

RESEARCH

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HOLLYWOOD MAINSTREAM IN THE ECUADORIAN ANDES

MAINSTREAM HOLLYWOODENSE EN LOS ANDES ECUATORIANOS

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ABSTRACT

The American film industry has been in the hegemony of the world for decades. The Hollywood mainstream affects movie theaters, television and currently the content on demand thanks to the rise of streaming platforms. This piece of research tries to verify to what extent the North American influence affects countries with big socio-cultural differences like Ecuador. The audiovisual tastes and consumption habits belonging to the Andean population in the center of the country are analyzed. The sample consists of 426 respondents of different ages and occupations in the university environment. The issues raised try to know the audiovisual content preferred by the audience (movies, series, actors, etc.) and different consumption habits (frequency of going to the cinema, ideal place, number of films, etc). After contrasting the answers, different patterns are observed in audiovisual consumption, as well as a huge influence of American cinema on the collective imaginarieness of the analyzed public. Finally, it delves into the consequences of the results while proposing various contributions in this regard.

KEYWORDS: Audience research; audiovisual preferences; Hollywood; Ecuador.

RESUMEN

La industria cultural cinematográfica estadounidense lleva décadas de hegemonía mundial. El *mainstream* hollywoodense afecta a las salas de cine, televisión y actualmente a los contenidos a la carta gracias al auge de las plataformas en *streaming*. Esta investigación trata de comprobar hasta qué punto la influencia norteamericana afecta a países con grandes diferencias socio-culturales como Ecuador. Se analizan los gustos audiovisuales y los hábitos de consumo

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pertencientes a la población andina del centro del país. La muestra está formada por 426 encuestados de diferentes edades y ocupaciones en el ámbito universitario. Las cuestiones planteadas tratan de conocer los contenidos audiovisuales preferidos por la audiencia (películas, series, actores, etc.) y los diferentes hábitos de consumo (frecuencia al cine, lugar ideal, número de películas, etc). Tras contrastar las respuestas, se observan diferentes patrones en el consumo audiovisual, así como una enorme influencia del cine estadounidense en el imaginario colectivo del público analizado. Finalmente, se profundiza sobre las consecuencias de los resultados a la vez que se proponen diversas aportaciones al respecto.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Análisis de audiencia; Preferencias audiovisuales; Hollywood; Ecuador.

MAINSTREAM HOLLYWOODIANO EM LOS ANDES EQUATORIANOS

RESUME

A indústria cultural cinematográfica estadunidense leva décadas de hegemonia mundial. O mainstream hollywoodiano afeta as salas dos cinemas, televisão e atualmente aos conteúdos à carta, graças ao auge das plataformas em streaming. Esta investigação trata de comprovar até que ponto a influência norte americana afeta a países com grandes diferenças sócios-culturais como Equador. Se analisam os gostos audiovisuais e os hábitos de consumo pertencentes a população andina do centro do País. A amostra está formada por 426 pessoas de diferentes idades e ocupações de diferentes âmbitos universitário. As questões levantadas tratam de conhecer os conteúdos audiovisuais preferidos pela audiência (filmes, series, atores, etc.) e os diferentes hábitos de consumo (frequência ao cinema, lugar ideal, número de filmes, etc.) Depois de contrastar as respostas, se observam diferentes padrões no consumo audiovisual, assim como uma enorme influência do cinema americano no imaginário coletivo do publico analisado. Finalmente, se aprofunda sobre as consequências dos resultados ao mesmo tempo que se propõem diversas contribuições ao respeito.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Analises da audiencia; preferências audiovisuais; Hollywood; Equador.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Knowing the tastes of a society at an audiovisual level, as well as its consumption patterns, contributes a mark in the study of the different audiences, a point in the filmic and television history that, as a sketch, portrays a punctual and conjunctural

framework that illustrates the repercussion that fiction has had on the imaginarieness of people in a specific context.

Relating box office sales with the likes of the audience would not be entirely reliable when analyzing the preferences of the audience *a posteriori*. Factors such as production, planning in the distribution of films or exhibition strategies in the movie theaters would also affect the attendance to the movie theaters regardless of whether a production will be liked and satisfy the needs of the spectators.

The studies on the cultural industries historically show the producers of greater media repercussion as the generators of determined standards and ideologies (Bustamante, 2000). In turn, they would be spread through other platforms such as radio, cinema, newspapers and, especially, through derived consumer products such as clothing, games or other merchandising (Sardar and Van, 2015), making the audiovisual sector just one of many forms of propagandistic mediation as argued by broad cultural studies (Durham and Kellner, 2009, Horkheimer and Adorno, 1971).

