The transformation of the Latin American television industry clearly exposes the profound impact of neoliberal policies throughout the region, including the multiplication of distribution windows, trends toward media concentration, and changes in the modalities by which global media corporations are rooting in local and national television industries. Miller and Leger argue that runaway productions are the means by which Hollywood outsources production to developing countries to realize cost advantages via flexible labor, low wages, low prices, tax incentives, cheap accommodations, and access to material, cultural, and symbolic infrastructure, all the while maintaining tight central administrative and financial control. This New International Division of Cultural Labor (NICL) allows global corporations to expand their transnational presence; however, capital accumulation and profit revenues stay close to the conglomerates’ homes. Given this new media industrial order, Hesmondhalgh argues that media conglomerates acting as large bureaucracies increasingly rely on professionals from small production houses to provide creativity and innovation.

Given this scenario, labor conventions in Latin American television are changing dramatically. The incursion of global media conglomerates in local markets across the region has caused unanticipated alliances with local independent production houses, or “indies,” which have traditionally been subject to the disproportionate power of the major national television networks in their respective countries. This combination of circumstances has led to disparate outcomes. On the one hand, the presence of global conglomerates has problematically spurred the region’s further incorporation into global capitalism, allowing penetration of Western media in countries where they were formerly confronted by institutional,
linguistic, and cultural barriers tied to dynamics of local television consumption. On the other hand, these circumstances present an opportunity for indies to produce different kinds of television projects for national and regional markets, bypassing the long-standing monopoly of national television networks.

The fact that there are just a few indies in each domestic market with the capacity to produce for television networks with national distribution is symptomatic of their precarious status, and exposes their vulnerable position within an industry dominated by national or multinational media conglomerates. Following Miller’s reasoning, “Cultural labor incarnates this latter-day loss of life-long employment and relative income security among the Global North’s industrial proletarian and professional-managerial classes”; accordingly, the very existence of indies relies on access to media professionals obeying the dynamics of flexible labor, nonunion status, and lack of long-term health or retirement benefits, which are crucial to the sustainability of their business models. These labor conditions are at the core of what Curtin and Sanson describe as “precarious livelihoods,” which are “indicative of a new world order of social and economic instability.”

I argue that there is a fundamental difference among the production dynamics of film and television in transnational settings that are largely shaped by the relation with local/national audiences. So it comes as no surprise that some authors in this volume, such as Szczepanik in the case of transnational ventures with television conglomerates in the Czech Republic or Keane in the case of television in China, recognize the impact of the NICL and its insidious effects on creative labor and local economies and also complicate the landscape, avoiding a causal and unidirectional effect of these global processes. For instance, in Latin America, where Hollywood cinema overwhelmingly dominates the box office in every domestic market, a different scenario appears in television, where the programming of national/regional networks overwhelmingly dominates prime time and achieves high ratings because of the cultural proximity of their products. As a result, while multinationals still rely on the advantageous agreements they receive in national markets and the flexible labor their productions require, these global television corporations also need indies and local professionals, who become valuable assets, albeit temporarily, helping to connect their content with local audiences.

So indies of different sizes with diverse financial and technical infrastructures now participate in projects ranging from low-budget documentaries and journalism to midbudget games and reality shows to the most expensive fictional series, telenovelas, and movies. Indies’ status across the region has grown because they can provide professional staff and talent to produce innovative narratives along with linguistic and cultural input that transnational corporations need to penetrate national and regional markets. In spite of these new opportunities for indie producers, it’s not clear that these new opportunities have as yet had a positive effect on wages and working conditions.
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LATIN AMERICAN TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Throughout Latin America since the 1950s, television has been the primary audio-visual medium. During this decade, the growth of a national television institution was central to the process of modernization and nation building across the region. Simultaneously, U.S. technologies and the commercial model of broadcasting were important engines for the growth of the medium across the region; Sinclair and Straubhaar have described this process as an interdependent relationship in which U.S. economic, commercial, and technological interests intertwined with the interests of national economic and political elites. Within this pattern, national markets developed in relatively distinctive ways. The development of Latin American television was shaped by specific conditions that include market size (population and purchasing power), market structure (monopoly, oligopoly, and competition), broadcasting regulations (private-commercial, state-owned, or hybrid), social and political instability (military coups, social movements, revolutions, and repression), and the visibility and impact of previously established cultural flows across the region, particularly radio and film.

