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#QuedateEnCasa

How did the Argentine and Spanish TV Industries React to the Outbreak of the COVID Pandemic in 2020?

Abstract

In March 2020, when the coronavirus pandemic hit the world, television industries had to rapidly adapt to the circumstances. While a substantial number of people were able to spend more time in front of their TVs, the executives had to make choices: should they tell stories about what was going on or should they try to create escapism? This article compares the responses given to these challenging times by the Argentine and Spanish television industries. Whereas both countries have long-standing cultural and economic ties, they differed in the length of their respective lockdowns, and this had an impact on the televisual answer to the crisis. In the case of Spain, commercial and public broadcasters and video-on-demand platforms produced half a dozen fiction series about the lockdown, focusing on the consequences of isolation and new social habits brought about by it. On the entertainment side, gossip talk-show *Sálvame* started to include public-service content in a remarkable transformation. Argentine free-to-air channels decided to re-run old *telenovelas* and focus on game and cooking adaptations of American and British formats (*Family Feud*, *Masterchef*, *Bake Off*). The public channel made just one online series about the “new normal” that had little success. By combining production studies with textual analysis, we hope to shed light on the responses given to the coronavirus crisis in two of the most important TV industries of the Spanish-speaking world on both sides of the Atlantic.

Keywords

COVID-19, pandemic, media industries, television industry, Spanish TV, Argentine TV

Introduction

March 2020 was a watershed moment in recent history. It was the time when the world seemed to pause, in fear of an unknown virus and in the context of an hypermediated reality. As the outside world became a threat to public and personal safety, millions of people stayed home due to government regulations. This forced domesticity changed everyday life in society: houses and apartments became the place for working, studying, and socializing, accelerating the adoption of “smart home” technologies, but people also turned back to their TV systems. Whereas more people were slouching through their sofas to watch audio-visual content, TV executives faced the challenge of producing topical shows with the restrictions imposed to every sector of the economy. In this article, we will focus on the responses given on both sides of the Atlantic by the Spanish and Argentine television systems during 2020.

The aim of this article is to trace a comparison between two Spanish-speaking television industries that have a shared heritage and yet different scales of production. Our analysis about these two countries, one situated in the very south of Latin America and the other one in Southern Europe, will shed new lights on the dynamics of contemporary television in times of crisis. When the events unfolded, both Argentina and Spain were governed by a center-left coalition (Frente de Todos in the former, PSOE and Unidas Podemos in the latter). Both governments used the catchphrase and hashtag #QuedateEnCasa (#StayHome) to promote the benefits of lockdown to prevent a public health catastrophe. With different accents of the same language (in Spain there is a stress on the E of *Quéd*ate, whereas in Argentina the stress is on the pronunciation of the A) on two opposite sides of the world, the TV executives faced the same questions: what do people want to watch during lockdown? A ceaseless flow of news? Escapist entertainment? Fictionalization of the drama which turned their lives upside down? The answers, as we will see, coincided, and differed in major aspects.

The Madrid-Buenos Aires connection

The relationship between Spain and Latin America started back in 1492 with the landing (for some, “a discovery,” for others “an invasion”) of Christopher Columbus into the “New World.” The colonies got their independence from the Kingdom of Spain in the 19th century, and despite tensions and discontinuities, the ties remained tight throughout time. In present times, there are still public differences and controversies about this foundational issue. For instance, Spain celebrates its national holiday on October 12, commemorating Columbus and Hispanic Day, whereas Argentina, since 2010, chooses to call it the Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity, acknowledging the preexisting indigenous communities that were inhabiting the land and as part of the transformations on the local discourses of race and nation.

Despite these historical and rhetorical differences, both countries have a similar population (Argentina has forty-five million and Spain forty-seven million), share a language and belong to common political, industrial and cultural institutions. Approved in the Ibe-

ro-American Summit of 1995, the Ibermedia program is formed by twenty-six countries of Latin America, Spain and Portugal to promote co-productions of feature films and documentaries amongst its members. Over time, it has invested one hundred and eighteen million dollars for three thousand and three hundreds audiovisual projects. In her case study about the star of the Argentine-Spanish films co-produced with the support of Ibermedia, Ricardo Darín, Clara Garavelli points out the recent migration flows that created a sense of “a common, mixed sense of imaginary community” and therefore reenanced the networks between the two audiovisual industries:

The exodus caused by the various dictatorships throughout Latin America during the twentieth century was followed by the incorporation of Spain into the European Union in the mid-1980s, with the subsequent freedom of movement of European citizens. The Argentine crisis of 2001 also played an important part in this equation, bringing hundreds of Argentines to the country.¹⁾

And beyond these institutional frameworks and migration flows, there are some invisible connections between the two industries. After its military dictatorship of 1976–1983, Argentina reprivatized one free-to-air channel in 1984 and the remaining two in 1989. And Spain ended the monopoly of the state-run RTVE in the same decade, first with the start of broadcasting of regional channels, in 1982, and then with the licensing of three commercial channels, in 1989. On both shores, new private players came to the field at the same time. The newly formed Telefe, previously called Canal 11 in Argentina, signed deals with the newly formed Antena 3 of Spain- before and after being controlled by Telefónica de España between 1999 and 2016. And, during the era of the super formats, Spain adapted them first to cater local audiences and later trained their Argentine colleagues to do so in Latin America.²⁾ But the global disparities between the European Union and the Mercosur also must be taken into consideration: whereas Spanish TV industries circulate amongst Europe and enjoy a central position in the Netflix universe,³⁾ Argentina is currently in a more isolated position and has not yet achieved the role of prominent transnational production hub. Yet, from transnational acting influence⁴⁾ to a shared film culture,⁵⁾ the connections between Madrid and Buenos Aires are multiple and provide a rich prospect for future research in the field.

1) Clara Garavelli, “Conquering the Conquerors: Ricardo Darín’s Rise to Stardom in Spanish Film Culture,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 92, no. 4 (2015), 411–428.

2) Ethel Pis Diez and Fausto García, “El desarrollo del mercado audiovisual en Argentina: una industria de exportación,” *Palabra Clave* 17, no. 4 (2014), 1137–1167.

3) Michael L. Wayne and Deborah Castro, “SVOD Global Expansion in Cross-National Comparative Perspective: Netflix in Israel and Spain,” *Television & New Media* 22, no. 8 (2021), 896–913.