Therefore, the power of the cultural industry represented by Hollywood is of great relevance to understand the formation of ideologies of a society and their influence on the collective imaginarieness (Martel, 2016). "Hence the importance of studying the influence of the mass media in general, and of television in particular, when transmitting a symbolic universe of common reference, creating reality and generating patterns of social behavior" (Campos y Garza, 2015, p. 255), since the television series (small sisters of the cinema) can be conceived as the evolution of the contemporary cinematographic narrative (Bort, 2007).

The US has transformed film art into the most profitable entertainment business that currently exists through the powerful machinery of Hollywood. "Its cinema has consolidated as hegemonic and is consequently the one that has penetrated the most in the global collective imaginarieness, establishing the canons of audiovisual language, visual aesthetics and hoarding billboards around the globe" (Olaskoaga, 2015, p. 8).

American cinema has been and continues to be the main exponent in the transmission of imaginarieness through fiction. At its core is the Hollywood lobby Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), currently composed of the representatives of the main studios or majors: Disney, Universal, Warner Brothers, Sony Pictures, Paramount and 20th Century Fox. The functions of the MPAA are, among others: to establish the public regulations that govern the world of cinema, to intercede in negotiations with the powerful labor unions, to seek funds and promote American films internationally. It has also been characterized by pressuring foreign governments to eliminate their protectionist policies of screen quotas and liberalize the market and, in a more controversial way, by promoting anti-competition agreements among the majors to prevent their most commercial films from overlapping in the world premieres (blockbusters) (Martel, 2016).

In the second half of the 20th century, cinematography consolidated as a means of mass culture. The one produced in the United States of America imposes in the world audiovisual universe a dominant axis of cinematographic themes and genres (not yet defined as contents); a model of narrative, design and use of the screen; and also of production and distribution that has shaped a way of perceiving the world according to Hollywood, whose interests and modes of representation were subsequently transferred to television, causing the US mainstream culture to extend

its influence to the last corner of the planet thanks to products the creation and dissemination strategies of which were designed in the aforementioned MPAA (Campos, 2012).

1.1. Context

The existence of movie theaters in Ambato (capital of the central province of Tungurahua) occurs since the entrance of the *Cinemark* chain in the *Mall of the Andes* mall in 2005. Previously, almost twenty years had passed since the disappearance of movie theaters in the city due to their low profitability, especially for the competition with the VCR and DVD player.

Historically, in Ambato there were up to nine movie theaters, reaching their greatest moment of glory from the 1940s to the mid-1960s, when the entrance of television to homes caused attendance to gradually fall.

In the decade of the eighties, these movie theaters closed continuously, playing films with content for adults in their last times. Later, it would be cultural and religious associations which were giving them other uses. Therefore, during the nineties, in this city, there were practically no movie theaters, until the opening of the *Cinemark* multiplex in 2005 (La Hora, 09/13/2015).

Therefore, the majority of film consumption comes through VCRs, DVD players and television broadcasts during those years, due to which the offer is almost completely restricted to products that come from Hollywood. Television networks buy film packages where Eastern or Latin American European productions barely reach the consumer, with the exception of large cities such as Cuenca, Quito or Guayaquil, where there is still room for another type of cinema. This makes that the tastes of audiovisual consumers tend to be Hollywood-biased, with the following implications.

Since the entry of Rafael Correa into the government in 2006, they sought to change this trend, committing themselves, at least in theory, to their own film spaces where national productions could be shown. It must be said that this national production is very scarce: according to www.imdb.com, there are only 118 cinematographic works, including short films and documentaries, which have Ecuador as their country of origin, 33 out of which had been produced before the arrival of the Citizen Revolution (name given to Correa's government).

The new government created the Ministry of Culture and the cinema became a public issue, the National Cinematography Council, the currently National Institute of Cinematography, being created. This Council supported and subsidized the start-up of different film projects from 2006 to 2017, 87 out of them being premiered, with 18 more in post-production or announced for the year 2018. All this work was slowed since 2015 and 2016 due to different budgetary swings that led to the resignation of some of its leaders (El Telégrafo, 02/12/2016).

The idea of government over all culture, not only audiovisual productions, is that it rests on four pillars (Ministry of Culture of Ecuador, 2011):

- Decolonization: affirmation of one's own denied by the coloniality of knowledge and power, for an inclusion of the multicultural population, and thus escape the symbolic hegemony of the dominators.