As for content, U.S. programming became a television staple across Latin America during the early years, but national productions took the lead in countries where producers were able to achieve comparable production values. Prime-time television in major markets, such as Mexico and Brazil, has been largely monopolized by national networks that produced most of their programming in-house. These not only dominated their national markets, they also became leading exporters, and their studios became the primary employers of the television labor force in their domestic markets. In smaller markets with lower production capacities, prime time has been populated with content coming from these major regional producers rather than U.S. studios, due largely to audience preferences for culturally proximate programming.

In major markets in Latin America, the leading networks were free to produce and broadcast their own content with little regulatory oversight. They built impressive studio facilities and dominated distribution, thereby limiting the possibilities for independent producers. However, the development of the industry across the region did not follow the same patterns. In Mexico, Brazil, and Venezuela, hegemonic networks dominated domestic markets from the very beginning; in contrast, in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, TV production was disrupted or fragmented as a result of dramatic political changes brought about by military coups in the 1970s and authoritarian forms of government throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. Colombia, which was similarly affected by political uncertainties, developed a hybrid television model wherein networks were state-owned but the content was largely produced by private production companies (programadoras). In the long run, certain levels of media atomization, with an array of independent
production entities and market competition, boosted creativity and stylistic diversity in these countries.20

During the 1990s, the implementation of media policies of privatization, deregulation, and liberalization coupled with new technological scenarios triggered the emergence of new windows of delivery through broadcasting, cable, satellite, and the Internet. Deregulation also encouraged a trend toward vertical and horizontal integration that enhanced the muscle of the already powerful national networks, allowing them to build alliances and expand into new sectors.21 However, new national television networks have been launched in parallel, establishing new competitors that are scrambling to secure talent and content to ensure their economic survival. This scenario has been complicated by the slow but steady increase in the presence of transnational networks through cable and satellite television. An increasing localization effort made by global conglomerates (Comcast/NBC-U, 21st Century Fox, Disney/ABC, Sony, Viacom, and TimeWarner/HBO) has resulted in them tailoring programming that could be successful locally in a Latin American market, as well as luring audiences in the U.S. Hispanic market and other countries in the region. Independent producers have thus become a key resource within specific national markets to achieve a successful presence locally and to reach a larger, regional market. This has produced a struggle for talent in which dominant national television networks have tightened their grip, leading to lawsuits against actors and producers working with competing networks.22 Therefore, global conglomerates, such as Sony, 21st Century Fox, and Comcast/NBC-U, have had to look elsewhere for professional teams and talent, increasingly establishing alliances, albeit temporary ones, with indies that house professional labor and talent, through joint ventures, coproduction, or takeovers.

INDEPENDENTS IN THE CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE OF TELEVISION INDUSTRIES

The Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (Obitel) reports that in 2013, there were forty-eight national television broadcasting networks in seven of the most important Latin American markets.23 Despite this seeming diversity, the domination of these national markets still falls in the hands of a few corporations. Out of the forty-eight networks, only twelve play a prominent role in these seven major markets. In most cases, two networks hold more than 90 percent of the national audience share.24 There is a correlation between these networks’ prominent market position and their capability to produce their own prime-time content, in particular fictional programming. Big-budget projects such as telenovelas are mostly produced in-house by these networks, but in today’s competitive environment these networks increasingly hire indies to produce series and miniseries that require innovative approaches.
The pressure to innovate derives from the fact that the multinationals are making use of cable and satellite services to gain a foothold in national markets. By 2013, 55 percent of Latin American households had access to these new services, and in some key markets, such as Argentina, more than 80 percent of households had access. These changes are reflected in ratings as well. Latin American Multichannel Advertising Council (LAMAC) reports that broadcast TV audience share fell from 86 percent in 2005 to 70 percent in 2014, while pay TV audience share rose from 14 to 30 percent in the same period. Moreover, the pay TV audience is generally more affluent and therefore more desirable to ad-based and subscription television companies. Given this media landscape, transnational television networks are increasingly making investments to localize programming with the aid of local indie producers.