4) Carmen Ciller, “The Influence of Argentinian Acting Schools in Spain from the 1980s,” in *Performance and Spanish Film*, eds. Dean Allbritton, Alejandro Melero, and Tom Whittaker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 110–121.

5) Esmeralda Broullón Acuña, “La representación de la emigración, el exilio y el retorno en la cultura visual hispanoargentina contemporánea,” *Naveg@ mérica: Revista Electrónica Editada por la Asociación Española de Americanistas*, no. 7 (2011).

Literature review and methodology

The growing literature review of the effect of COVID-19 on TV presents at least two distinct trends. It is noteworthy how, during the COVID-19 lockdown, television was reinforced in a complementary way in the two main types of consumption identified by the theories of uses and gratifications: information and entertainment.⁶⁾ The first trend explored the effect of the pandemic specifically on TV news, showing a widespread increase in production and consumption during the first months of the pandemic.⁷⁾ News kept citizens attached to the crisis and in touch with the official messages (although resistance existed in the form of alternative media and the rise of fake news⁸⁾). The second trend broadened its focus to other types of programming, such as reality shows, music programmes and drama, in order to frame its consumption within the need for escapism and to find shared experiences during the months of social isolation.⁹⁾ According to Annabell Halfmann and Leonard Reinecke, “media users engage in escapist entertainment use to distance themselves from a stressor (i.e., avoidance coping) and to reduce negative affective states that are associated with the stressor (i.e., emotion focused coping).”¹⁰⁾ Shared viewing through apps or social networks gave binge-watching a more benign meaning during lockdown:

Against an image of the binge watcher as a solitary figure huddled over a smart device, COVID-19 illuminated the profoundly social properties of binge-watching in the streaming era through the inventive ways in which people used technologies and platforms to negotiate new forms of digital intimacy and to find ways to watch together while physically apart.¹¹⁾

With this article, we hope to contribute to the ongoing debates about the effects that the pandemic had in different countries. The impact that the pandemic in Hollywood has been studied by Kate Fortmueller,¹²⁾ whereas John Ellis looked at the ways in which the crisis gave a boost to the life of broadcast television in the United Kingdom.¹³⁾ Nishu Aye-

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- 6) Alan M. Rubin, “Television Uses and Gratifications: The Interactions of Viewing Patterns and Motivations,” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 27, no. 1 (1983), 37–51.
 - 7) Peter Van Aelst et al., “Does a Crisis Change News Habits? A Comparative Study of the Effects of COVID-19 on News Media Use in 17 European Countries,” *Digital Journalism* 9, no. 9 (2021), 1208–1238.
 - 8) Carlos Elías and Daniel Catalan-Matamoros, “Coronavirus in Spain: Fear of ‘official’ fake news boosts WhatsApp and alternative sources,” *Media and Communication* 8, no. 2 (2020), 462–466.
 - 9) Gwendelyn S. Nisbett, Stephanie Schartel Dunn, and Newly Paul, “The Escapism and Social Bond of Pandemic Binge Watching,” in *Persevering During the Pandemic: Stories of Resilience, Creativity, and Connection*, eds. Deborah A. Macey, Michelle Napierski-Pranci, and David Staton (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022), 225–227.
 - 10) Annabell Halfmann and Leonard Reinecke, “Binge-Watching as Case of Escapist Entertainment Use,” *The Oxford Handbook of Entertainment Theory*, eds. Peter Vorderer and Christoph Klimmt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 196.
 - 11) Tanya Horeck, “Netflix and Heal”: The Shifting Meanings of Binge-Watching during the COVID-19 Crisis,” *Film Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (2021), 35–36.
 - 12) Kate Fortmueller, *Hollywood Shutdown: Production, Distribution and Exhibition in the Time of Covid* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021).
 - 13) John Ellis, “Provocations, I: What do we need in a crisis? Broadcast TV!,” *Critical Studies in Television* 15, no. 4 (2020), 393–398.

dee and Sanjay Manocha, in turn, showed that TV was a beneficial force in times of a mental health crisis in India,¹⁴⁾ while Massimiliano Scopelliti, Maria Giuseppina Pacilli and Antonio Aquino explored how exposure to TV news and discussions about COVID-19 and the perception of social initiatives of prevention increased healthier behaviors in the use of public spaces in Italy during the early onset of the pandemic.¹⁵⁾ In Germany, Lothar Mikos showed how the crisis attracted younger audiences to TV news, while at the same time cooking, shopping, dating, and traveling programmes reached higher viewing numbers.¹⁶⁾ In a study conducted in the same country, Tim Wulf, Johannes Breuer and Josephine B. Schmitt analyzed how media-induced nostalgia functioned as a resource to cope with social stress and fear of isolation during the lockdown.¹⁷⁾

In this article, we will use a comparative perspective to trace the similarities and differences of the effect of the COVID-19 crisis in the television industries of two countries belonging to different continents but linked by close cultural ties. We will also analyze the public policies towards the audiovisual industry and, in particular, the filming protocols that strongly conditioned the productivity of the sector alongside the rest of the economy. And we will also use textual analysis tool to examine some specific television texts, especially in the case of the fictions that dramatized the crisis. The time span of the research goes from March 2020, when the global emergency was declared, until December 2020, when the end of the year gave way to a new stage of the crisis. To give clarity to our work and due to space limitations, we decided to focus solely on 2020. It is the year that marked the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, with its forced last-minute adaptations and changes in the television industry. Despite the occasional lockdowns and new variants of the virus, after the start of vaccination programmes in December 2020, citizens gradually began to return to normal life. And the television industry began to strike a balance between speeding up production and following safety measures with COVID protocols. Drama series production resumed in full and entertainment programmes were able to regain their scale and live audience. Except for occasional interruptions due to the quarantine of a host, television in general adapted quickly in 2021 to the “new normal” of COVID-19. Therefore, we will keep our analysis to 2020.

14) Nishu Ayedee and Sanjay Manocha, “Role of media (Television) in creating positive atmosphere in COVID-19 during lockdown in India”, *Asian Journal of Management* 11, no. 4 (2020), 370–378.

