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Explanatory factors of preferences for domestically-produced versus American-made fiction series

Factores explicativos de la preferencia del público por las series de televisión nacionales o americanas

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ABSTRACT: Fiction series broadcasted by TV channels can be domestically-produced or foreign-made. The former may contribute to the definition of a TV channel's corporate identity. The latter, usually US-made, series tend to have widely recognized quality standards and offer a reasonable guarantee of high audience ratings in the countries to which they are exported.

The definition of viewer preferences for home-produced or American-made fiction series is a key issue in this regard. The purpose of this paper is to explore the effect that certain viewer factors may have on preferences for domestically-produced or American-made fiction series in Spain; in specific terms, the variables taken into consideration here are gender, age, educational level, nationality, preferences for TV genres and the perceived quality of television series.

RESUMEN: *Según su origen de producción las series de televisión que emiten las cadenas pueden ser de dos tipos; nacionales o extranjeras. Las primeras ayudan a definir la identidad del canal que las produce. Las de producción ajena, en su mayoría americanas, vienen avaladas por unos altos índices de audiencia y unos reconocidos estándares de calidad. Este trabajo trata de definir las preferencias del público por las series de producción nacional o americana. El objetivo de este artículo es explorar el efecto que ciertos factores tienen sobre la audiencia española a la hora de establecer sus preferencias por las series españolas o americanas. Las variables o factores que se han tenido en cuenta para llevar a cabo el mencionado objetivo han sido: género, edad, nivel de educación, nacionalidad, preferencia por géneros de televisión y la calidad percibida de las series.*

Keywords: Television, fiction, audience preferences, domestically-produced series, American-made series.

Palabras clave: *televisión, ficción, preferencias de la audiencia, series españolas, series americanas.*

1. Introduction

Fiction programs and series comprise one of the most frequently produced and broadcast type of contents on the most prominent television channels in Europe and the United States. Fiction series occupy a significant proportion of the broadcasting schedule, obtain the highest audience share figures in the US and Europe, and, in most countries, have led the primetime schedule since the early 1990s¹. The television fiction genre encompasses several subgenres covering a variety of contents, all of which are firmly established as such and reflect widely acknowledged specific characteristics, most of which are indebted to the US TV industry where they originated.

In the creation of different fiction genres, the US TV industry drew on and adapted formats from a large number of sources including radio, film, literature, theatre, journalism and music². Nowadays would appear to be a global golden age for television fiction series. A number of experts in English-speaking TV fiction –see, for instance, Robert J. Thompson’s 1997 book *Television’s Second Golden Age* or Concepción Cascajosa’s many contributions to the field– have traced up to three golden ages in the history of television³. The key note of the current (third) golden age is the transfer of talent and expertise from cinema to television, a general exodus of renowned producers, directors, screenwriters and actors towards the television

¹ Cfr. *Yearbook Annuaire Jahrbuch, Television in 36 European States 2010*, EAO, 2010, Francia, pp. 11-279.

² Cfr. CREEBER, Glen, *The Television Genre Book*, BFI, Londres, 2001, p. 3.

³ For a more detailed account for the features of the three golden ages of television drama in US see: CASCAJOSA, Concepción, “La televisión llega a Hollywood: una aproximación a los dramáticos llevados al cine”, *Ambitos*, nº 13-14, Universidad de Sevilla, 2005, pp. 91-108; CASCAJOSA, Concepción, “Por un drama de calidad en televisión: La segunda edad dorada de la televisión norteamericana”, *Comunicar*, nº 25, Huelva, 2005 and CASCAJOSA, Concepción, “La nueva edad dorada de la televisión norteamericana”, *Secuencias: revista de historia del cine*, nº 29, 2007, pp. 7-31.

industry, thus overturning the traditional barriers between the two industries and enhancing the formal and creative quality of television series⁴. The fiction contents now being broadcast by some US channels reflect standards of quality, shaped by imagination and innovation in the creation of plots and storylines that lead to brilliant screen-writing and mise-en-scène (set design, camera work, production acting, etc.), which match the values associated with cinema production⁵. A number of celebrated filmmakers have come to see television drama as a way of broadening their creative horizons⁶.

However, the fiction programs broadcast on television are not limited to US-made productions; nationally-produced fiction programs are also known. A reading of the data published by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2010 regarding the geographical origin of fiction programs broadcast by the main general-interest TV channels in Spain (across all time-segments) discloses that the US is the main player in this regard: 9987.8 hours of US-made fiction series as compared with 4045.6 hours of Spanish-produced fiction series contents⁷. Whereas American-made series ensure a reasonable guarantee of high audience ratings because they have already achieved success in the country of origin and met recognized standards of quality series produced in the home-country may contribute to defining the TV channel's corporate identity, and thus are regarded as a badge of identity.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the role that certain sociodemographic characteristics of viewers in Spain play in preferences regarding nationally-produced or American-made fiction series. Previous research has shown that these characteristics correlate well with media preferences⁸, but the specific issue of preferences for fiction series depending on geographical origin has not yet been analysed. The variables taken into consideration here are gender, age, level of educational achievement, nationality and television consumption preferences. In order to perform the analyses an original database containing information from a sample of 1,000 TV viewers is used.

The structure of the article is as follows. Firstly, a review of the literature on the factors affecting

⁴ A number of producers, directors and screenwriters, including Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese and Frank Darabont have created successful, award-winning series such as *Band of Brothers* (HBO, 2001) *Broadwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010-2012) and *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 2010-).

⁵ Cfr.: TOUS, Anna, "Temas y tramas de la narrativa serializada de los Estados Unidos", Dossier OPA (Observatori de la Producció Audiovisual), Universitat Pompeu Fabra, last accessed on 19/10/2012 Available at: <http://www.upf.edu/depeca/opa/dossier1>; GRANDÍO, Marimar and DIEGO, Patricia (2010), "The Influence of the American Sitcom on the Production of TV Comedy in Spain", *Scope: Online Journal of Film and Television Studies*, University of Nottingham, Issue 17. pp. 1-5; PARDO, Alejandro, "Las series bélicas de la HBO: *Band of Brothers* (2001) y *The Pacific* (2010)", in Pérez, Miguel Ángel, *Previously On: Estudios interdisciplinarios sobre la ficción televisiva en la Tercera Edad de Oro de la Televisión*, monographic issue of Frame, Revista de la Biblioteca de la Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, 2011, pp. 637-638; and PARDO, Alejandro, "Hermanos de sangre: una miniserie híbrida entre cine y televisión", in CASCAJOSA, Concepción (ed.), *La caja lista: televisión norteamericana de culto*, Laertes, Barcelona, 2007, pp. 50-51.