The new battle to effectively capture “desirable commercial audiences” in a newly populated industrial scenario brought about innovation but also the rehashing and remaking of “proven ideas and formulas” to successfully appeal to national and transnational audiences. In the case of indies working for the television industry, their size, budget, and production capacities are reflected in the kind of television programming they can offer their clients. In today’s television landscape, there is great demand for documentaries, global formats (particularly reality TV), and fictional formats (particularly series), which range from small- to large-scale productions.

Despite the growing number of independent production houses, most have a short life span, and very few produce for the national television networks that can reach mass audiences. “Here, house productions last very few years,” acknowledged an executive producer of Laberinto Producciones in Colombia. While his production company is twenty years old, his assertion underscores the rarity of its position. In a similar statement, an executive producer from Argos Communication, Mexico, states that most transnational companies looking to produce a telenovela would have to select from only a few production houses: “Anybody who pretends to have strong presence in Mexico by producing more than a hundred episodes is going to face complications. In Mexico only we can do that.” Similarly, an artistic director from Del Barrio Producciones in Peru recognizes that “there are really few production houses that have the economic means to produce at that level.” These assertions reveal the challenges these production houses face in the context of their structural industrial relationship with the gatekeepers of distribution: the television networks. A handful of networks have the power to decide what gets produced and distributed nationally and, ultimately, internationally. National TV networks set the terms in contract negotiations, generally offering one of three options: they offer a flat producer’s fee and retain the copyright; they forge a coproduction agreement based on the investments of the respective partners, with each retaining distribution rights for specific territories; or they agree to broadcast a program that is fully financed by the independent production house, which retains the copyright. In spite of these three options, most indies can’t risk producing their own content because a single failure would likely bankrupt the
company. Most commonly, an indie producer will pitch an idea to the networks. If the network is interested, it offers the first option and the producer accepts, reasoning that there will be a secure flow of income to keep the studio staff employed. When dealing with successful producers, networks commonly offer “exclusive” conditions through “volume content agreements,” signing the producer for a number of projects. In other cases, a network will sign an agreement with a successful producer that gives it a “first look” at all new projects. Such agreements allow the network access to top material and give it the option to buy a project and shelve it for an indefinite period so that it doesn’t fall into the hands of a competitor.

GENRE AND FORMATS DIVISION OF LABOR

The key role indies play at local, national, or transnational levels results from their flexible accommodation to television networks’ needs. The networks’ requirements matched with the capacity and infrastructure of local indies largely define the kind of genre and television formats that indies can afford to produce. Channels like Discovery or NatGeo have employed smaller indie houses to produce television formats that do not require large numbers of employees. Documentaries, docu-reality, and journalism have become an important source of content production for indies, as they permit cheaper formats and shorter time commitments. At the same time, these productions represent spaces for innovation and creativity by the producers and scheduling flexibility for the networks.

Fictional programming, in contrast, requires major commitments from both network and producer, so larger indies, some with international reputations, tend to prevail in this genre. Fictional programming is costly, requires larger infrastructure, and quite crucially, depends on access to top-line talent. This is especially true with telenovelas, which usually involve the production of around one hundred episodes. By contrast, series and miniseries provide a more secure space for indies for a couple of reasons: economically, they are shorter projects that involve less risk and demand for resources; creatively, they offer scope for innovation that telenovelas rarely offer. While series have fewer episodes than telenovelas, the fact that they continue through different seasons can ensure the economic well-being of the indie and its employees for several years. For networks, in contrast, telenovelas help them make optimal and daily use of their studio infrastructure and human resources. Keeping larger projects like telenovelas in-house allows the promotion of network talent and the full exploitation of commercial opportunities.