15) Massimiliano Scopelliti, Maria Giuseppina Pacilli, and Antonio Aquino, “TV News and COVID-19: Media Influence on Healthy Behavior in Public Spaces,” *International journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 4 (2021), 1879.

16) Lothar Mikos, “Film and Television Production and Consumption in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic — The Case of Germany,” *Baltic Screen Media Review* 8, no. 1 (2020), 30–34.

17) Tim Wulf, Johannes Breuer, and Josephine B. Schmitt, “Escaping the Pandemic Present: The Relationship Between Nostalgic Media Use, Escapism, and Well-being During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” *Psychology of Popular Media* 11, no. 3 (2022), 258–265.

Spain

On March 13, socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez appeared on TV to announce the declaration of a state of alarm the following day. TV channels began to broadcast press conferences and public statements, using reruns of comedy and entertainment programs, forbidding live audiences, and mixing on-site and at-home participants in live content.¹⁸⁾ The state of alarm decree published the following day in the Official State Bulletin included an article stating that public and privately owned media outlets were obliged to insert messages, announcements and communications that the competent delegated authorities, as well as regional and local administrations, deem necessary to broadcast (Article 19 of Royal Decree 463/2020).¹⁹⁾ Pedro Sánchez's presence in the programming would be particularly intense: between the announcement of the State of Alarm and 2 May, when he announced the start of the de-escalation, Pedro Sánchez made 11 television speeches.²⁰⁾ The work of the media workers was recognised as essential in Royal Decree-Law 10/2020 along with health care professionals, policemen and other workers who had to maintain the minimum of social functioning during the hardest weeks of lockdown, during which up to 1000 deaths per day were caused by COVID-19.²¹⁾

At that time, the television industry was in a process of fragmentation between channels due to the implementation of Digital Terrestrial Television, but at the same time of concentration between two large commercial business groups, Atresmedia (Antena 3, La Sexta, Nova, Neox, Mega, Atraserries...) and Mediaset (Telecinco, Cuatro, Factoría de Ficción, Boing, Divinity, Energy...). That year, Telecinco was the most watched channel due to its entertainment and gossip programming full of celebrities, while Antena 3 stuck to a family-oriented programming strategy that would pay off later. Within the public-service media, RTVE (La 1, La 2, Teledeporte, Canal 24H, Clan) remained as a national entity, co-existing with more than a dozen regional public media (TV3 in Catalonia, Canal Sur in Andalusia, TVG in Galicia...). In the pay-TV market, the Movistar+ platform, owned by Telefónica, maintained a hegemonic position, although the market had been altered since 2015 by the arrival of Netflix, which was soon followed by other transnational video-on-demand services such as Amazon Prime Video and HBO. In fact, Disney+ arrived in Spain on 31 March 2020, in the middle of the strictest period of lockdown.

In the case of drama, broadcast channels opted for not premiering new series in prime time, while in the case of daytime series such as *Amar es para siempre* (Loving is forever), the amount of footage shot, remote editing and the cut of shorter episodes allowed the broadcast to be maintained without too many alterations.²²⁾ In total, twenty-eight series shoots

18) Ceide Cé, Miguel Túñez López, and Martín Vaz Álvarez, "Impacto del COVID-19 en la televisión en España: contenidos, audiencias, soportes y estrategias de producción," *Revista Ibérica de Sistemas e Tecnologías de Informação*, (September 2020), 572–585.

19) Available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2020-3692>.

20) Manuel Marraco, "La guerra de Sánchez en 70.000 palabras," *El Mundo*, May 13, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.elmundo.es/espana/2020/05/12/5eb94f14fdddf7b9e8b45ed.html>.

21) Available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2020-4166>.

22) RedacciónAV451, "Las series diarias se organizan: cómo continuar su emisión con los platós cerrados," *Audiodisual 451*, April 20, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.audiodisual451.com/las-series-diarias-se-organizan-como-continuar-su-emision-con-los-platos-cerrados/>.

were paralysed with the start of the lockdown.²³⁾ However, with a large production backlog, the pay-TV platform Movistar+ and the VOD service Netflix did take advantage of the captive audience at home. And with good results: *La línea invisible* (The Invisible Line) became Movistar+'s most watched original content to date after its first 25 days on the platform.²⁴⁾ But filming, both of fiction series and of movies and advertising, would not restart until almost the summer, when the regulations aimed at organising economic and social life after the end of the strictest stage of lockdown began to be published. The Order SND/399/2020 of the Ministry of Health, published on 9 May, included the directives that were to guide filming, including cleanliness, reduced crews, supervision by occupational risk teams, special signaling and social distancing between performers (articles 29, 30, 31 and 32).²⁵⁾

In April 9 Televisión Española, the public national broadcaster premiered the first series about the crisis, *Diarios de la cuarentena* (Quarantine Diaries). Produced by Morena Films, creators Álvaro Fernández-Armero and David Marqués, both recognized filmmakers, wrote the scripts and used telematic communications to direct the actors, who shot themselves at home using equipment provided by the production company. The episodes of *Diarios de la cuarentena* were between 25 and 29 minutes long, and were based on an ensemble group, with 15 characters. There was a connection between them that was gradually through video calls: they were fathers and sons, brothers, co-workers, friends or had business relationships.

In *Diarios de la cuarentena* there was a notable absence of diversity: all the characters were in heterosexual relationships and seemed to belong to a privileged stratum. Even delaying the payment of rent in one episode was more as an example of picaresque than a necessity. No woman in the series lived alone or presented autonomy beyond a romantic relationship. The three older characters were in permanent connection with their respective children, a further example of how the series avoided essential concerns during lockdown. But closer to a shared experience, the series incorporated, especially in the early episodes, one of the shared rituals during the first weeks of lockdown: the 8 PM applause from windows and balconies in support of health workers. At the beginning of each episode, a banner displayed two messages: the series was produced without anyone leaving their homes (the hashtag #QuedateEnCasa was added) and it was dedicated "to the professionals who work every day for us." By then, the country was already going through an acrimonious political confrontation, which the series was part of. Its comedic tone made it an object of criticism by groups opposed to the government, such as the far-right party Vox, whose leader Santiago Abascal denounced it in parliament as a comedy "about the imprisonment of Spaniards."²⁶⁾ In fact, in response to a question posed by representatives of the conserv-

23) Redacción, "Todas las series que han suspendido sus rodajes en España y Estados Unidos por la crisis del coronavirus," *Vertele*, March 15, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, https://vertele.eldiario.es/noticias/todas-series-suspendidas-canceladas-coronavirus-espana-estados-unidos-usa_1_7410303.html.