⁶ Cfr. CASCAJOSA, Concepción, "Por un drama de calidad"..., *op. cit.*

⁷ Cfr. Yearbook. Television in 36 European States 2010, European Audiovisual Observatory, Francia, 2010, p. 97.

⁸ Cfr. RENTFROW, Peter J., GOLBERG, Lewis R. and ZILCA, Ran, "Listening, Watching and Reading: The Structure and Correlates of Entertainment Preferences", *Journal of Personality*, vol. 79, n° 2, 2011, pp. 223-257; FISCHOFF, Stuart, ANTONIO, Joe and LEWIS, Diane, "Favorite films and Film Genres as a Function of Race, Age and Gender", *Journal of Media Psychology*, vol. 3, n° 1, 1998, last accessed on 1/9/2012. Available at: <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/sfisco/media3.html>; REDONDO, Ignacio and HOLBROOK, Morris B., "Modeling the appeal of movie features to demographic segments of theatrical demand", *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 2010, vol. 34, 2010, pp. 299-315; KRAAYKAMP, Gerbet and van EIJICK, Koen, "Personality, media preferences and cultural participation", *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 38, n° 7, 2005, pp. 1675-1688.

attitudes to fiction series is conducted. The following section summarizes the main differences between American and Spanish-made fiction series that could influence viewers' preferences in relation to them. Next, hypotheses are formulated regarding the sociodemographic variables studied. Data and methods for the empirical analysis are described, followed by a description of results. Finally, the main conclusions drawn from the research are presented.

2. The factors influencing attitudes to fiction series

Clearly, the key variable in explaining the success or failure of a fiction series with audiences is whether or not viewers like it and feel entertained when watching it. Enjoyment has been pointed to as the most important motivation for entertainment consumption in the most notable theories of entertainment psychology⁹. It has been conceptualized as an attitude with affective, cognitive and behavioural components, referring to positive responses to media contents and is closely associated with hedonic concerns including experiences of fun and amusement¹⁰. Although other gratifications not due to immediate feelings of pleasure, such as appreciation, meaningfulness or eudaimonia, have recently been mentioned as motivators of exposure to entertainment¹¹, there has been little or any discussion on the central role of enjoyment in the entertainment process. Several integrative theoretical models have been proposed to explain the presence or absence of positive experiences derived from fiction programmes¹². Based on these and other research articles focusing on specific aspects of fiction series, several variables emerge as relevant to an understanding of the factors linked to the experience of enjoyment and, therefore, to the formation of preferences for particular fiction series.

Of course, one of the key components of a successful fiction series in terms of impact on viewer attitudes is its leading characters. Identification with the main characters is one of the principal ways in which the effects of TV fiction series, as well as audience attitude and enjoyment, may be accounted for¹³. In addition, other mechanisms such as affective disposition¹⁴ or the parasocial

⁹ Cfr. NAVI, Robin L. and KRUMHOLTZ, Marina, "Conceptualizing media enjoyment as an attitude: implications for mass media effects research", *Communication Theory*, vol. 14, n° 4, 2004, pp. 288-310; VORDERER, Peter, KLIMMT, Christoph and RITTERFELD, Ute, "Enjoyment: AT the Heart of Media Entertainment", *Communication Theory*, vol. 14, 2004, pp. 388-408; OLIVER, Mary Beth, "Tender affective states as predictors of entertainment preference", *Journal of Communication*, vol. 58, 2008, pp. 40-61.

¹⁰ Cfr. AHN, Dohyun; JIN Seung-A Annie and RITTERFELD, Ute, "Sad Movies Don't Always Make Me Cry. The Cognitive and Affective Process Underpinning Enjoyment of Tragedy", *Journal of Media Psychology*, vol. 24, n° 1, 2012, pp. 9-18.

¹¹ Cfr. OLIVER, Mary Beth and BARTSCH, Anne, "Appreciation of Entertainment. The Importance of Meaningfulness via Virtue and Wisdom", *Journal of Media Psychology*, 2011, vol. 23, n° 1, 2011, pp. 29-33; OLIVER, Mary Beth and BARTSCH, Anne, "Appreciation as Audience Response: Exploring Entertainment Gratifications Beyond Hedonism", *Human Communication Research*, vol. 36, 2010, pp. 53-81; OLIVER, Mary Beth and RANEY Arthur A., "Entertainment as Pleasurable and Meaningful: Identifying Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motivations for Entertainment Consumption", *Journal of Communication*, vol. 61, 2011, pp. 984-1004.

¹² Cfr. VORDERER, Peter, KLIMMT, Christoph and RITTERFELD, Ute Ritterfeld, "Enjoyment: AT the Heart...", *op. cit.*, pp. 388-408; BERMEJO, Jesús, "Los mecanismos de la conectividad del espectador con las series de ficción televisiva e influencia sobre su experiencia afectivo-cognitiva de entretenimiento" II Congreso AE-IC "Comunicación y desarrollo en la era digital", Málaga, 3-5 de febrero de 2010.

¹³ Cfr. COHEN, Jonathan, "Audience identification with media characters", in BRYANT, J. and VORDERER, Peter, (eds.), *Psychology of entertainment*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2006, pp. 183-197; IGARTUA, Juan José and MUNIZ, Carlos, "Identificación con los personajes y disfrute ante largometrajes de ficción. Una

interaction¹⁵ also play a part.

Another significant factor is personal resonance –that is, the cognitive process in which personal memories from the viewer’s own life are prompted by the TV story¹⁶. Such resonance may inspire a more refined reception of the fiction product, thus leading to a greater sense of enjoyment. Cultural proximity is a process that is closely related to personal resonance, and arises when the audiovisual fiction viewer identifies culturally with situations, events and characters presented in the program¹⁷. Cognitive elaboration –that is, the level of reflection prompted by the fiction program– has also been seen as a potential explanatory factor in relation to viewer attitude to TV fiction¹⁸.

