper-class, 77% are middle- and lower-class, and 4% are undefined. Regarding dark-skinned characters, the ratio is more notable, with only 11% being upper class, and 77% being middle and lower class. The only one dark skinned supporting character is lower class, which is 100%

### *Tertiary characters*

Conducting a quantitative class inventory of tertiary characters is beyond the scope of this study. However, the relationship between race/ethnicity and social stratum is clearly illustrated by the geographies and specific social spaces where these characters have the opportunity to gain visibility. These spaces are also highly racialized given the types of characters shown in the context of modern urban spaces, exemplified by buildings such as corporate spaces. There, white or light-skinned Latino characters, such as business owners, senior executives, and professionals, coexist and are visible in common spaces such as offices, conference rooms, and meeting rooms, where these characters are assumed to be middle, upper-middle, or upper class. In contrast, characters with dark skin, dark brown skin, or indigenous features, although also found in both little towns and the city, are visible in the neighborhood, the market, the factory, the mine, the municipal police offices, the corner store, the church, and the town festivals and ceremonies. They are mostly brown-skinned people who have no voice, yet inhabit these spaces where they largely identify as humble, lower-class people. It's worth noting that at the same time, the spaces that give greater visibility to brown-skinned people are the spaces of criminality, criminal organizations, drug dealers, their drug labs in the city or the jungle, and prisons.

### 6.3 Character development

#### *Heroes*

First, the opportunity to develop a multidimensional narrative is granted to the cast with the most screen time, in this case the lead couple. Considering that approximately 90% of the leading couples are white Latinos and/or light-skinned, they have the opportunity to develop a complex subjectivity, and in this case, become an example of the ideal citizen proposed by fiction. The leading couples are heroic, who may come from high or low strata, but all with a path to success and meritocratic compensation for access to professional fulfillment or an upper class. Here, the heroes are presented as representatives of modern rationality, meritocratic effort, are the moral balance of the story, and, in this case, are almost entirely white characters.

#### *Villains (complex characters), and the bad ones (one-dimensional characters)*

Villains are just as important as the main characters to the plot's development. The characterization of villains, and their henchmen, builds characters possessing a keen intelligence and strategic capacity that becomes more evident. For the purposes of recognizing these characters within the analysis, we will consider two general levels of villainy: "Complex Villains" and "One-Dimensional Villains." For differentiation, we will simply call the latter "Bad Characters." Villains (complex characters) are the masterminds behind a whole series of facade schemes that hide gruesome and disturbing realities. In the 10 fictions, there are 18 villains who stand out in leading roles; of these, 15 are white Latinos and only three are brown-skinned.<sup>3</sup> We see the villains' evil in full action, as they, as part of the main cast, navigate a whole series of situations in which they must appear as decent people. Their whiteness gives them the license to go unchallenged at first glance. Of the three complex, dark-skinned villains, two—Vicente García in *El Conde* and Mauro Nicoliti in *El Amor no Tiene Receta*—come from humble origins and become wealthy thanks to corruption and crime, and are able to navigate these spaces thanks to their nouveau riche status, in different environments. Meanwhile, the third, El Cabo, a major drug trafficker and arch-enemy of Aurelio in *El Señor de los Cielos*, despite living in luxury, cannot navigate various spaces as freely due to his status as a criminal, a foreigner, a Colombian in Mexico, and a racialized character of color.

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<sup>3</sup> The most important villains of the 10 fictions are Roberta Castro "The Boss" (*Minas de Pasión*), Lorenzo Benavides (*El Gallo de Oro*), Gerardo Villarreal, Josefina Zambrano, Vicente García (*El Conde*), Ginebra Nicoliti and Mauro Nicoliti (*El Amor no Tiene Receta*), Leandro (*Vencer la Culpa*), Natalia Ferrer, Rolando Molina, Malena (*Tu Vida es mi Vida*), Rogelio Fuenmayor and Camila Montes (*La Historia de Juana*), El Cabo, Belem San Roman and Ricardo Almenar (*El Señor de los Cielos* 9), Braulio Zepeda and Fausto Meléndez (*Vuelve a Mi*).