24) RedacciónAV451, "La línea invisible, un fenómeno de audiencias en Movistar+," *Audiovisual 451*, May 11, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.audiovisual451.com/la-linea-invisible-un-fenomeno-de-audiencias-en-movistar/>.

25) Available at: <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2020/05/09/pdfs/BOE-A-2020-4911.pdf>

26) Berto Molina, "Maldita la gracia: Abascal (Vox) carga contra la serie cómica de TVE sobre coronavirus," *El Confidencial*, April 9, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, https://www.elconfidencial.com/television/series-tv/2020-04-09/abascal-vox-tve-diarios-cuarentena-critica_2542083/.

ative Partido Popular, the administrator of RTVE explained that the sole purpose of the series was “to entertain.”²⁷⁾ But this lack of relevance, beyond the political conflict, had its consequences in terms of audience size, which remained at a average of 6.9% of share.

En casa (At home), produced for HBO Spain, premiered on 3 June, arrived when a large part of Spain was already in a situation of attenuated lockdown. The approach of *En casa* was quite different from that of *Diarios de la cuarentena*: it offered 5 independent stories with a length of between 20 and 50 minutes. Produced by Warner Bros. and Caballo Films, *En casa* was in continuity with HBO Spain’s commitment to *auteur* fiction, such as its series created by Isabel Coixet (*Foodie Love*) and Álex de la Iglesia (*30 monedas*). The episodes of *En casa* were directed by Rodrigo Sorogoyen, Leticia Dolera, Paula Ortiz, Elena Martín and Carlos Marqués-Marcet. All five were examples of Spanish *auteur* cinema without necessarily being on the margins, and with clear links to serialized fiction: Sorogoyen, Dolera, Martín and Marqués-Marcet had recently directed or had series in the pipeline on the pay-TV service Movistar+. *En casa* belonged to a hybrid territory between cinema and television: an anthology series that, due to the decision to release all its instalments simultaneously, could also be an anthology film. Two aspects of *En casa* stand out. One is the generic, tonal, and aesthetic variety, which allows the episodes to move between fantasy, drama and comedy. But the stories explored the theme of affective relationships of 30-something people, whether to reflect on mourning after a break-up (Marqués-Marcet), the transition from friendship to love (Ortiz), the crisis of a couple (Sorogoyen), the recognition of being in a toxic relationship (Dolera) and alternative family models (Martín). There are more points in common: the constant exploration of the ritual of the 8 PM applause and the incorporation of real footage from of the lockdown, including press conferences of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez to the videos disseminated on social media. For the critic Antonio Rivera (2020), the main quality of the series was “a syncretic and common discourse on audiovisual work itself in extreme conditions.”²⁸⁾

The third relevant drama produced during the period of lockdown was *Relatos con-fina-dos* (Lockdown stories), premiered on 3 July on Amazon Prime Video. The project had clear links with *Diarios de la cuarentena* from a production point of view, although in this case, like *En casa*, it was an anthology series. Two of its episodes were directed by the creative directors of *Diarios de la cuarentena* (Álvaro Fernández Armero and David Marqués), while Fernando Colomo (an actor in the TVE series), Miguel Bardem and Juan Diego Botto were responsible for the other three. The series itself was a hybrid product between film and television- internationally it was distributed by Latido Films as an episodic film under the title of *Tales of the Lockdown*.²⁹⁾ According to Macarro, even though *Di-*

27) Martín Izaguirre, “La polémica comedia *Diarios de la cuarentena* costó 273.400 euros a RTVE,” *La Política*, June 1, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.lapoliticaonline.es/nota/84631-la-polemica-comedia-diarios-de-la-cuarentena-costo-273-400-euros-a-rtve/>.

28) Antonio Rivera, “*En casa*, una visión de autor y de trinchera sobre la COVID-19,” *Fuera de Series*, June 3, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://fuera deseries.com/critica-en-casa-hbo-espana-serie-antologia-confinamiento-dc1848b75ec0>.

29) Emiliano de Pablos, “Latido Nabs World Sales Rights to Morena’s *Tales of the Lockdown*,” *Variety*, June 22, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://variety.com/2020/film/global/latido-sells-morenas-ales-of-lockdown-1234643867/>.

arios de la cuarentena, *En casa* y *Relatos con-fin-a-dos* had many differences, offered a central concept:

Subject to a particular process of immediacy typical of the press and journalistic reports, the different creations have been able to gather reliable witness of a surrounding reality, crude and desolate, to launch a message of collectivity based on identification with others.³⁰⁾

As noted previously, television schedules remained pretty much the same in Spanish television, with programs taking different measures to remain active during the lockdown. Talk-shows were produced with both the host and the guests connecting from home. *Late Motiv*, the talk-show hosted by Andreu Buenafuente, became *Late Motiv en casa* (Late Motiv at Home), while *Lo de Évole*, the interview program with Jordi Évole, labelled the episodes shot using telematic means as “Lo de #QuédateEnCasa.” One relevant exception was *Cuarto Milenio*, the mystery program directed and hosted by journalist Iker Jiménez. Accused of giving space to conspiracy theories, ufology and anti-scientific thinking, the program was suddenly taken off the air at the end of March, sparking rumors that its content, in the context of the health crisis, had been deemed too controversial for the network. Although rumors of censorship were always denied by both the channel and Iker Jiménez, its return in September 2020 was devoted to a series of specials on the origin of the COVID-19 virus that encouraged some conspiracy theories.³¹⁾

Sálvame (Save Me) was the most relevant programme during the COVID-19 lockdown in Spain. Hosted by Jorge Javier Vázquez, *Sálvame* premiered in 2009 on Telecinco, the main channel of Mediaset España and quickly became labelled as trash TV.³²⁾ A talk-show based on gossip and panelists in never-ending feuds and shouting matches, it occupied the slot between 4 PM and 9 PM, with a special edition on Saturday prime time, *Sálvame Deluxe*. After the start of the health crisis, politicians and doctors began to sit alongside the usual panelists with surprising ease to convey calm and messages of responsibility. A new section was introduced for experts to answer viewers’ questions and at 8 p.m. there was a pause for the panelists to join in the collective applause in recognition of health workers fighting the spread of COVID-19. Journalist Natalia Marcos linked this content to the program’s audience and highlighted the way in which it separated the expert voices authorized to give messages about the coronavirus and the program’s regular contributors:

The audience of *Sálvame*, a good percentage of whom are pensioners or people in at-risk groups, have been aware of the symptoms of the virus and have learnt how to

30) Jordi Macarro, “Relatos con-fin-a-dos de una «cuarentena» en casa,” *VISUAL REVIEW: International Visual Culture Review* 8, no. 2 (2021), 191–202.