- Cultural Rights: possibilities of access to the symbolic circulation of the creative diversity of the collectives, under conditions of equality.
- Cultural Undertakings: promotion of mass production, commercialization and consumption of symbolic contents, based on respect for the rights of creators, valuing one's own.
- New Contemporary Ecuadorian Identity: symbolic questioning of self-referentiality about the Ecuadorian, to proudly assume a new intercultural identity under construction

This economic and political impulse increased the popularity of Ecuadorian cinema, reaching in 2013 an average of 40,000 spectators per national film (El Telégrafo, 12/26/2015), an unusual figure in the country, although not enough for the incipient industry to keep. Thus, various voices have been proposing solutions for the US mainstream not to impose so abusively, leaving Ecuadorian productions *out of the game*. One of the proposed solutions of the National Cinematography Council was the creation of the Cinema Territories (El Telégrafo, 12/26/2015), where exhibitors were given facilities to release national cinema. Another idea was to look for spaces outside the major distributors and even to focus efforts on other forms of dissemination such as television (El Telégrafo, 10/15/2015). Finally, it was also proposed to create alternative circuits in houses of culture, theaters and other places of cultural dissemination since it was accepted that the national cinema had a very difficult access to the big movie theaters (El Telégrafo, 08/07/2015).

1.2. Theoretical framework

In the first place, we must consider that audiovisual content is part of the formation of the collective imaginarieness of a society. As Edgar Morin mentioned, there are massive projections generated by the media to the social life system, defining the concept of collective imaginarieness as the set of myths, forms, symbols, types, motives or figures that exist in a society at a given moment (Morin, 1962).

Secondly, assess the institutional analysis of the media, which leads to study how communication messages are produced and distributed. One of the most important theoretical currents in this field is the *Critical Political Economy*, which, under a neo-Marxist approach, studies the ownership and control of the media to demonstrate their links with the ruling class. The main objective is to demonstrate that the owners of the media and those who control them are part of the dominant capitalist class or respond to its interests (Lozano, 2007).

Part of the importance of knowing the favorite contents of a certain audience derives from the assumption that audiovisual products influence the audience through the cultivation of biased images of the social world, just as Hollywood has been doing with the female figure (Méndez, 2016), the vision of foreigners (Gelado and Sangro, 2016) or of ethnic minorities (Romero, 2013).

Much of the responsibility lies with the producers, who have been the generators of this development and without losing sight of the fact that, from the perspective of the producers, the main purpose of the vast majority of audiovisual content is entertainment (Zillmann and Bryant, 1986).

Once the objective of most of the audiovisual content has been determined, it is pertinent to take into account its repercussion on the viewers. The theory of cultivation indicates that *we are what we consume through the media*: what the spectator observes in the media constitutes his symbolic world (Gerbner, 2002). Most of what we know or think we know we have never experienced personally. We know things based on the stories we hear and the ones we tell. We are the stories we tell.

According to Gerbner, the media corporations thus become a true *Ministry of Private Culture*, in such a way that they help to shape the dominant cultural currents. Studies on cultural industries show the producers with the historically greatest media coverage as the generators of certain standards and ideologies (Martel, 2014).

From the hypothesis of the theory of cultivation, the influence of fiction is associated with a general phenomenon of (ideological) reproduction, with the ways in which individuals internalize the power structure of society (refracted in the dramatic world) (Roda, 1989).

In Latin America, the relevance of Hollywood would not only affect these characteristics in its viewers but also in its cinematographic productions, "seen as miscegenation processes, proposals that want to be different, without achieving it, to the globalized cultural standard coming from Hollywood" (Amézquita, 2012). This is the case of countries such as Chile (Purcell, 2012), Mexico, Argentina, Brazil (Berthier and Del Rey-Reguillo, 2013, Getino, 2005, Moguillansky, 2016) and especially Ecuador, which for a century began to be influenced by foreign genres in the cinema produced in the country (Loaiza, 2015).

Therefore, the mainstream of Hollywood would influence, in a holistic way, the spectators, producers, distribution, exhibition, regulatory policies, economy, culture and society. Without hoping to be so extremist, nothing would really exist outside the regulatory margins of the mainstream (Rodríguez, 2009). This way, it would be established that the model of the Hollywood cultural industry would respond to an attempt of the American cultural power in its audiovisual contents produced and exported to the rest of countries.