THE ASYMMETRICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIE HOUSES AND TELEVISION NETWORKS

Even though independents provide creative possibilities free from the constraints of network in-house productions, most still lack the economic, technological, and
labor capacity to produce their own content without the financial backing of a television network or a major sponsor. An executive producer from Blind Spot, Mexico, describes this model as one of “interdependency.” Even in cases where a production house has the means to produce its own content, the executive producer argues, “they still depend on having clients who want to buy this specific content.” In some way, the producer from Blind Spot is subtly recognizing its condition of dependency on clients and television networks.

Argos is an interesting example of the challenges faced by indie producers, even though it is one of the most important indie houses in the large television market of Mexico. Its prestige as a leading producer of “quality fiction for TV” was achieved initially when Argos worked for TV Azteca (1995–2000) and produced some of the most innovative telenovelas from that decade. Ultimately a battle over distribution rights led TV Azteca to part ways with the indie in 2000. That year Argos reached an agreement with Telemundo to produce 1,200 hours of fictional programming, but in this case Argos used its leverage to secure a share of distribution rights in international markets. A screenwriter working with the Argos team recalls that Telemundo was willing to make concessions so long as Argos would shape its production to accommodate a specific U.S. Latino demographic as well as Mexican audiences. Argos worked exclusively for Telemundo until 2007, then with TV Azteca again until 2010, when it struck a production agreement with Cadena Tres, a rising new network targeting upscale audiences. Argos was encouraged to innovate as a way to enhance Cadena Tres’s profile. As one Argos writer described it, “I was expressly asked to be polemical and controversial with a new project called Las Aparicio. It was delightful to have almost total freedom.”

Seeking to distinguish itself from the dominant networks, Televisa and TV Azteca, Cadena Tres “had nothing to lose and too much to gain.” However, the precarious position of independents is interestingly exemplified by Argos’s executive producer when he talks about its relation with Cadena Tres. He remembers that the indie, challenged by the economic crisis of the time, proposed a new business model: “First, Cadena Tres provides part of the cost while Argos provides an in-kind contribution [pago por especie] and some economic investment, and then both look for a third partner.” Argos invited Colombia’s Caracol TV as a third partner, but the producer recalls that “when two television networks got together [Cadena Tres and Caracol TV], they asked themselves, what do we need Argos for?” So TV Caracol and Cadena Tres moved along on a new production agreement, leaving Argos behind.

Increasingly, there is a great deal of transnational deal-making between networks and independent production houses, much of it motivated by the desire to attract audiences in multiple markets. The key role of Argos is best exemplified by the indies’ collaboration in Telemundo’s La reina del sur in 2011, a coproduction that included RTI (Colombia) and Antena 3 (Spain). La reina del sur featured a
transnational flow of characters with a drug trafficking narrative that was filmed in Bogota, Mexico City, Miami, and Melilla, Spain, with production teams in each location, a strategy I call “reglocalization,” based on a “network cities system of production.” La reina del sur proved to be one of the most successful telenovelas in recent memory for Telemundo. Later, El señor de los cielos (2013), a new coproduction of Telemundo with Colombia’s Caracol TV and the collaboration of Argos, became the second most popular production in Telemundo’s history, only surpassed by La reina. That telenovela earned an Emmy in 2014 and propelled a new collaboration between Telemundo and Argos to produce new successful seasons of El señor de los cielos 2 (2014), 3 (2015), and 4 (forthcoming), but this time without Caracol TV. This series of successes set the stage for a new programming/production strategy that Telemundo has called “super series.”