31) Borja Terán, “Cuarto Mileni’ y la conspiración,” *La Información*, September 5, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.lainformacion.com/opinion/borja-teran/cuarto-milenio-y-la-conspiracion/2814106/>.

32) Frederic Guerrero-Solé, Besalú Reinald, and Híbai López-González, “Save me, save them! Trash talk shows and the third-person effect,” *Communications* 39, no. 2 (2014), 193–214.

Natalia Marcos, “‘Sálvame,’ un inesperado referente informativo,” *El País*, March 18, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://elpais.com/television/2020-03-17/salvame-un-inesperado-referente-informativo.html>.

wash their hands properly and how to respect the one meter safety distance. On social media, many viewers of the program have praised the didactic way in which the program has tackled the issue, without scaremongering but firmly, and reminding them of the importance of staying at home. Some of the regular contributors to the program are also present at these tables, although only as representatives of the population. Information is left to the experts.³³⁾

The program's central strip, entitled *Sálvame Naranja*, went from two million viewers on 9 March to 2.9 million on 16 March (the first broadcast after the declaration of the State of Alert). Later, *Sálvame* focused on attacking alt-right journalist Alfonso Merlos, whose infidelity to a former *Big Brother* contestant was revealed during a live broadcast on YouTube. The humorously named "Merlos Place" (a humoristic reference to popular nineties prime time soap opera *Melrose Place*) also exemplified how *Sálvame* entered the controversy surrounding the political management of the health crisis. Jorge Javier Vázquez, a declared Socialist Party voter, stated live that *Sálvame* was for "reds and queers," and defended the government of Pedro Sánchez in a public discussion with the most famous panelist of the show, Belén Esteban (known as the "People's Princess")³⁴⁾.

The Spanish television industry responded to this unprecedented crisis in two important ways. First, it started to dramatize the emergency in a number of series, both in broadcast TV and streaming platforms. The year ended with 50 fiction series premieres compared to 42 in 2019, indicating that the COVID-19 crisis found the fiction industry in a production boom.³⁵⁾ The fact that many drama series were produced for transnational video-on-demand services was an incentive for their release during the period of confinement, which allowed Spanish titles to be among the most watched worldwide.³⁶⁾ And second, the entertainment programming incorporated public interest content, symbolized by the hit gossip talk show *Sálvame* (Save Me) and its multiple ramifications. Upbeat in the face of an unimaginable crisis and in permanent fight with itself, *Sálvame* perfectly embodied Spanish identity during the lockdown.

Argentina

The first Argentine lockdown started five days later than the Spanish one, on 20 March 2020. But, on this side of the Atlantic, it lasted longer, and it affected a television industry that was already in a worse shape than its Spanish counterpart. By the beginning of the

33) Natalia Marcos, "'Sálvame,' un inesperado referente informativo," *El País*, March 18, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://elpais.com/television/2020-03-17/salvame-un-inesperado-referente-informativo.html>.

34) Paloma Rando, "Cuando *Sálvame* volvió a dejar de ser (solo) de rojos y maricones," *Vanity Fair*, June 21, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.revistavanityfair.es/cultura/entretenimiento/articulos/belen-esteban-jorge-javier-enfrentamiento-salvame-politica/45580>.

35) Javier Mateos-Pérez and Rebeca Sirera-Blanco, "Taxonomía de las series de televisión españolas en la era digital (2000–2020)," *El Profesional de la Información* 30, no. 6 (2021), 1–15.

36) Álvaro Ruiz de Elvira, "La pandemia aupó las series españolas entre lo más visto en todo el mundo," *El País*, April 26, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://elpais.com/television/2020-04-25/la-pandemia-aupa-las-series-espanolas-entre-lo-mas-visto-en-todo-el-mundo.html>.

lockdown, there was just one fictional series being shot and broadcast on free-to-air TV. The shooting of this series was disrupted and a few days later it went off air without an actual ending. And this was not the only adjustment that Argentine TV had to deal with during the turbulent months of 2020. The restrictions imposed by an executive order of President Alberto Fernández in March were labelled as a “social, preventive and compulsory isolation” period that started as a temporary measure of two weeks. However, amid the uncertainties around the virus and the bad news coming from the European winter, these measures were extended in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires on several occasions until 6 November. The President announced these extensions himself in speeches broadcast live on TV and radio. These speeches, accompanied by slides and figures, were broadcast live by most free-to-air channels and cable news channels, though it was not compulsory to do so as in the last government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. As a way of differentiating from his mentor and vice president, Fernández chose not to recur to the *cadena nacional* (national broadcast) that was a hallmark of Kirchner’s second administration.³⁷⁾

The free-to-air TV is formed by one state-run channel, currently called La Televisión Pública, and five private stations. The most popular ones are Telefe, controlled since 2016 by the American corporation Viacom, and El Trece, controlled by the biggest national media conglomerate of the country, Grupo Clarín³⁸⁾. The other players are Canal Nueve, controlled by the leader of a trade union that has connections with the ruling party; América, controlled by a group of companies with interests in the energy sector and the private health sector; and NET, run between a print media company, Perfil, and a TV production company, Kuarzo. The public sector has two streaming platforms associated with it, CineAr and Contar, and the private streaming platforms that operate in the country are Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, Disney+, Star+ and Paramount+, the latter one directly associated with Viacom’s Telefe.