For their part, the “bad guys” (one-dimensional characters) are the necessary tools for the complex villains to carry out their plans, thanks to the unconditional support they provide as thugs and henchmen in their felonies. Most of these bad guys are corrupt, thieves, counterfeiters, gunmen, and hired killers. A first look at the 16 one-dimensional bad guys key to the plot reveals that fourteen of them are brown-skinned, one is Asian, and one is white. Interestingly, 15 of the 16 bad guys or one-dimensional characters are people of color, or 94% of them. It’s important to remember that these characters don’t think for themselves, but rather follow orders from higher powers (the villains), partly due to an assumed lack of intellectual complexity or because their racial makeup doesn’t allow them to navigate all spheres as white characters can. Although it’s worth noting that even in criminal circles in these fictions, there are power hierarchies that involve the racialization of characters. The exception to the rule will be Patricio, a young blond white man, an executive assistant, in *Minas de Pasión*, who, given his whiteness, will be able to navigate the corporate world and carry out the misdeeds that Roberta, the villain, requests of him.

#### 6.4 Modalities of inclusion

Here we pause to reflect on the strategies of inclusion or invisibility of different groups –such as Indigenous peoples, Afro-Latinos, and the LGBTQ community, — and their methods of inclusion from an intersectional perspective.

##### *Indigenous populations*

Indigenous peoples found visibility in four of the 10 fictions: *Vuelve a Mi*, *El Gallo de Oro*, *El Señor de los Cielos* 9, and *El Conde*. The inclusion of Indigenous groups in fiction occurs in three specific ways: first, as elements of popular culture but present only through folklore; second, as characters linked to a supernatural world, inheritors of the knowledge of their ancestors (shamans or healers); and third, as a population stuck in the past, disconnected from the contemporary world. In *Vuelve a Mi*, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples or all things Indigenous occurs through the dimension of folklore. The first episode of the telenovela begins in the town square in Ciudad Juárez, where, in the midst of a festival, we see a group of dancers performing an Indigenous dance. These groups of dancers showcase a tradition and revive a custom that has been reified and stuck in the past, for popular enjoyment. Nuria and her son dance and got lost among the people in the collective feeling that dance, music, and the popular festival provide. This will define the setting: the square where the boy will be kidnapped. In the final chapter, in the final minutes, when she reunites with her son, the boy recalls those moments of happiness, when the dancers provided a sense of collective belonging, and these moments are crucial for the boy to remember everything that happened. It is important to note that this

group represents the concept of indigenous, without necessarily being indigenous themselves, and, as dancers we do not know anything about them, they have no voice. Their function in the plot purely symbolic. Thus, the narrative reinforces the traditions and customs of the past, in this case the indigenous, as reified foundations in an official identity discourse, since these indigenous people have no voice, agency, or history.

*El Gallo de Oro* is a fiction series set in a rural setting in a small town. This town is predominantly inhabited by a humble peasant population, who populate every scene in the public sphere: the plaza, the market, the festival, the church. The town's identity is marked as peasant, and no indigenous identity trait is seen in language, clothing, or customs. However, in this context, indigenous visibility is represented through a single character: the witch doctor, the shaman. This is the shaman whom the series' protagonist, La Caponera, visits to be cleansed through a series of magical-religious rituals based on indigenous knowledge and traditions. It is important to emphasize the connection established between magical-religious knowledge, the past, and the indigenous.

In *El Señor de los Cielos* 9, the inclusion of indigenous people occurs in the context of La Felina's incursion into the Amazonian territories of Leticia in Colombia. Entering the jungle by river, the group is attacked by a group of indigenous men, who resemble figures from the past. The group, wearing loincloths, feathers, and painted faces –as if in a war ritual –attack with blowguns to defeat their enemies and throw darts. The idea of depicting a tribe in the Amazonian habitat could be a breakthrough in itself; however, in this case, their presence is merely decorative. Despite their large group, we quickly learn that they are only the tools of a heavily armed group of drug traffickers. From there, we see these indigenous people standing in formation, not speaking. There is no activity related to everyday life; they are merely soldiers kidnapped and/or recruited by drug crime in the jungle. Their silence only objectifies them and exposes them as relics of a past that, like archaeological ruins, is only there for the curious gaze.

Finally, in *El Conde: Amor y Honor*, a distinctly indigenous healer is included, who uses her knowledge of herbal medicine to make potions or remedies that can cure or kill those who use them. In this sense, the healer anchors her usefulness in an inherited knowledge of the herbal wisdom of her ancestors, where medicine, magic, and witchcraft are indistinctly intertwined. Unlike the Shaman in *El Gallo de Oro*, the healer in *El Conde* links her knowledge to a financial utility, such as a business, from which she profits by first serving the villain Doña Josefina Zambrano, only to abandon her and go serve the Count, for a substantial sum of money. Unlike previous representations, this character has a voice and agency, situated in the re-



alities of the present. Thus, the healer, on the one hand, is tied to knowledge of the past, but, on the other hand, displays a rationality of entrepreneurial and capitalist convenience motivated by money.