Perceived realism is another variable that could positively influence the entertainment experience. For example, characters perceived to be more realistic have been found to encourage more positive affective responses of viewers¹⁹. Related concepts are those of diegesis and verosimilarity²⁰. Diegesis refers to the fictional world represented in the fiction series and the laws that govern it. Viewers make comparisons between the world of the program and their own world. If the viewer perceives that the fictional world alters the laws of her real reference world, she may display a negative attitude due to inverosimilarity.

Finally, Bermejo (2010) has pointed out that perceived quality (in terms of production values, acting standards, mise-en-scène and editing) also plays a key role in connectedness. He also notes that the audience’s preexisting familiarity with actors in the series and attitudes towards them may also have a bearing on viewer attitudes towards the series.

3. Differences between American- and Spanish-made fiction series

The most significant differences between fiction series produced in Spain and American-made productions are outlined in this section. Two fundamental differences may be discerned in this regard: target audiences and production standards.

The structure of the television market in United States gives rise to a much wider range of television channels and programs, so TV audiences tend to be quite fragmented and target audiences quite diverse, enabling the production of series that are more innovative and bold in narrative terms. The majority of the most original new series have been produced by cable TV

investigación empírica”, *Comunicación&Sociedad*, vol. 21, nº 1, 2008, pp. 25-52; IGARTUA, Juan José and PÁEZ, Darío, “Validez y fiabilidad de una escala de empatía e identificación con los personajes”, *Psicothema*, vol. 10, nº 2, 1998, pp. 423-436; FERNÁNDEZ, Concepción, REVILLA, Juan Carlos and DOMINGUEZ, Roberto, “Identificación y especularidad en los espectadores de violencia en televisión: una reconstrucción a partir del discurso”, *Comunicación&Sociedad*, vol. 24, nº 1, 2011, pp. 7-33.

¹⁴ Cfr. ZILLMANN, D. and CANTOR, J.R., “Affective responses to the emotions of a protagonist”, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 13, 1977, pp. 155-165.

¹⁵ Cfr. RUBIN, A.M. and PERSE, E.M., “Audience activity and soap opera involvement: A uses and effects investigation”, *Human Communication Research*, vol. 14, nº 2, 1987, pp. 246-268.

¹⁶ Cfr. LARSEN, Steen F. and LASZLO, Janos, “Cultural-historical knowledge and personal experience in appreciation of literature”, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 20, 1990, pp. 425-440.

¹⁷ Cfr. IGARTUA, Juan José and MUÑIZ, Carlos, “Identificación con los personajes...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-52.

¹⁸ Cfr. IGARTUA, Juan José and PÁEZ Darío, “El cine sobre la Guerra Civil española. Una investigación sobre su impacto en actitudes y creencias”, *Boletín de Psicología*, vol. 57, 1997, pp. 7-39.

¹⁹ Cfr. KRAKOWIAK, K. Maja and OLIVER Mary Beth, “When Good Characters Do Bad Things: Examining the Effect of Moral Ambiguity on Enjoyment”, *Journal of Communication*, vol. 62, 2012, pp. 117-135.

²⁰ Cfr. BERMEJO, Jesús, “Los mecanismos de la conectividad...”, *op. cit.*

channels in the United States, including such critical and popular successes as *The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007), *The Wire* (HBO, 2002-2008) and *Dexter* (Showtime, 2006-)²¹. This innovative approach to programming on US pay-per-view channels has raised the standards of creative (content) and formal (technical) quality of series produced by general-interest networks, leading to such successful productions as *Lost* (NBC, 2004-2010), *Desperate Housewives* (ABC, 2004-2012) and *House M.D.* (Fox, 2004-2012)²².

In marked contrast, national series in Spain are usually produced so as to appeal to a wide target audience, to attract both adults and children; most series are designed for the whole family to enjoy: *Médico de familia* (Tele 5, 1995-1999), *Los Serrano* (Tele 5, 2003-2008), *Doctor Mateo* (Antena 3, 2009-2011) and *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (TVE 1, 2001-)²³. The US and Spanish TV markets cannot be easily compared. Whereas the US television audience is highly fragmented, leading to the production of 'niche' series, the general interest TV networks in Spain endeavour to reach the most broadly-defined and numerous audience as possible. This commitment to audience ratings has acted as a brake on creative (storylines, characters, types of humour) and formal (technical production) development because the primary goal has been to hold on to a majority of the viewing public. In recent times, however, such series as *Desaparecida* (TVE 1, 2007-2008) and *Gran Hotel* (Antena 3, 2011-) have appeared, the cinematic style of which stands in marked contrast to the norm for Spanish-produced programs. Although the independent production sector has adopted a number of the strategies that characterize the US approach (the team organization of screenwriters for each episode, the creative role of the executive producer, etc.)²⁴, episode duration has not been altered (US drama, 40-50 minutes, and sitcom, 25 minutes); rather, the longer drawn-out 70-80 minute episode duration of most primetime series in Spain has been retained.

A further significant difference marking the great divide between the US and Spanish markets is the size of the budget invested in television fiction. In production terms, TV channels and production companies in the United States can draw on vast budget resources, which ensure that the technical standards of TV series are of the highest quality. The standard format for a shoot there is cinematographic, including such striking values as excellent lighting and editing, a high number of exterior scenes, exacting location work, and very refined production characteristics. The best directors and screenwriters from the US film industry often work in the production of such cinema-standard television programs. In contrast, the production values in Spain are considerably lower and the standard format for most TV fiction series shot there (dramedy, comedy, serial) is video²⁵. The budget-per-episode for the pilot episode of a high-quality dramedy

²¹ Cfr. TOUS, Anna, "Paleotelevisión, neotelevisión y metatelevisión en las series dramáticas estadounidenses", *Comunicar*, vol. 27, nº 33, 2009, pp. 175-183.

²² Cfr. TOUS, Anna, "Temas y tramas de la narrativa"..., *op. cit.*, pp. 1-6.

²³ Cfr. DIEGO, Patricia and PARDO, Alejandro, "Estándares de producción de dramedias familiares en España", in MEDINA, Mercedes, *Series de televisión. El caso de Médico de familia, Cuéntame cómo pasó y Los Serrano*, Yumelia, Madrid, 2008, pp. 45-74 and DIEGO, Patricia, *La ficción en la pequeña pantalla*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2010, pp. 51-171.