2. OBJECTIVES

This piece of research has the main purpose of analyzing what the influence of the Hollywood mainstream has been abroad, and more specifically, in Ecuador. For this purpose, the film and television preferences of the viewers will be studied in order to later reflect and deepen into the causes and consequences of the *Hollywood hegemony* (Sánchez, 2003).

We consider what the media content preferred by the audience from Ambato, as well as their consumption habits, especially on television, which has been part of the lives of people in recent decades.

The objective is to make a descriptive study of the favorite films, series and cartoons, as well as their consumption habits regarding this type of content. It is intended to go directly to the source, to ask the different types of audience, and from there to analyze their responses in search of cultural patterns that allow us to sketch a portrait of the audiovisual tastes of a population.

Therefore, this piece of research is not only considered a mere description of the preferred content but also seeks to find if there are patterns with the cultural

industries of greater impact, understanding them as the generators of ideologies and possible collective imaginariess biased in a society.

3. METHODOLOGY

The sample is composed of 426 people mostly related to the Technical University of Ambato, which is made up of citizens from all parts of the country, and especially from the central province of Tungurahua. About 40% are teachers, another 40% are students, and the remaining 20% belong to other occupations such as administrators, secretaries, etc., 60% being women and 40% men, and of different ages, with young people predominating.

A questionnaire was provided online to the entire university community (approximately 20,000), 426 being the number of people who did it voluntarily and anonymously. In addition to the technical data mentioned such as age, place of residence, gender and profession, the questionnaire was made up of different open and semi-structured questions related to audiovisual habits and preferences. In all cases, participants were adequately informed of the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation in the study and of its objectives. The collected data were analyzed using the statistical package SPSS (version 21 for Windows 32 bits).

In most issues, the subjects wrote more than one answer, opting finally to choose the first five mentions given for each question. At the same time, the answers of the audiovisual contents were homogenized, either by errata in the writing of the titles of the films and series, or by the variability of the answers, as in the case of the number of movies seen per year, where we proceeded to categorize them into time slots for a better treatment of the data.

Once the descriptive analyses were performed, we proceeded to the inferential phase, relating the data with the variables age and gender to find possible response patterns.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

As for the favorite movies in childhood, a predominance of the Walt Disney production company was found. 35% chose as their preferred film *The Lion King* (Rob Minkoff and Roger Allers, 1994); 15% chose *Home alone* (Chris Columbus, 1990); 13%, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, William Cottrell, Larry Morey, Perce Pearce, Ben Sharpsteen, 1937); 12% *Bambi* (David Hand, James Algar, Bill Roberts, Norman Wright, Samuel Armstrong, Paul Satterfield, Graham Heid, 1942); 12% *Cinderella* (Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Lusk, 1950); 11% *ET: the Extraterrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982); and 11%, *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995).

Regarding the series of favorite cartoons, 38% chose *The Flintstones* (William Hanna, Joseph Barbera, ABC: 1960-1966); 26%, *Looney Tunes* (Rudolph Ising, Hugh Harman, 1930-); 22%, *Thundercats* (Tobin Wolf, 1985-1989); 22%, *Doragon Bōru* (Minoru Okazaki, Daisuke Nishio, Fuji Television: 1986-1989); 21%, *Mitsubachi Maya no bōken* (Hiroshi Saito, Seiji Endō, Mitsuo Kaminashi, TV Asahi: 1975-1976); 19%,

Alps no Shōjo Heidi (Isao Takahata, Fuji Television: 1974); 18%, *Majingā Zetto* (Gō Nagai, Fuji TV: 1972-1974); and 14%, *The Simpsons* (Matt Groening, FOX: 1989-).

As noted previously, the favorite content for the selected audience is of US origin. Only non-American content is found in the cartoon series, where the weight of oriental animation has had great repercussions with series such as *Doragon Bōru*, *Mitsubachi Maya no bōken* or *Heidi*.

Regarding non-animated series, the one that has been and is being more successful is *Full House* (Jeff Frankiln, ABC: 1987-1995), with 28% of people who declare it as one of their favorites. This sit-com shares genre with other series of great importance such as *Alf* (Tom Patchett, Paul Fusco, NBC: 1986-1990), with 16%; or *I dream of Jeannie* (Sidney Sheldon, NBC: 1965-1970), with 9%. Finally, there are two series of action within the *top* of the most desirable: *Power Rangers* (Haim Saban, Shuki Levy, Fox Kids: 1993-), 13%; and *MacGyver* (Lee David Zlotoff, ABC: 1985- 1992), with 8%.