The new set of corporate relationships that localized transnational ventures producing Spanish-language fictional programming is best exemplified by HBO’s incursion into Mexico in partnership with Argos and by Sony’s into Colombia in partnership with Laberinto Producciones. After prior experiences in Argentina and Brazil, HBO in 2007 announced its strategic partnership with Argos to produce Capadocia (2008) for Mexican and regional markets. By 2014, HBO had experience producing with indies across the region, with eighteen television series produced in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay. While working for HBO on Capadocia, one screenwriter remembers that she had a lot of creative freedom, which allowed the inclusion of “a lot of things that were vox populi, but nobody expected to see on television, not even on cable.” At the same time, “the expectation was to have an international product with high production values, with high-quality scripts.” Because of these expectations, “the budget and investment of the company were considerably higher,” and she added, “they paid us very well.” She recognizes that HBO supervised the project but never really interfered in creative decisions or practiced any kind of censorship.

Sony’s presence in the Colombian television market can be exemplified by the production of Los caballeros las prefieren brutas with indie producer Laberinto Producciones. Sony’s partnership with the Colombian indie seems to be similar to HBO’s and Argos’s in Mexico, as described by an executive producer from Laberinto Producciones. Sony read the scripts and supervised the project but did not interfere too much with creative decisions. The producer explains, “For Sony it was an experiment that had its own risks, and they tried to understand how it works from a different creative point of view. They saw that some things function differently in Latin America, and they were open to that.”

In contrast, argues the Colombian producer, when a national network deals with an indie, it tries to interfere as much as possible in creative decisions to ensure that the product meets the network’s goals. For instance, some of the most sensitive decisions in which networks intervene are in casting, to promote their own
talent, followed by interfering in narrative strategies to please clients and their target audience. For example, an artistic director from Del Barrio Producciones in Peru argues that “sometimes we approach the network to pitch a story, and we want to make it with specific leading talent. Sometimes the channel buys the story but objects to the leading talent, and we need to change it.”

LABOR STRUGGLES, ACCOMMODATIONS, AND STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL

Creative professionals face an array of challenges in their mostly unstable work settings across the region. These involve a lack of steady jobs and an absence of work benefits such as health insurance, retirement funds, paid vacations, and maternity leave. Most workers are nonunionized, and their employers are themselves subordinate to the power of national networks and multinational conglomerates. Both workers and management sense the precariousness of their situation. Their only leverage resides in the growing demand for content and the fierce competition for talent. Given that, the relationship between these rather small business entities and their creative labor is shaped by complex and intertwined conditions of professionalism, emotional attachment, creative styles, and in many cases “family”-style ties and relationships.

There are several sizes and modalities of production indies bring to the audiovisual realm. Many houses produce advertising and corporate and institutional content as a way to maintain a healthy income. They also keep their payrolls trim, commonly anchored by three to ten permanent office employees and a network of freelance creatives. Indies typically rely on the prestige and connections of particular professionals, mostly the producers themselves. So, while a company might be initially founded by a famous actor, director, writer, producer, or venture capitalist, most commonly its ongoing operations are led by a producer who is the owner, co-owner, or CEO of the company.

While varying in size, indies nevertheless tend to have similar staffing patterns. They routinely hire administrative personnel for the office, including accountants, administrators, secretaries, and office assistants. In larger companies, especially those producing fictional programming, there is also a second group of permanent employees, mostly technicians and manual laborers. In some cases, there is an editor on staff and a few other below-the-line professionals who enjoy permanent contracts and legal benefits such as health benefits, retirement funds, vacations, and compensation in case of a layoff. Yet they employ mostly a nonunionized workforce.