²⁴ For a more detailed account of the influence of the US TV industry on the production of Spanish series, see DIEGO, Patricia, "La figura del productor de ficción en televisión", *Comunicación&Sociedad*, nº 1, junio, 2005, pp. 9-30; GRANDIO and DIEGO, "La influencia de la sitcom americana en la producción de comedias televisivas en España. El caso de *Friends* y *7 vidas*", *Ambitos*, nº 18, 2009, pp. 83-97; and CANOVACA, Enrique, "La influencia del serial estadounidense en el mercado español: una comparativa entre *Péridos* y *El internado*", in PEREZ-GOMEZ, Miguel A. (ed.) *Previously on: estudios interdisciplinarios sobre la ficción televisiva en la Tercera Edad de Oro de la Televisión*, Frame, Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, 2011, p. 859-873.

²⁵ Cfr. GRANDÍO, Marimar and DIEGO, Patricia, "The Influence of the American"..., *op. cit.*

to be broadcast during primetime is between €600,000 and €800,000; *El Internado* (Antena 3, 2007-2010) is an example in this regard²⁶. By contrast, in the United States, the drama series *Lost* (ABC, 2004-2010) had a budget of 13 million dollars²⁷.

Although the technical and creative standards of US-produced series may be higher, it should be noted that Spanish series tend to prompt higher levels of recognition or identification among audiences. The plots, characters, locations and situations presented in Spanish series seem closer to viewers' lives and are easier to empathize with than their US equivalents²⁸.

4. Hypotheses

In light of the factors that may have a bearing on viewer attitudes towards TV fiction and the differences between US-made and Spanish-produced fiction contents, a set of hypotheses as regards the relationship between viewer characteristics and preferences for series produced in the US and Spain is framed in this section. Two types of variables are taken into consideration: sociodemographic variables (sex, age, level of educational achievement and nationality) and stated tastes in television genres.

4.1. Sex and preference for American or Spanish-made series

It is common knowledge that men and women prefer different types of media products. In general, women prefer stories told from the woman's point of view or where the woman is the clear protagonist. They also report more enjoyment of communal themes and sad stories resulting from relational tragedies such as dissolution of romantic relationships, difficulties in families, etc. In contrast, men prefer high-arousal fiction programs, where the level of activation associated with emotional response is very excited, and the focus is on action, competition and violence²⁹.

Taking this all these arguments into consideration, men are expected to be more likely to prefer American-made series because they usually center on highly intelligent, professionally successful male protagonists *CSI Miami* (CBS, 2002-) and *CSI Las Vegas* (CBS, 2000-), which focus on detectives Horatio Caine and Gil Grissom, respectively, or the implacable federal agent Jack Bauer in *24*, may be illustrative examples in this regard. Moreover, such series also contain action high arousal sequences that appeal more to male viewers, and a significant amount of

²⁶ Cfr. QUÍLEZ, R. and BARTOLOME, E., "Los secretos de *El Internado*", last accessed on 9/4/2012. Available at: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2007/10/30/television/1193774712.html>.

²⁷ Cfr. TOUS, Anna, "El concepto de autor en las series norteamericanas de calidad", in SERAFIM, José Francisco (org.), *autor e autoria no cinema ena televisão*, EDUFBA, Salvador de Bahía, 2009, pp. 133.

²⁸ Cfr. GARCIA DE CASTRO, Mario, "Los movimientos de renovación en las series televisivas españolas", *Comunicar*, vol. 15, nº 30, 2008 pp. 147-153.

²⁹ Cfr. BANERJEE, Smita C., GREEN, Kathryn; KRCMAR, Marina; BAGDASAROV, Zhanna and RUGNYTE, Dovile, "The role of gender and sensation seeking in film choice", *Journal of Media Psychology*, vol. 20, nº 3, 2008, pp. 97-105; RATNASINGAM, Malini and ELLIS, Lee, "Sex Differences in Mass Media Preferences Across Four Asian Countries", *Journal of Media Psychology*, vol. 23, nº 4, 2011, pp. 186-191 and FISCHOFF, Stuart, "Favorite film choices: influences of the beholder and the beheld", last accessed on 1/9/2012. Available at: <http://www.calstatela.edu/faculty/abloom/tvf454/2FavoriteFilmChoices.pdf>.

violence, towards which a male audience tends to be more tolerant³⁰; see, for instance, *The Shield* (FX Networks, 2002-2008).

In contrast, women should be more likely to enjoy Spanish-made series because, in general, such programs are designed to attract a female audience; broadcast during prime time or in a daily timeslot, these series tend to focus on family-centered plotlines and female characters, dealing with romance, revenge and forbidden love. Some examples in this regard are *La Señora* (TVE 1, 2008-2010), *Gran Reserva* (TVE 1, 2010-) and *Gran Hotel* (Antena 3, 2011-). Television serials, which are broadcast in the afternoon/early-evening timeslot, are clearly designed to attract a female viewership. The most popular Spanish-made serials include: *Bandolera* (Antena 3, 2011-), *El secreto de Puente Viejo* (Antena 3, 2011-) and *Amar en tiempos revueltos* (TVE 1, 2005-).

H1: As compared to women, men tend to prefer American-made rather than Spanish-made television series.

4.2. Age and preference for American or Spanish-made series

Differences in preferences related to age are also expected. Bartsch (2012)³¹ indicates that young adults are more geared towards strong impressions such as action, suspense, thrills and violence, whereas nostalgic contents tend to be more popular in older audiences, who become less interested in emotionally-intense entertainment experiences, such as thrilling experiences, and avoid violent and frightening content. Older adults prefer more lightweight positive entertainment experiences, since they are less able to process complex negative experiences³². Given the difference in content between American and Spanish fiction series, these arguments would lead to a preference of younger viewers for the former and of older viewers for the latter.