Within this classification, are also the series of *the guy from 8* (Roberto Gómez Bolaños, Channel 8: 1971- 1980), with 24% of people who have chosen it; and *Malcolm in the Middle* (Linwood Boomer, FOX: 200-2006), with 9%.

Although the genre of action does not predominate so much in the non-animated series of childhood, it does in the rest of preferred content, in fact 50% of the audience prefers this genre as the first option, followed by 30% of people who opted for comedy. Males prefer action (75%) followed by the comic one (20%) and terror (5%), while women choose action and comedy to an equal extent (38% and 37%). But in addition, it is appreciated that they also choose the romantic genre (14%), terror (5%), drama and music (3% and 3%).

In turn, a very diverse distribution of genres can be observed depending on the possible age ranges. Although, in general, everyone prefers action, young people also prefer terror and comedy. With age the taste for terror decreases and the comic and especially the romantic genres gradually increase, they being the greatest preferences from the fifties on.

If these predilections extend beyond what they were liked in childhood, there is again a strong predominance of the American industry. Within the series, *The Simpsons* stands out as the only animation among all the chosen ones.

Regarding the preferred films throughout one's life, *Titanic* (James Cameron, 1997) and *Star Wars* (George Lucas, Gareth Edwards, 1977) have been the most selected with 18%. You can also find *La vita è bella* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), with 13%; *Pretty Woman* (Garry Marshall, 1990), with 11%; and *Forrest Gump* (Robert Zemeckis, 1994), with 10%.

Regarding the series that they have chosen to a greater extent, we find *Full House* with 32%, *The Simpsons*, with 26%; *Friends* (Marta Kauffman, David Crane, NBC: 1994-2004), with 24%; *Malcolm in the Middle* (Linwood Boomer, FOX: 2000-2006), with 19%; *The Big Bang Theory* (Chuck Lorre, Bill Prady, CBS: 2007-), with 14%; *The Walking Dead* (Frank Darabont, AMC: 2010-), with 14%; *He guy from 8*, with 12%; and *CSI* (Anthony E. Zuiker, CBS: 2000-), with 12%.

On the other hand, although the romantic genre does not have the same level of preference as that of action or comedy, it is found that the preferred films are mostly romantic in nature; in fact, it is observed that *Titanic* (the most valued movie throughout life) also occupies the first place in the list of romantic movies. This

would indicate that, despite having a predilection for other genres, the films that have marked the most have been romantic. Among these were: *Titanic*, *The Notebook* (Nick Cassavetes, 2004), *PS I love you* (Richard LaGravenese, 2007) and *Ghost* (Jerry Zucker, 1990).

The majority of people preferred their home (63%) as a favorite place to watch movies, as compared to 33% who preferred movie theaters (33%). Among the types of responses that were given, there was a considerable influence on the fact of watching movies in the room or in bed, especially by the young audience. On the other hand, men preferred to watch movies at home or at movie theaters, while most women preferred their home as the ideal place.

Within the preferred sagas are several of a juvenile nature, largely due to the fact that half of respondents were young. Sagas as *Harry Potter* (Chris Columbus, Alfonso Cuarón, Mike Newell, David Yates, 2001-2016), *The Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008-2013), *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the rings* (Peter Jackson, 2001-2003) and *The Fast and the Furious* (Rob Cohen, John Singleton, Justin Lin, James Wan, F. Gary Gary, 2001-).

As far as actors and actresses are concerned, it coincides that the second most valued actor (Leonardo DiCaprio) is also the protagonist of the aforementioned favorite movie (*Titanic*). However, although there are no films starring Johnny Depp among the most favorite, this actor is the favorite of respondents. In addition, in the third and fourth place would be Adam Sandler and Will Smith. Something similar happens with the most voted actress, Sandra Bullock, whose films are not among the chosen ones despite being the favorite of viewers. In second place is Julia Roberts, who stars in one of the most voted movies by the audience (*Pretty Woman*). Following on the female list are Emma Watson, Jennifer Aniston and Meryl Streep.

It should be mentioned that the choice of actors and movies, series or the film genre, were largely determined by the age of respondents. Thus, people over forty years preferred actors like Harrison Ford, films like *Star Wars*, series like *the guy from 8*, and had no predilection for the horror genre, showing this way a relationship between content liked in early ages and their preferred tastes in adulthood.