The audiovisual industry, and the free-to-air TV channels, faced a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, there was a peak in the demand for content since more people were spending time in their homes.³⁹⁾ With millions of people not being able to travel for work, the measures taken to tackle the virus coined added terms. “Public health protocol” and its shorter version “protocol” became everyday words, used either for entering a shop or for establishing a way to film in a set. And “essential” became the shortcut to refer to the people who were performing “essential duties” during the emergency. The executive order establishing the lockdown included twenty-four exempted professions that were allowed to leave their homes. These “essential” workers were the members of the security forces, hospitals, and clinics, and those working on “audiovisual, radial and graphic media,”

37) Ezequiel Rivero, “Una batería de anuncios: atributos de las cadenas nacionales de Cristina Kirchner en la cobertura online de Clarín, La Nación, y Página/12 (2011–2015),” *Intersecciones en Comunicación* 1, no. 12 (2018), 75–100.

38) Guillermo Mastrini, Martín Becerra, and Ana Bizberge, *Grupo Clarín: From Argentine Newspaper to Convergent Media Conglomerate* (London: Routledge, 2021).

39) Santiago Marino, “ASPO, rating y clics: más ruido que nueces en el primer trimestre de pandemia,” *Letra P*, July, 2020, accessed October 8, 2022, <https://www.lettrap.com.ar/nota/2020-7-7-12-59-0-aspo-rating-y-clics-mas-ruido-que-nueces-en-el-primer-trimestre-de-pandemia>.

amongst others⁴⁰). The use of the word “essential” sparked controversy on social media and newspapers. What did it mean to be essential? Did the term refer to the fact that escaping from reality was key for society, and therefore TV had a role to play? Or did it mean that people working on TV didn’t have to follow the same rules as their fellow citizens?⁴¹

Despite TV being “essential,” filming fiction was not. The protocol for filming fictions for TV, cinema and streaming services, did not come until 7 August (Protocol for filming, 2020). This protocol was a “guide of good practices” negotiated between the Ministry of Culture, the Audiovisual Institute, the board representing the main producers and the trade union of the sector. Due to a combination of all these factors, 2020 was the year that marked a historical record. According to data processed by the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (OBITEL, for its acronym in Spanish), there were just sixty-one hours of new Argentine fictional productions and 1 coproduction. These sixty-one hours represent 5% of the total amount of broadcast fiction during this period.

By the time of the establishment of the first lockdown, there was only one fiction shot and broadcast, *Separadas* (Separated). It was an ensemble dramedy, what would be called a *tira diaria* (daily strip) in Spanish, about seven women who had recently been scammed and had therefore been separated from the routines of their daily lives. Forced to reinvent themselves and create networks of solidarity, they started running a cafe. The show premiered on January 20 with local celebrities in the leading roles. The formulaic storyline was proving well with ratings but the filming had to stop. As a way of engaging into trans-media storytelling, the official announcement was made on March 20 in the Instagram account of the show, @separadas, where the authors combined the aesthetic of the fictional cafe with the speech that was starting to circulate socially: “Dear clients and partners, we will be following the sanitary protocols so you can feel safe. That is why Cafe Rivero will keep CLOSED from today until further notice. Let’s take care and stay home.” What was first conceived as a temporary pause until filming could be resumed proved to be, some days later, the actual end of the show. On 12 May, it was finally announced that the program wouldn’t return “due to economic reasons.”⁴² The series did not have a closing episode conceived as such. It just stopped being broadcast on episode 36, out of an expected total of 120, and with every storyline open. In the era of social distancing, how can you shoot a telenovela? The shooting protocol had not yet been discussed and there were little clues on which was the best way to proceed.

The Public Channel scheduled three local productions. Two of them were filmed before the pandemic: *La persuasión* (The Persuasion), a political dramedy that premiered on 20 July and was also scheduled after the midnight news edition; and the third season of *Si solo si* (If Only If), a story about disabled people that includes them as part of the cast. However, the only new production filmed during 2020 was *Terapia de cuarentena* (Quar-

40) Argentine Presidency, Executive Order 297/2020, March 19, 2020, accessed October 8, 2022, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/normativa/nacional/335741/texto>.

41) Emanuel Respighi, “La ‘esencialidad’ de la TV,” *Página/12*, July 15, 2020, accessed October 8, 2022, <https://www.pagina12.com.ar/278479-la-esencialidad-de-la-tv>.

42) Pablo Montagna, “TV: Separadas no regresará a la pantalla de eltrece,” *La Nación*, May 12, 2020, accessed October 8, 2022, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/espectaculos/personajes/separadas-no-regesara-pantalla-trece-nid2364251>.

antine Therapy), made by a production company called NOS, with experience in the advertising field. It was, again, scheduled after midnight and premiered on 2 August, after streaming in the public online platform Contar in May. The miniseries, originally produced for the web, consisted of eight episodes of less than twenty minutes each, where three patients expressed their concerns about various aspects of lockdown to an psychoanalyst. With similarities to the Spanish *Diarios de la cuarentena* and the Chilean *Historias de cuarentena*, this show focused on the therapy sessions held via Zoom by different people who did not know each other. The protagonist was Anita, the psychoanalysis (Carola Reyna), who was seen struggling with the fact that her house had also become her office and dealing with the problems of her patients as well as with her own. The author, Marcelo Camaño, said that he came up with the idea of the show when he found himself tired of the endless stream of Zoom calls that had become the everyday landscape of the pandemic. He had also written the adaptation of the bestseller book *Historias de diván* (Couch Stories), written by psychologist Gabriel Rolón and adapted for Telefe in 2013.⁴³⁾

Partly due to the short length of the story, there was little room for the characters of *Terapia en cuarentena* to grow. The patients were Rosario, a working mother tired of dealing with her children and her work in the same confined space (Mercedes Funes); Julio, a 60-year old man living temporarily with his mother and having his therapy session in the only place with a certain amount of privacy, the bathroom (Coco Sily); Malena, a young doctor who is targeted as a threat to the safety of her building because she is in the front line of the pandemic (Violeta Urtizberea); and Diego, a 45-year old gay man, who is desperate for going back to his sexual life against the advice of his therapist (Luciano Cáceres). This last storyline was too solemn for a fiction trying to dramatize the period under a comic and cathartic lens, because the answer from the therapist was the same as the one from the Ministry of Health: in times of emergency, sex can wait.