The application of the concepts of identification with characters, personal resonance and cultural proximity would also reinforce this expectation. A considerable proportion of older people in Spain are not familiar with the idiosyncrasies of English-language culture because they grew up in a time when the country was more isolated from the wider world; they have never travelled to English-speaking countries, and show a more negative attitude to living abroad nor do they know the language³³. Therefore, an older audience is less likely to identify with the plots American-made fiction series present, as well as the characters, locations and settings they depict, and the sense of humor they reflect. Hence, it is difficult to establish a connection between older viewers and American-made television productions. The opposite applies as regards Spanish fiction programs. *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (TVE 1, 2001-), a drama series which recreates the life of a family in Spain from the 1960s onwards and appeals to a sense of nostalgia and personal resonance among TV viewers, is an emblematic example in this regard. Other instances include comedies of Spanish or 'local' manners such as *Los ladrones van a la oficina* (Antena 3, 1993), *Aquí no hay quién viva* (Antena 3, 2003-2006) and *Los Serrano* (Tele 5, 2003-2008). These

³⁰ Cfr. WEAVER, Andrew J. and WILSON, Barbara J., "The role of graphic and sanitized violence in the enjoyment of television dramas", *Human Communication Research*, vol. 35, n° 3, 2009, pp. 442-463.

³¹ Cfr. BANNE, Bartsch, "As time goes by: what changes and what remains the same in entertainment experience over the life span?", *Journal of Communication*, vol. 62, 2012, pp. 588-608.

³² Cfr. LABOUVIE-VIEF, G., "Dynamic integration: affect, cognition and the self in adulthood", *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, vol. 12, pp. 201-206.

³³ Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Barómetro de febrero de 2010, last accessed on 1/9/2012. Available at: http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Marginales/2820_2839/2830/Cru283000EDAD.html

productions reflect the effort made by Spanish fiction programs to attract older viewers³⁴.

H2: The older the television viewer, the greater his/her preference for Spanish-made series.

4.3. Level of educational achievement and preference for American or Spanish-made series

In relation to level of educational achievement, empirical evidence shows that better educated people prefer movies lacking sentimentality³⁵. Given that this genre is more prevalent in Spanish fiction series, this would make educated audience tend to prefer American-made films. More educated viewers are also expected to be more demanding as regards the quality of the fiction series they watch, which is more likely to be satisfied by American series given their connections with the film industry and the larger amount of resources available. Identification with characters in American fiction series is also expected to be higher for more educated viewers since many of them depict occupations to which they now belong (doctors, lawyers, journalists, etc.).

Cultural proximity with American series is also higher for more educated viewers. Viewers who have attended university may be expected to show a stronger preference for American-made series because such programs reflect production values and an imagined world with which such viewers are already familiar. They are more likely to have travelled abroad and visited the main cities in which such series are set, such as New York (*Friends* and *Seinfeld*); they also tend to have some proficiency in the English language, using it in their professional activity or having studied it for years at school and university³⁶.

Educated viewers may also be regarded as having a greater capacity to understand complex plot development, which requires more concentration as is the case of the American-made series *The Wire* (HBO 2002-2008), for instance. Another factor in this context is the use of new technologies and the Internet to download TV fiction contents. This form of access enables viewers to watch series produced in the US for more specialized audiences, often dealing with more irreverent or daring storylines, such as programs produced by cable TV companies like HBO (*The Sopranos*, *Six Feet Under* and *Game of Thrones*), etc.

H3: The higher the viewer's level of educational level, the more likely (s)he is to prefer American-made television series.

4.4. Nationality and preference for American or Spanish-made series

³⁴ Cfr. LÓPEZ, José Antonio and CUENCA, Francisco Antonio, "Ficción televisiva y representación generacional: modelos de tercera edad en las series nacionales", *Comunicar: Revista científica iberoamericana de comunicación y educación*, vol. 25, nº 2, 2005 (special issue on Quality Television: Congreso Hispanoluso de Comunicación y Educación. Huelva. 2005, CD-Rom).

³⁵ Cfr. REDONDO, Ignacio and HOLBROOK, Morris B., "Modeling the appeal"..., *op.cit.*, pp. 299-315.

³⁶ Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Barómetro de febrero de 2010, last accessed on 10/10/2012. Available at: http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/Archivos/Marginales/2820_2839/2830/Cru283000ESTUDIOS.html.

One of the key factors to shape the demographic profile in Spain in recent times is immigration³⁷, which has prompted a number of studies of the impact of immigration on television fiction in Spain and, in particular, the role of the immigrants as depicted in such programs. These studies have concluded that immigrants are remarkably underrepresented in TV series, and more often than not are depicted in stereotypically negative³⁸. Thus Galán's analysis (2006) of two series discloses that immigrant characters tend to appear sporadically (not even in supporting roles), and generally in relation to storylines concerning delinquency and drug-trafficking. Lacalle's study (2008)³⁹ found that immigrant characters in Spanish fiction are generally presented as undocumented, poorly qualified individuals, that such characters are commonly portrayed as criminal or victims of crime, and very rarely do they appear as competent individuals playing a key role in the plot. Such findings parallel the conclusions reached by Ruiz-Collantes et al. (2006)⁴⁰, who add that immigrants are frequently depicted as incompetent in achieving goals, and as given to pretense, manipulation and deception.

In light of such phenomena, it is reasonable to assume that immigrant viewers are less likely to identify with characters in Spanish-made TV series than viewers born in Spain; they are more likely to prefer US-produced television programs. Moreover, there is a greater sense of cultural proximity between Spanish-born viewers and Spanish fiction series, since they share the same cultural framework and heritage as the program-makers.

H4: Spanish-born television viewers are more likely to prefer Spanish-made series over American-made series, as compared with immigrant viewers.

4.5. Taste in TV genres and preference for American or Spanish-made series

The favorite type of programs among television viewers may also be expected to correlate with their preference for American or Spanish-made fiction series insofar as different types of fiction series are concerned⁴¹. Television viewers whose favorite type of TV content is fiction programs are expected to prefer programs that reflect higher production values: more intriguing storylines; better acting; the use of higher-quality recording equipment (cranes, dollies, etc.); and set design, as described in the third section of this article above. The fact that the budgets for American-made series are much higher than those for Spanish productions is noteworthy in this regard. Viewers in this category are more demanding because they may have a more refined level of audiovisual awareness. Thus, they are more likely to favor American-made series because they are the sector-leaders in the TV fiction production market.