#### *Afro-descendants*

The most significant element is the almost total absence of Afro-descendant characters. Their presence only occurs in two fiction series: *El Señor de los Cielos* 9 and *El Conde*. In *El Señor de los Cielos* 9, the Afro-descendant presence occurs in the context of criminal circles. On many occasions, the Afro-descendant presence has occurred in the context of Colombian or Venezuelan drug trafficking groups. Already in season 7 of the series, an Afro-Colombian woman and her brother are included as collaborators of the Colombian drug trafficker, El Cabo. In this season, the Afro-descendant is a witch who performs cures, but at the same time is sexualized as the object of El Cabo's sexual passion. Particularly in this season, Afro-descendants appear in the Spanish Canary Islands, as lieutenants of local drug traffickers. One exceptional moment occurs in a scene of a meeting between members of the DEA and their team in Mexico, where an African American can be seen in the foreground. None of the Afro-descendant characters this season have a voice, agency, or story.

An exceptional case is Violeta's story in *El Conde*. Violeta is an actress full of dreams who marries Vicente García, a villain who makes his fortune through crime and corruption. Violeta is a character who inspires empathy, due to her warmth and charisma, and we learn to hope that she will be able to cast off the chains that bind her to a criminal whose business dealings she wasn't aware of. However, on the one hand, Violeta is sexualized or tropicalized by initially presenting her as a prey to her own sexual desire, which, despite being a married woman, leads her to seek sex with Antonio Rodríguez. This sexualization is problematic because in the telenovela, sexualization and uncontrollable sex are established as characteristics of villains like Josefina, Antonio himself, and even her own husband, Vicente García. But Violeta isn't a villain; in fact, her character development not only humanizes her but also presents her as a somewhat naive and even endearing character. So, the only explanation for her behavior could be linked to the fact that she's an artist, but it seems more rooted in the dynamics of sexualization that Afro-Latina characters have experienced in American film and television. It's important to remember that this production is from Sony and Telemundo, American corporations. On the other hand, Violeta, as an Afro-descendant, is identified as a Cuban immigrant, not a Mexican. This is very significant, since the only Afro-descendant character in a plot set in Mexico isn't Mexican, which continues the process of erasing or rendering invisible the Afro-Mexican presence.

### *LGBTQ Community: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation*

Six of the fictions incorporate characters or narratives of LGBTQ gender identity and sexual diversity, with subplots involving two gay couples, one couple gay/bisexual, one lesbian couple, two trans women, and single bisexual man and one single gay man. What is most significant about this inclusion is that out of these 13 characters 11 of these LGBTQ characters are white Latinos, and only one brown skinned gay man, and a light skin mestiza trans woman. This reinforces that the only acceptable avenue for visibility in fiction is through the humanity that comes with being white and/or light-skinned. It is important to underscore the absence of the LGBTQ community of color. Furthermore, the other modality that seems to bring visibility to these characters is class. All of the characters come from upper classes or are in relationships with upper-class partners, which provides them with a meritocratic path to full citizenship. This relationship of class difference in these subplots mirrors the way class relations operate within the leading couples. In this sense, the space occupied by these upper-class characters brings with it different avenues for interpretation. On the one hand, these characters will prove themselves worthy, in an equally heroic journey in which class access in the meritocratic sense is their reward. But on the other hand, there is the preconception that class offers education and, with it, spaces of tolerance, so a gay or lesbian couple could flourish and navigate more effectively in wealthy class circles.

### **6.5 Brief conclusions**

The analysis finds a strong correlation between racial profiling, class affiliation, visibility, and inclusion in the narrative. There is an extreme overrepresentation of white or light-skinned talent or characters at all levels of leading and supporting roles. There is an almost direct connection between being white and belonging to an upper class, or a path to it through meritocratic work throughout the plot. There is a direct connection between brown characters and their position in the lower and lower middle classes. While the villains (complex characters) in the stories are predominantly white, as they are conceived as masterminds, the bad guys (one-dimensional characters) who have a lower rank are predominantly brown. The indigenous population is objectified as part of the past, or connected to it, and mostly represented as tradition and folklore. The Afro-Latino population is erased, and when made visible, it is mostly as secondary characters in criminal or prison circles. The LGBTQ community has increased its visibility, but this is only possible because of its representation as a white population connected to or with access to the upper classes. Representation of the brown, Indigenous, or Afro-Latinx LGBTQ community simply doesn't exist in these fictions.



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