América's motto was "la vida en vivo" (life in real time) because the channel did not produce any fiction in the last decade, focusing instead on live discussion shows, both on politics and on gossip about the show business. 2020 was not the exemption. During the reign of the Mexican mogul Ángel González González, Channel 9 had broadcast several imported telenovelas that belonged to his conglomerate, Grupo Albavisión. In 2020, instead, they adopted a schedule similar to that of América, its main competitor for the third pole in the ratings, and it didn't broadcast any fiction at all. Net TV broadcast eight imported telenovelas of Mexico and Colombia that had already been aired.⁴⁴⁾ Re-runs of local and imported productions was a strategy followed by most channels. Telefe, with the excuse of its 30th anniversary, scheduled special emissions of selected episodes of its most successful telenovelas. One of them, *Educando a Nina* (Educating Nina), from 2016, was re-run against *Argentina, tierra de amor y venganza* (Argentina, land of love and vengeance),

43) Infobae, "Terapia en cuarentena: cómo es la serie argentina que se está filmando durante el aislamiento," *Infobae*, May 7, 2020, accessed October 8, 2022, <https://www.infobae.com/cultura/2020/05/07/terapia-en-cuarentena-como-es-la-serie-argentina-que-se-esta-filmando-durante-el-aislamiento/>.

44) Mónica Kirchheimer and Ezequiel Rivero, "Argentina: pandemia, aislamiento y paralización de la producción audiovisual," in Vasallo de Lopes, Maria Immaculata (coord), *Anuario Obitel 2021: Ficción Televisiva en Tiempos de Pandemia* (2021), Ediciones UC, 65–99, accessed October 8, 2022, https://obitel.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/anuario2021/pdf/Obitel21ARG_s.pdf.

from 2019 and made by Channel 13. Both leading channels re-run other telenovelas of their own archive and from Turkey and Brazil.

Besides the limited production of new fictionalized content, the broadcasting schedule of Argentine free-to-air television in 2020 was made up of two other components: news and magazine shows, and competition programs, both in the traditional way and reality shows. The thrive to be following up the latest events about the unknown virus sparked interest in news shows, especially during the first weeks of lockdown.⁴⁵⁾ In a media landscape that has been increasingly polarised since 2008,⁴⁶⁾ Carboni and Marino argue that there was a “temporary truce” in the relationship between the government and the media conglomerates.⁴⁷⁾ President Fernández, as head of a center-left coalition, gave interviews to different factions of the political spectrum, emphasizing the importance of lockdown for preventing a major disaster in the health system. This truce was temporary, the authors say, and lasted just a month. After that, the narrative of mainstream media centered on critiques of Fernández, who claimed that restrictions had to continue because it was not possible to make a choice between preserving the economy and preserving public health.

The mediatic truce gained its momentum on 5 April, when the six channels joined to produce and broadcast a simultaneous telethon called *Unidos por Argentina* (United for Argentina). Made under the auspices of the first lady Fabiola Yáñez, it gathered some of the most popular hosts of the Argentine star-system in a show that combined information with entertainment. Live interviews via Zoom with different artists and advice on how to take care during the pandemic were mixed with the aim of raising funds for the Red Cross. “Aseptic, the show was a succession of announcements, fortunately without political manipulations, but without emotion,” wrote the TV critic Pablo Sirvén in *La Nación*.⁴⁸⁾ After the truce ended, polarization got back in the game. In this context, where most news programs were heavily editorialized, there were two opposing cases that deserve further attention. Jorge Rial and Viviana Canosa, journalists that started their respective careers as gossip columnists, talking about the private lives of celebrities, took a leading role during this crisis. Rial was celebrating the 20th anniversary of his show *Intrusos en el espectáculo* (Intruders in showbusiness), broadcast in América and usually dedicated to frivolous aspects, though it had already fostered debates around social issues such as the legalization of abortion. In this case, with the pandemic as the main topic, Rial and his team used the *spectacularization techniques* to talk about public health and raise awareness on the importance of staying home.⁴⁹⁾ One leading case was the one involving doctor Rubén Müll-

45) Agustín Espada, “Medios en cuarentena,” *Letra P*, March 24, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.letrap.com.ar/nota/2020-3-24-14-50-0-medios-en-cuarentena>.

46) Philip Kitzberger and Germán Lodola, “Politización y confianza en los medios de comunicación: Argentina durante el kirchnerismo,” *Revista de Ciencia Política* 37, no. 3 (2017), 635–658.

47) Ornela Carboni and Santiago Marino, “De la tregua a la guerra, el road media presidencial en la pantalla cuarentenada,” *Letra P*, April 29, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.letrap.com.ar/nota/2020-4-29-10-49-0-de-la-tregua-a-la-guerra-el-road-media-presidencial-en-la-pantalla-cuarentenada>.

48) Pablo Sirvén, “En *Unidos por Argentina* la política quedó afuera,” *La Nación*, April 5, 2020, accessed September 10, 2022, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/espectaculos/television/en-unidos-argentina-politica-queda-afuera-nid2351147>.

49) Pablo Méndez Shiff, “Los sanitarios del espectáculo,” *Espoiler*, June 8, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <http://espoiler.sociales.uba.ar/2020/06/08/los-sanitaristas-del-espectaculo>.

berger, a plastic surgeon working with many celebrities who had promoted an illegal pill to “cure” coronavirus. His professional and personal scandals were discussed on several editions of the program, while framing it into a broader context of a social problem. In other editions of the show, *Intrusos* even included an interview with the minister of Health. On the other hand, Viviana Canosa followed the radicalization of some of her male colleagues and found a place in the fringes of the mainstream. Using her platform as the host of a political late-night show in Canal 9, *Nada Personal* (Nothing Personal), she drank from a bottle that was allegedly containing a miraculous cure for the virus and interviewed people claiming the disease was not real.⁵⁰⁾ Both these shows were successful not only in terms of traditional rating, they were also heavily discussed on social media and between journalists.

The main figures of the Argentine star system took a year off screen. Mirtha Legrand, considered “the queen of TV,” is an actress born in 1927 who has been hosting her interview show, *Almorzando con Mirtha Legrand* (Having lunch with Mirtha Legrand), since 1968.⁵¹⁾ Due to her age and following the official guidelines, she made a “royal” move and handed the baton of her show to her granddaughter, Juana Viale, who hosted it on her behalf. Susana Giménez, who has hosted a competition and interview show since 1987, also took a step year. The difference is that she took a more active role in opposing the lockdown and moved to Uruguay in May 2020, after flying in a private jet in the middle of the lockdown.