³⁷ Cfr. GALAN, Elena, "La representación de los inmigrantes en la ficción televisiva en España. Propuesta para un análisis de contenido. *El Comisario y Hospital Central*". *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, nº 61. La Laguna (Tenerife), 2006, last accessed on 1/09/2012. Available at: <http://www.ull.es/publicaciones/latina/200608galan.htm>

³⁸ Cfr. IGARTUA, J. J., PIÑEIRO, V. and MARCOS, M. "La construcción de la imagen del inmigrante en la ficción televisiva de *prime time*", in DE MORAGAS, M. and FARRÉ, J. (ed.), *Comunicación y riesgo. Actas del III congreso internacional de la AE-IC* [CD-ROM]. Tarragona: AE-IC, 2012, Universidad Rovira i Virgili.

³⁹ Cfr. LACALLE, Charo, *El discurso televisivo sobre la inmigración. Ficción y construcción de identidad*, Omega, 2008, Barcelona.

⁴⁰ Cfr. RUIZ-COLLANTES, Xavier, FERRÉS Joan, OBRADORS, Matilde, PUJADAS, Eva and PÉREZ, Oliver, "La imagen pública de la inmigración en las series de televisión españolas", *Política y Cultura*, nº 26, 2006, pp. 93-108.

⁴¹ Cfr. RENTFROW, Peter J., GOLBERG, Lewis R. and ZILCA, Ran, "Listening, Watching and Reading"..., *op. cit.*, pp. 223-257.

On the other hand, television viewers who favor entertainment programs (talk shows, reality TV, etc.) are expected to prefer Spanish-made productions to American-produced programs, perhaps because they are less demanding as regards television production values in general, and since the relationship between viewers and such programs is more straightforward and less complex. Some American-made series involve a certain level of commitment and concentration on the viewer's part, thus requiring their audiences to invest more in the viewing experience. Entertainment programs and most Spanish-made fiction productions reflect lower levels of narrative complexity and command a correspondingly lower investment on the viewer's part⁴².

Moreover, entertainment formats tend to be more closely attuned to their immediate cultural context. Those appearing on them tend to be people from the same country so viewers clearly show a preference for local contents. Their taste is in television programs that reflect local cultural concerns; hence, they are likely to favor Spanish-made rather than American productions, since the sense of cultural proximity is greater. This type of audience is more familiar with the national 'star system' of actors and TV presenters, and are likely to be more interested in seeing them star in the television series and programs they tend to watch.

H5: Television viewers who prefer TV fiction contents are more like to prefer American-made series rather than Spanish-made series.

5. Data and methods

Data from an original survey where the target population consisted of all the residents in Spain aged 14 or over (37,910,000 inhabitants) are used. Sample selection was polietapic, stratified by region (Centre, South, North and East) and size of municipality (<5,000 inhabitants, 5,000-50,000, over 50,000 and provincial capitals). The sample size is one thousand. A confidence level of 95% involves a margin of error of 3.2%. Interviews were conducted by telephone, assisted by computer (CATI). The selection of the interviewee in each home was made in accordance with gender and age quotas.

Variables

Dependent variable. The television viewer's preference for US-made or Spanish-made series was measured via their response to a direct question on the matter included in the survey. The question offered three preference options regarding which type the viewer liked most: US-made series, Spanish-made series, or other. The dependent variable takes value 1 when the response is US-made series and value 0 when the response is Spanish-made series. It should be noted in this regard that the few responses where the "other" option was selected have not been taken into account. Only 2.1 % of the respondents selected this third option.

Independent variables. The variables used to explain the preference for US-made series over Spanish-made series may be categorized in three main groups: sociodemographic variables; television preferences; and perceived quality.

⁴² For a more detailed account of entertainment formats in Spain and audience characteristics, see GUERRERO, Enrique, *El entretenimiento en la televisión española. Historia, industria y mercado*, Deusto, 2010.

The sociodemographic variables encompass sex, age, educational level and nationality. Sex was captured using a binary variable, which takes value 1 when the respondent was male and value 0 when the respondent is female. Age was measured using a continuous variable. Level of education was captured using three dummy variables, representing whether or not the respondent had completed primary, secondary or university education. The dummy variable measuring nationality takes value 1 when the respondent is Spanish and 0 in all other cases.

Four indices were used to measure viewer preferences for different television genres. Each captures the viewer's preference for one of the following types of program: entertainment, fiction, general-interest programs and sports. Interviewees were asked to rate their interest in the following television genres on a scale from 0 (none) to 5 (a lot): news programs, magazines and talk shows, cinema, series, contests, sports, documentaries, reality TV, music shows, entertainment and humor programs, and general culture programs.

To build the above-mentioned indices, the eleven TV genres were categorized in four broader genre descriptions: "entertainment" includes magazine and talk shows, contests, reality TV, music shows and entertainment and humor programs; "fiction", cinema and series; "general-interest", news programs, documentaries and general culture programs; and "sports" is limited to sports programs. Each index is based on the average scores of the items comprising the broader genre descriptor.

It is clear, therefore, that formative indicators have been used to measure preferences for different television genres. Such indicators were considered to be most appropriate for the purposes of this research because formative measurement posits that the measures jointly influence the composite latent construct, and meaning emanates from the measures of the construct, in the sense that the full meaning of the composite latent construct is derived from its measures⁴³. Under formative measurements the latent variable is determined by its indicators rather than the other way round. The nature of latent formative yields an internally consistent perspective that is inappropriate for assessing their suitability⁴⁴. The multicollinearity among the measures within an index was studied to validate the formative constructs⁴⁵. In this context, a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) below five is a good indicator of the absence of multicollinearity⁴⁶. As displayed in Table 1, the VIF values for the items in genre preference indices fulfill this criterion.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for genre preference measures

⁴³ Cfr. MACKENZIE, Scott B, PODSAKOFF, Philip M. and JARVIS, Cheryl B, "The Problem of Measurement Model Misspecification in Behavioural and Organizational Research and Some Recommended Solutions", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 90, n° 4, 2005, pp. 710-730.

⁴⁴ Cfr. BAGOZZI, Richard P., *Advance Methods of Marketing Research*, Blackwell. Oxford, 1994.

⁴⁵ Cfr. PODZAKOFF, Nathan and P., SHEN, Wei, "The Role of Formative Measurement Models in Strategic Management Research: Review, Critique and Implications for Future Research" *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management*, vol. 3, n° 1, 2006 pp. 197-252.

⁴⁶ Cfr. JUDGE, George, HILL. R. Carter and others, *Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Economics*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1998.

