Streaming the Hispanic World: Mobility in Netflix’s “Original” Films in Spanish

Christopher Meir, Profesor Visitante, Universidad de Carlos III de Madrid

“Cinematic Cartographies of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic” (CSO2017-85290-P)
Cinema in an Age of “Content”: The Continuing Rise of Netflix Films

- Since getting into “original” fiction films, Netflix has been steadily increasing the number of works it distributes. Those films have been getting more and more attention:
  - 2015: 7
  - 2016: 31
  - 2017: 69
  - 2018: 132
  - 2019 (thus far): 100

- (Figures are based on US releases, compiled from press announcements. Actual totals likely slightly higher.)
Hispanic Films and “Content” at Netflix

Francisco Ramos, VP of Hispanic Original Content

- Netflix’s corporate alignment considers Hispanic world as separate from Europe, non-Hispanic LA
- Company has extensive production presences in Mexico and Spain
Hispanic Films and “Content” at Netflix: Madrid and Mexican Production Hubs
Netflix’s Hispanic Original Series
Netflix’s “Original” Hispanic Films

- Since 2018, Spanish is the second most popular language of Netflix “original” films:
  - 2015: 7/7 ENG 0 ESP
  - 2016: 31/27 ENG 1 ESP
  - 2017: 69/55 ENG 2 ESP
  - **Ramos hired December 2017**
  - 2018: 132/77 ENG 19 ESP (1 Euskera)
  - 2019 (thus far): 100/40 ENG 21 ESP
  - TOTALS: 339/206 ENG 43 ESP 1 EUSKERA
Types of Netflix Films I: Full(ly) Original Films

- Films are fully financed by Netflix before principal photography begins. So far, within Hispanic world, practice has only occurred in Spain. Mexican, Chilean films are in the works.
Types of Netflix Films II: Global Acquisitions

- Netflix takes global exclusivity on the films that were already in production or were already produced.
Types of Netflix Films III: Some Foreign Rights

- Films are distributed by traditional means (i.e. theaters, TV, etc.) in one or more countries. Distributed/owned by Netflix everywhere else. Most common practice for Hispanic films.
Made from TV Movies: Netflix Films as Compliments to/Offshoots of Series

Luis Gerard Méndez as Netflix Star

La Casa de Papel

[Images of movie posters]

[Image aligned to the left]

[Image aligned to the right]
Creating and Exploiting the Hispanic Market: Historical Precedents


- Vast body of research on independent co-production initiatives between Spain, Latin America to create “Hispanophonie” (Turegano, Shaw, Felicov, others)
Finding and Fostering Hispanic Community: Mobility in Netflix Films

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- Major line of research is concerned with instances of mobility within and beyond the Hispanic world. Such representations occur frequently across the corpus of Netflix films: 22 of 43 films (50%). Will feature in forthcoming films known to be in the pipeline.
Images of Mobility: Spaniards in Latin America
Images of Mobility: Latin Americans in Spain
Aspirational Mobility and Pan-Hispanic Difference in *Soltera Codiciada* (2018)
Towards Greater Critical Attention to Netflix’s Role in Hispanic Cinema

- The sheer size of Netflix’s investment in Spanish-language film production demands we pay attention to it. The precarity of Netflix’s business model, its preferences in terms of creative partners, genres, modes of representation all need close scrutiny.
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- Mobility recurs in the films, as it did in earlier industrial formations. We need to have a more sophisticated understanding of how it looks now vs. how it looked before.
  - Aspirational mobility vs. economic migration vs. transnational crime stories.