Guido Kaczka was hosting a competition show called *Bienvenidos a Bordo* (Welcome on Board) when the pandemic struck. Instead of going off air, he changed the patterns and decided that, during those months, the only participants able to compete would be doctors, nurses and taxi drivers, some of the most affected by the crisis. As Jordana Timerman pointed out: “It has survived — and thrived — because it’s been able to adapt to the COVID-19 landscape: contestants compete on an open-air stage, and their only interaction with the host is on a Zoom-style screen.”⁵²⁾ The show, broadcast on Channel 13 prime-time, found a unique blend of escapism with social awareness of the unfolding events.

Another surprising competition filling the TV with good ratings was the local edition of *Bake Off*. Shot in 2019 but not broadcast until 2020, it became a social phenomenon. Millions of people were re-discovering the perks and perils of domestic life and cooking became a global topic of conversation, so the show was a perfect fit for those months. Even though it was shot before the pandemic (or maybe because of that), it proved to be a welcomed form of escapism. *Bake Off*, broadcast on Sunday nights in Telefe, from April to July, was an unexpected success. And it was the decisive factor in bringing *MasterChef Celebrity Argentina* (Celebrity MasterChef) to the same channel in November that same year. In this case, it was shot during the pandemic, and with health protocols in shape (it was usual to see people with face masks and the distance between the kitchen counters was

50) Sebastián Robles and Nicolás Mavrakís, “Una diva trash,” *Crisis*, October 1, 2020, accessed September 16, 2022, <https://revistacrisis.com.ar/notas/una-diva-trash>.

51) Libertad Borda and Pablo Méndez Shiff, “De Mirtha Legrand a la Chiqui: apuntes sobre una figura única,” *Revista de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Buenos Aires*, no. 90 (2016), 108–115.

52) Jordana Timerman, “Argentine TV’s New Normal,” *American Quarterly*, October 28, 2020, accessed September 30, 2022, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/argentine-tvs-new-normal/>.

long enough). A combination of reduced budgets and a desire to combine escapism with social awareness were the principles of non-scripted television in the times of coronavirus and polarization in 2020 Argentina.

Conclusions

The same catastrophe was perceived differently on each side of the Atlantic. Before the first lockdown, Spain, at a more comfortable place in the world economy, was producing around forty series. Argentina was broadcasting only one, with some more announced for the coming months that could not be shot during 2020. The economic consequences of the pandemic and lockdowns were not the same because the countries were already at a different scale of production. Spain produced three fictional series about the ongoing crisis for national channels and video-on-demand platforms, and one of them was targeted by the far-right party, which accused it of doing propaganda. Argentina just produced one series about the pandemic, which was made by the public channel and with little repercussion either in the press or in social media.

Argentine screens were flooded with news shows, which come in the way of commented news, and the return of reality shows. The rise of cooking shows, especially *Bake Off* and *MasterChef*, reinvigorated the ratings of the free-to-air channel by providing a topical issue, homemade food in times of lockdown and isolation, and escapism at the same time. It is worth noting, as an example of the multiple ties between Argentina and Spain, that the producing company making *MasterChef* in South America was the same producing *Bake Off* in the Iberian Peninsula. Gossip talk shows were also protagonists on both shores during these times. While Spain experienced the expansion of *Sálvame* in multiple time slots, Argentina had in *Intrusos* the main version of this combination of political, health and show business news. These shows are not only cheap to produce, but they also know how to cater to local audiences- and this national component proves to be of maximum importance in times of catastrophe. Plus, the spectacularization of the public discussions says a lot about the current state of affairs in the public arena.

The halt in the filming of fictional series, the little success of the dramatization of the crisis, the return of cooking shows and the domination of gossip programs were key elements of Spanish and Argentine TV channels during 2020. A shared language and several cultural affinities produced comparable results. They differentiated themselves mostly due to their respective scaled of production that has to do with the broader panorama of the world economy and the place in which country is located. Once again, this comparison allows us to see that television is not only still alive, but it is also deeply rooted to society, both in a transnational and in a national level.

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Filmography

- 30 Coins* (30 monedas; Pokeepsie Films/HBO Europe, 2020–)
- Argentina, land of love and vengeance* (Argentina, tierra de Amor y Venganza; PolKa, 2019)
- At Évole* (Lo de Évole; Producciones del Barrio, 2020–)
- At Home* (En casa; Warner Bros./Caballo Films, 2020)
- Bake Off* (Bake Off: El gran pastelero; Turner Latin America, 2020)
- Couch stories* (Historias de diván; Yair Dori and Canal 10 of Uruguay, 2013)
- Educating Nina* (Educando a Nina; Underground, 2016)
- Foodie Love* (Foodie Love; Miss Wasabi, 2019)
- Fourth Millenia* (Cuarto Milenio; Plural, 2005–)
- Having Lunch with Mirtha Legrand* (Almorzando con Mirtha Legrand; Storylab, 1968–)
- If Only If* (Si Solo Si; Manada de Dos, 2016–2020)
- In Treatment* (En Terapia; Dori Media, 2012–2014)
- Intruders in show business* (Intrusos en el espectáculo; América, 2001–)
- Late Motiv* (Late Motiv; Movistar+, 2016–2021)
- Lockdown stories* (Relatos con-fin-a-dos; Morena Films, 2020)
- Loving is for ever* (Amar es para siempre; Diagonal TV, 2013–)

Masterchef Celebrity (BoxFish, 2020)
Nothing Personal (Nada Personal; GM Producción, 2020)
Quarantine Diaries (Diarios de la cuarentena; Morena Films, 2020)
Quarantine Stories (Historias de la Cuarentena; Mega, 2020)
Save Me (Sálvame; La Fábrica de la Tele, 2009–)
Separated (Separadas; PolKa Producciones, 2020)
The Invisible Line (La línea invisible; MOD Producciones, 2020)
The Persuasion (La Persuasión; El Buey Solo, 2020)
Therapy in Quarantine (Terapia en Cuarentena; NOS, 2020)
United for Argentina (Unidos por Argentina; Joint production of six channels, 2020)
Welcome on Board (Bienvenidos a Bordo; Kuarzo, 2020–)

Biographies

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