	Mean	St. dev.	VIF
Entertainment	2.281	0.837	
Magazine and talk shows	1.787	1.259	1.177
Contests	2.516	1.369	1.211
Reality TV	1.655	1.159	1.250
Music shows	2.592	1.420	1.164
Entertainment and humor	2.853	1.460	1.120
Fiction	3.547	1.076	
Cinema	3.863	1.245	1.075
Series	3.222	1.425	1.075
General-interest programs	3.266	0.892	
News programs	3.910	1.108	1.070
Documentaries	3.484	1.360	1.078
Cultural programs	2.395	1.451	1.045
Sports	2.791	1.616	

Finally, a set of variables relating to perceived quality has also been taken into consideration. The first such variable captures the respondent's perception of the quality of Spanish television series on a scale from 1 to 5: value 1 means the quality is very bad; 2, bad; 3, average; four, good; and 5, very good. The second variable measures the perception of US-made television series on the same 1-5 scale. A third variable has been calculated to capture the difference between the first two variables, measuring the perception of the difference in quality between US-made and Spanish-made television series.

The mean, standard deviation and correlation matrix for dependent, independent and control variables are displayed in Table 2.

Estimation methods.

Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, the method used to test the hypotheses was a logit model. In order to measure the goodness of fit and prediction of the models, Nagelkerke Pseudo-R² and the percentage of correct predictions are displayed⁴⁷.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for variables

⁴⁷ When analyzing data with a logit model, an equivalent statistic to R-squared does not exist. Logit models are maximum likelihood estimated. They are not calculated to minimize variance, so the OLS approach to goodness-of-fit does not apply. However, to assess the goodness-of-fit of logit models, several pseudo R-squares have been developed. These are "pseudo" R-squares because they look like R-squared in the sense that they are on a similar scale, ranging from 0 to 1 in most cases. In this case we use the pseudo R-square developed by Nagelkerke. Cfr. NAGELKERKE, N.J., "A Note on a General Definition of the Coefficient of Determination", *Biometrika*, vol. 78, n° 3, 1991, pp. 691-692.

	Mean	St. dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Preference for American series	0.40	0.49													
2. Male	0.47	0.49	.07 ^b												
3. Age	46.43	18.49	-.17 ^a	-.04											
4. Primary education	0.26	0.44	-.12 ^a	0	.16 ^a										
5. Secondary education	0.39	0.48	.04	-.03	-.22 ^a	-.48 ^a									
6. University education	0.28	0.45	.12 ^a	.07 ^b	-.06 ^b	-.37 ^a	-.50 ^a								
7. Spanish	0.95	0.20	-.03	.03	.12 ^a	.01	-.03	0							
8. Entertainment	2.28	0.83	-.07 ^b	-.15 ^a	-.04	.22 ^a	-.06 ^c	-.23 ^a	-.10 ^a						
9. Fiction	3.54	1.07	.12 ^a	-.09 ^a	-.34 ^a	-.04	.08 ^a	-.02	-.06 ^b	.29 ^a					
10. General-interest programs	3.26	0.89	-.15 ^a	-.04	.39 ^a	.07 ^b	-.05 ^c	-.06 ^b	-.01	.13 ^a	-.02				
11. Sports	2.79	1.61	0	.46 ^a	-.08 ^a	.02	.01	-.02	-.03	.01	0	-.02			
12. Perceived quality of Spanish series	3.72	0.86	-.40 ^a	-.05	-.01	.12 ^a	0	-.13 ^a	-.04	.15 ^a	.10 ^a	.08 ^b	0		
13. Perceived quality of American series	3.85	0.87	.36 ^a	-.07 ^b	-.13 ^a	-.04	.07 ^b	-.03	-.10 ^a	.13 ^a	.22 ^a	-.02	-.01	.12 ^a	
14. Perceived difference in quality between American and Spanish series	0.14	1.16	.56 ^a	0	-.09 ^a	-.12 ^a	.06 ^c	.07 ^b	-.03	-.02	.08 ^b	-.08 ^b	-.01	-.66 ^a	.66 ^a

^a $p < 0.01$, ^b $p < 0.05$, ^c $p < 0.10$

6. Results

The logit models estimated to analyze the factors influencing the preferences of television viewers in Spain for American-made rather than nationally-produced fiction series are presented in Table 3. Four different models have been estimated. The first model contains only independent variables relating to the sociodemographic features of the TV viewer; the variables designed to capture viewer preferences for different genres of TV program are added in the second model; the third model includes the two variables concerning the perceived quality of American-made and Spanish-made fiction series; and the final model replaces the variables relating to perceived quality with the variable measuring the perception of the difference in quality between US-made and Spanish-made series.

As is clear from the various chi-square values, all the models prove statistically significant to a rate of one per cent. However, it should also be noted that such statistical significance is especially evident in relation to the third and fourth models, as reflected in higher R^2 values and the %-rates of correct prediction for the dependent variable.

The first model is primarily descriptive, including only sociodemographic factors as independent variables; as such, a clear difference between the sexes is disclosed regarding preferences for American-made rather than Spanish-produced fiction series: men express greater interest in the former, whereas female respondents express a preference for the latter.

Age is also a variable that conditions the tastes of television viewers: it is clear that the older the viewer, the less likely (s)he is to prefer American-made over Spanish-produced series.

Albeit to a lesser extent, levels of education also have an impact on preferences regarding TV series. Although the coefficients of the variables rise in line with level of educational achievement, only those relating to university studies prove statistically significant. The results suggest that television viewers who have completed university education tend to prefer American-made series, in contrast to those with lower levels of educational achievement.

However, surprisingly perhaps, no differences have been detected between Spanish nationals and viewers of other nationalities: the coefficient of the variable relating to this characteristic is not significantly different to 0 from a statistical perspective.

As outlined above, the second model comprises four variables concerning viewer preferences with regard to different television program genres. Neither age nor level of education is statistically predictive in this model, which suggests that their statistical significance in the first model did in fact capture differences in preferences with regard to television genres. In contrast, the results for sex are unchanged. The scores in the second model imply that viewer tastes in relation to TV program genres have a bearing on greater or lesser interest in American-made as opposed to nationally-produced series. Thus, viewers expressing an interest in fiction tend to prefer American-made over Spanish-made series. The situation for those expressing a preference for general-interest programs such as news and documentaries is the contrary: that is, their taste is for Spanish productions rather than series made in the US.