If previously it was mentioned that only a third of the audience advocated movie theaters as the ideal place to watch movies, the frequency in movie theaters confirms the scarce reception that the cinema is now having as a meeting place with the film premieres, where 70% of people go less than 5 times a year or almost never.

Just as it was commented that the romantic genre was not among the most suggested ones, even though some of the most relevant films were romantic, with the comedies it happens otherwise. As this genre is preferred by 30% of respondents, none of the following humor films that were chosen are among the favorites.

The following are among the best comedies: *The Hangover* (Todd Philips, 2009) with 13% of people who have chosen it; *Cantinflas* films, with 11%; and *Bean: the movie* (Mel Smith, 1997), with 7%. On the other hand, in the best films to see with friends, the youthful character of these films is present again, influenced again by the age of respondents. 26% determined *Fast and furious* followed by *The Hangover* with 21%.

Regarding the national filmography, the favorite film is *How Far* (Tania Hermida, 2006), followed by *Rats, mice, pickpockets thieves* (Sebastián Cordero, 1999), *Behind Your Back* (Tito Jara, 2010), *The Tigress* (Camilo Luzuriaga, 1990), *The Fisherman* (Sebastián Cordero, 2011) and *In the name of the daughter* (Tania Hermida, 2011). Even so, no Ecuadorian film was among the 10 favorite films by the audience of the country.

In reference to one's company to watch movies or series, 45% of viewers prefer to do it with their partner, 30% with their family (meaning this as the inclusion of children), 12% with friends and 8% alone. On the other hand, males prefer to see films with their partner (58%) and with their family (22%). Females choose to do it with their partner (38%) and also with their family (40%). In the same proportion both genders choose to go to movie theaters with friends (13%) and alone (approximately 9%).

Taking into account the social relationships according to age, it can be observed that younger people prefer to watch movies with friends or family, while people from thirty to fifty years old do so with their partner or family in a greater proportion than the rest.

Among the most hated films or series, we found out that the two less loved audiovisual contents are animated series (*Dragon Ball* and *The Simpsons*) which in turn were among those preferred by the audience. This polarization is largely due to the gender of respondents, where females tended to insult the series that are of great importance to males. These two were followed by *Teletubbies* (Anne Wood, Andrew Davenport, BBC Two: 1997-2001) *Futurama* (Matt Groening, FOX: 1999-2013) and *Family Guy* (Seth MacFarlane, FOX: 1999-2014).

Finally, in reference to the number of films seen per year, the majority see from eleven to thirty films per year (33%) and less than 10 (25%). The rest claim to see more than thirty films a year (15%) and even more than one hundred (15% approximately).

4.2. Discussion

Regarding the rankings found, the hypothesis of the Hollywood influence is confirmed, although some aspects to be taken into account should be highlighted.

The first is the contradiction between the preferred film genre and the genre of favorite movies. While the audience prefers action, the films that have marked them most are romantic. Appealing to uses and gratifications (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1985), that viewers are motivated to view certain genres, it does not mean in a deterministic way that these contents are the ones that provide the greatest gratification.). In turn, it would be necessary to focus on the personal environment and the socio-cultural context to understand the possible *reading compacts* that spectators make with the different film genres.

Comparing the answers concerning the habits of consumption with other pieces of research of the style, it is found that most of the analyzed data are very similar to those obtained in the "Study of film audiences in Ecuador" presented by Marketing Consulting in 2015, The results of the Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca cities coincide largely with those obtained in Ambato (Marketing Consulting, 2015).

However, compared to other countries such as Mexico (Mercawise, 2014), Argentina or Spain, among others (MECD, 2014-2015, Ríos, Matas and Gómez, 2014), differences are obtained in many aspects such as the frequency of films, the number of movies or the preferred genre.

Apart from these national discrepancies in terms of audiovisual consumption habits, the most notable aspect of this study is the American influence in the Ecuadorian audience. As Juan Martín Cueva (Executive Director of the National Film Council) argues, there is hegemony in the market, "almost a monopoly of a single source of production and also a single discourse, a single story, a single look, a single aesthetic. It is difficult to change consumption habits in a logic that has already been installed" (El Telégrafo, 10/15/2015).

Since the first Hollywood films sixty years ago, mass cinema has promoted the ideology of the American system (Little, 1987). This pattern, which was mentioned decades ago, is currently in the preferred content of the Ecuadorian public since their infancy. Therefore, the American ideology predominates since people are very young and develops throughout life, guiding and marking the attitudes and beliefs of an Andean culture developed in a context of great discrepancies in comparison with the American culture. "The real territories, the nations and the effective communities do not exist to the global cinematographic industry but as emblems" (Viñolo-Locuviche and Infante del Rosal, 2012, p. 380). Hollywood itself is nothing but a brand under which large corporations operate (Roig, 2009).

This media imperialism with Hollywood films or American television programs would cause the local and national identities of other countries to end up displaced (Zweig, 2015) and these territories to have little or no interest in their local production (Morrell, 2015).

Another interpretation points to Hollywood's successful new strategies and multi-screen exhibition chains to reinvent cinema in movie theaters as a visual and technological spectacle. In this line, the majors would increasingly concentrate their production efforts in three different but complementary strategies: create a high visual impact, perform prequels and sequels (serial formats that aim to repeat the success of a narrative formula) and direct the products to the child and / or adolescent public (Moguillansky, 2016). "This era of structural changes in Hollywood was also marked by the baby boom of the postwar period and the consequent birth of a flourishing and juicy market focused on the teenager and the youth, desired and pursued audience" (Agirre, 2014, p. 656).

To avoid falling into this reductionism on Hollywood strategies, it should be stressed that this cultural industry is very complex, each project has its own nature and each director has his own personality. There are films that, despite having a close relationship with the Hollywood industry, annihilate the stereotype of the mainstream articulated under the star-system, the light comedy, easy emotion and the happy end (Mannarino, 2005). To say that everything that is produced there is bad would be to generalize. The problem of Hollywood would be more aimed at imposing some typologies in the stories and ways of making films and marginalizing other forms, the *independent* film circuits of which would act in the end under the pretensions of Hollywood (Brown, 2014).

The fact that the results show a predominantly American film background also means leaving aside other currents of great historical significance such as those from

Europe, Asia and especially Latin America and, as a consequence, shortcomings in the spectators as far as cinematographic culture is concerned.

Another aspect of the Hollywood influence detected in this piece of research is related to a prevailing narrative scheme in which protagonist women are scarce or relegated to a romantic role biased by the heteropatriarchy (Méndez, 2016). Similarly, it would occur with the offered vision of the foreigner or of certain nationalities and cultures portrayed as enemies, barbarians or disrupters of *the US status quo* (Gelado and Sangro, 2016, Tamayo and Rincón, 2017), especially with those ethnic minorities in which a look *towards* the indigenous world rather than one *from* within predominates (Romero, 2013).

Another aspect inherited from the Hollywood mainstream would refer to a primarily realistic or naturalistic aesthetic, both at the dramaturgical level and in staging and acting; forgetting other currents, like the symbolist or expressionism; or different ways of interpreting, such as those of a gestural or mimic type; or with scenic montages more transgressors of them to which Hollywood is used.

In addition, another factor of relevance is the fact that the majority of films and series that arrive in Ecuador are dubbed into Mexican, reverberating not only in the aesthetics and narrative proposed by Hollywood but also in the way of speaking and in the cultural jargons that end up being impregnated in a different society like the Ecuadorian one.

The habits and tastes for the genre of action and the romantic one would indicate a pattern of use of the cinema as a way of escape or evasion of reality, eluding those social films or those that incite a reflection on life itself or about the reality of a socio-historical situation. This would be part of an approach that Hollywood has been doing for decades by flooding the screens with a mentality to understand cinematographic art at the service of entertainment and not from a critical or artistic perspective (Martel, 2014). This author gives the name entertainment mainstream to *the culture that everyone likes* and the initial matrix of which is developed in Hollywood. In order to achieve a global product, a medium level of taste must be maintained by eliminating everything that is too local, thus providing a formula that intends to be universal and the model of which is increasingly internationalized to other cultural industries. All try to create products *for everyone's taste*, even seeking to exceed class divisions to address an audience that feels represented by the offered material (Toussaint, 2011).

Hollywood responds, disseminates and reaffirms mainstream thinking based on the aesthetics of the show. An ephemeral and sensational aesthetic, stopped what is visual (and in some cases, like the star system, in theatricality) where immediacy is sought, as is the case of magic, illusion and extravagance. Far from being a paranoid and conspiratorial thought, it is the ideological-cultural and entertainment correlate of a business model on a global scale (Campos, 2012).