The variables relating to the perceived quality of TV series are included in the third and fourth models. On the basis of the third model, that respondents who perceive Spanish series as being of high quality prefer them to American-made series should come as no surprise. A parallel result is observable when the terms are reversed: respondents who perceive US-made series as being of high quality tend to prefer them to Spanish productions. Likewise, the fourth model suggests that respondents who note a greater difference in quality between American-made and Spanish series tend to prefer the former.

Despite the fact that the perceived quality variable has a very significant bearing in this regard, that other variables are significantly predictive regarding television viewer preferences for fiction series produced in different countries is also noteworthy. In other words, the perceived quality of a television program or program genre is not the only variable conditioning the viewer's preference for it. When the significance of perceived quality is controlled for, this analysis shows that the viewer's preferred program genre influences his/her preference for American-made rather than Spanish-made series. Models 3 and 4 evince a range of differences from the second model in relation to this issue. While the general tendency among those expressing an interest in television fiction to prefer American-made series remains unchanged, the preference for general-interest programs disappears. Moreover, viewers expressing an interest in entertainment programs tend to prefer series produced in Spain rather than in the US.

Finally, the strength of the figures in relation to the sociodemographic variable of viewer sex should not be underestimated. Even when both perceived quality and preferred genre are controlled before, male respondents remain more likely than women to express a preference for American-made fiction series.

Table 3. Logit estimation results (n = 715)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
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Constant	-0.293 ^b (0.568)	-0.010(0.778)	-0.435(1.168)	-1.009(0.932)
Male	0.329 ^a (0.155)	0.433 ^b (0.182)	0.430 ^c (0.224)	0.423 ^c (0.224)
Age	-0.012 ^a (0.005)	-0.004(0.005)	-0.002(0.007)	-0.002(0.007)
Primary education	0.001(0.414)	0.020(0.417)	0.385(0.508)	0.372(0.506)
Secondary education	0.412(0.409)	0.392(0.416)	0.450(0.507)	0.443(0.505)
University education	0.698 ^c (0.413)	0.659(0.422)	0.733(0.517)	0.728(0.515)
Spanish	0.028(0.363)	-0.082(0.372)	0.237(0.449)	0.262(0.447)
Entertainment		-0.156(0.106)	-0.246 ^c (0.132)	-0.253 ^c (0.131)
Fiction		0.216 ^a (0.084)	0.239 ^b (0.106)	0.229 ^b (0.105)
General-interest programs		-0.248 ^b (0.098)	-0.173(0.122)	-0.177(0.121)
Sports		-0.070(0.056)	-0.054(0.068)	-0.053(0.068)
Perceived quality of Spanish series			-1.760 ^a (0.178)	
Perceived quality of American series			1.607 ^a (0.163)	
Perceived difference in quality between American and Spanish series				1.677 ^a (0.141)
R²	5.5	8.4	48.8	48.7
Chi-square	30.178 ^a	46.076 ^a	322.92 ^a	322.25 ^a
% correct predictions	59.7	61.3	78.2	77.6

^a $p < 0.01$, ^b $p < 0.05$, ^c $p < 0.10$

5. Conclusions

Fiction series comprise one of the most popular types of program among television viewers. As regards the broadcast of such series, television channels may choose between two basic options: home-produced or foreign-made (mainly US) series. The former tend to be closely associated with the television network on which they are broadcast, and thus contribute in a significant way to building the company's corporate identity. Nevertheless, television networks frequently choose to broadcast American-made series because of their high production values and success in their country of origin, which in turn may ensure high audience ratings for the importing channel.

Given the fact that a significant number of time-slots in the programming schedule are set aside for fiction series, the identification of the factors that may account for one type of series or another is a matter of vital interest. The conclusions reached on the basis of this research may enable television networks to take effective decisions as regards what type of series to broadcast, based primarily on the country of original production.

The data presented in this study suggest that male viewers prefer American series, whereas female viewers express a preference for home-produced series. In terms of age, American series are more appealing to younger rather than older viewers; this may be due to the fact that young people expect higher production standards and more creative storylines, which are more likely to

be features of US-produced rather than Spanish-made series. In relation to levels of educational achievement, a positive correlation has been traced between higher educational level and a preference for US-made television series, which may be due to a clearer understanding of the storylines and themes involved, as well as a closer sense of identification with the peculiarities of the foreign country through more refined knowledge of the language and culture of the country itself. Successful outcomes in the selection of one type of fiction series rather than another, measured in terms of audience ratings, depend on the viewer profile associated with a particular television channel.

These results imply that the country of origin of fiction series is a key variable to be taken into careful consideration when a television channel's programming strategy and target audience are being defined. The decision to broadcast a particular type of fiction series must encompass the fact that the place where the program was produced may have a significant bearing on the type of viewers attracted to the channel or network. In assessing the various possibilities available, television channel executives ought to have a clear target market segment in mind because a successful decision in this regard depends on whether or not the country of origin of the series selected matches the desired end.

An analysis of the preference for Spanish-produced or US-made series in light of stated viewer preferences in relation to specific program genres also discloses that viewers who prefer fiction contents also tend to choose US-made over Spanish-produced series. In contrast, viewers expressing a preference for other (non-fiction) program genres tend to favor Spanish-made series. This situation suggests that television channels should analyze the most popular contents in their programming schedule, selecting on the basis of such results the most appropriate (Spanish-produced or US-made) fiction series for their target audiences. Therefore, the selection of fiction series to be broadcast (in terms of country of production) must be consistent with the overall programming schedule for the television channel.

As may be expected, the perceived quality of the two types of fiction series has a significant bearing on viewer preferences for one or the other. However, the fact that other variables remain significant even when this factor is controlled for is also noteworthy in this regard. Thus, perceived quality is not the only factor that Spanish television viewers take into account when forming their preference for Spanish-produced or US-made fiction series. This result may prompt further research to explain other factors that may shape viewer choices in relation to the country of origin of the television series they choose to watch. A number of these factors, including how closely the audience identifies with the program's storylines and themes, have been mentioned in this paper. While the results of the study presented here would appear to suggest indirectly that such factors are significant, further direct analysis is required to test whether or not they play a determining role in the choices made by television viewers.

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