This repercussion also reaches TV, which, although at the beginning it was a rival to the cinema, in the end it ended up being a promoter of the Hollywood cinematography (Agirre, 2014). The series would be a substitute for the narrative and aesthetics of the mainstream of Hollywood, under the same schemes, principles and commercial purposes that lead to consider the fiction television industry as a faithful heir of the Hollywood mainstream (Bort, 2007). An example of this is the California company Netflix, which is increasingly monopolizing the entertainment

market with millions of users around the world but under parameters that also respond to the mainstream of Hollywood, where some of its large producers are already reducing the exhibition time among the movie theaters and committing themselves to streaming as the main means of collection, making Netflix a home blockbuster and a leader in the online broadcast of content (Velasco, 2015).

This fact is relevant enough to take action in this regard. On the one hand, the creation and promotion of national productions, audiovisual content of different kinds produced in the country, with characters and stories close to the Ecuadorian reality, and developed in a cultural context familiar to the national public.

Some measures taken by other countries go from imposing a minimum of national filmography in the movie theaters, subsidizing the cinematographic productions of the country, educating spectators in matter of cinema, to limiting the alliances between the majors of Hollywood and the multiscreen chains (Berthier and Del Rey-Reguillo, 2013; Moguillansky, 2016). The ultimate goal would not be to compel viewers or countries to reject the Hollywood industry but to facilitate and regulate access to other less alien film productions with the help of national and international policies and edu-communication programs that teach viewers to know the cinematographic, television scaffolding and the functioning of the underlying cultural industries. But especially, to value the transcendence of fiction and position cinema as the seventh art that it is, and not just as mere entertainment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The media, and specifically television, are one of the basic axes for the promotion of the education of television viewers, with a special responsibility in the education of their audiences for an active and selective consumption of their messages because, although entertainment is the central axis of television programming, "it should not go against the main human values and rights of citizens and not necessarily have to be understood against educational values" (Aguaded, 2005, p. 54).

Under this premise, not only would it be enough to create and promote national content but also to counteract the influence of the American cultural industries under a process of education in the audiences that allows them to know the functioning of the institutions dedicated to audiovisual entertainment, "their objective offer -and not manipulated or distorted- of spaces, the discovery of television genres, the clues of their language and television discourse, their technological scaffolding, the processes of construction of news, the background of programs ..." (Aguaded, 2005: 54), in short, to promote edu-communicative strategies to obtain spectators that are increasingly trained and with a critical capacity before the media (Aparici, 2011).

In this sense, it is worth mentioning that ticket prices are quite high for young people from Ajate, with the exception of Tuesday, where prices are lowered. To this we must add the tendency among the youngest to consume audiovisual products downloaded directly from the Internet and more in a country like Ecuador, where the policies of individual property rights are quite lax. Therefore, consumption is greater and is done from home, indiscriminately and especially products from Hollywood through the fourth screen that allows Internet in computers and smartphones (Castillo-Pomeda, 2016).

This broadcast of audiovisual products, mainly from the United States, helped by globalization and *ICTs*, has made universal tastes become increasingly homogeneous. If, at the dawn of the cinema, the facilities provided by the non-presence of spoken language to present messages helped to spread throughout the world a series of Jewish-Christian cultural values, easily recognizable in the West, today and after more than one century of sending messages that transformed the appetites of the spectators, the speed with which these audiovisual products are moving has made the American cultural industry preponderant.

Despite the fact that globalization itself has made local audiovisual products seen all over the world, this *glocalization* cannot confront, on equal terms, the powerful construction of imaginarieness that Hollywood supplies.

In addition, the national component is not very present when choosing content to consume. On the one hand, it seems that western tastes have been homogenized and, on the other hand, there is not too much national or regional offer to choose from, especially considering the avalanche from the north of the continent that covers the billboards, leaving no room for such an offer to be displayed. Although there are films like *Mono with hens* (Alfredo León León, 2013) or *With my heart in Yambo* (María Fernanda Restrepo, 2011) that have managed to make room in the most important movie theaters, it is necessary to take into account that, to achieve it, they had first of all to get several international awards.

Therefore, it is pertinent to become aware of the importance of the entertainment industry in the formation of the collective imaginarieness and in the persistence of cultural patterns inherited from a context that is not Ecuadorian, promoting an audience education for good audiovisual consumption, guided by government institutions and covering the different areas of national communication.

This way, it is possible that, in the near future, the Ecuadorian public can be proud of their production and that it can be the point of reference with which to guide themselves culturally and socially.

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