When launching a particular project, the company hires above-the-line creative professionals on temporary contracts at higher wages but with no legal benefits. These professionals are nonunionized, and although many are paid quite well, their work stints are unpredictable, punctuated by regular periods of unemployment.
without benefits. These professionals include writers, directors, actors, photographers, casting experts, art and costume designers, and many others. They constitute a floating labor force that offers its services either to independent producers or to fill the needs of network in-house production teams on particular projects. However, there are some working conditions that vary by country. In Mexico, freelance laborers take care of their individual health expenses and save for retirement. In Uruguay, individuals are hired through a personnel company that provides benefits, while in Colombia workers have benefits via payroll.

In terms of stability, freelancers are in the most vulnerable position, always pursuing the next gig by offering their services to multiple clients in different audiovisual sectors. At the same time, some workers embrace the flexibility and freedom of being able to change jobs and negotiate working conditions. An executive producer from the Uruguayan indie house Microtime argues, “There are professionals who prefer a freelance status because that allows them to manage their lives. They take vacations when they want. They do not want to ask permission from their boss, producer, and that kind of flexibility works very well for them.” At the same time, this kind of freedom comes with a downside: according to an Argos screenwriter, “I cannot plan my life more than two or three months in advance. If I have earned money from a project, I need to save and take care until I find the next one.” Interviewees explained that forging a good professional reputation is essential to keeping themselves in the labor force. Intelligence, talent, technical and artistic abilities, and work ethic are considered to be essential elements for survival. Work continuity and stability are linked to gaining the producers’ trust.

Interestingly, the small number of highly visible indie productions and their small size tend to create tight relationships within professional circles. Work relations are permeated with emotional ties and a sense of common artistic purpose. Some executive producers from indie houses refer to their permanent staff members and regular freelancers as family, saying they want to take care of professionals who have worked with them for a long time by offering a sense of stability. An artistic director from Del Barrio says it’s “because we know that these workers have families, and they have worked for us too many years. So, yes, there is an emotional element.” Thus, just as emotional and pecuniary relations are intertwined, so too is the artistic sensibility that permeates some of the indie shops. This is often described as a common outlook on how television should be made, a shared understanding in the realm of either aesthetics or ideology. As opposed to the conventions of in-house network productions, these creative teams believe that indie shops are the perfect space to make something different. The professional profiles of the leading indie producers seem to permeate the institutional culture of their production houses, creating personal bonds around common artistic goals, including innovation and brand distinctiveness that set them apart from the dominant network studios.
CONCLUSION

The new media landscape, with its myriad windows of video distribution and the changes brought about by digital conversion, appears to offer new opportunities to regional indie producers. It remains to be seen, however, if these opportunities can be translated into real improvements in labor conditions. There are already urgent questions about low pay and unstable labor conditions prevalent in the region.

Moreover, the transformation of the media landscape as a result of larger structural processes offers a complex industrial scenario in which the integration of the region into global capitalism leads to battles between national and transnational corporations. In this scenario, different entities are taking advantage of the structural conditions and flexible labor of indie producers. A visible element that underscores the differences among national television industries has been the nature and role of indie productions within these national markets. However, in spite of these differences, the indie production sphere first emerged in relation to powerful national television networks. Those relations have recently been challenged by the emergence of a new generation of “indies” wholly owned by large conglomerates or independently owned but closely related to them. The presence of transnational companies now competing with national networks or collaborating with them offers opportunities to professionals, but at the same time they are competing in an industrial space that would otherwise have been occupied by local companies. Fox-Telecolombia (21st Century Fox), Teleset (Sony), RTI (NBC), Cuatro Cabezas (Eye-Works), Endemol, Zodiak (Di Agostini), and FremantleMedia are striking “volume agreements” with television networks that allow them continuity in production but also show the large professional and financial capabilities of these “indies.”

Beyond these new transnational indies, national and local entities are struggling to survive by deploying a variety of strategies. Their existence and roles go far beyond the realm of television industries, offering a diversity of services to different companies and producing a variety of programming, including films, documentaries, and corporate or educational videos. Consequently, they need to be flexible and scale their workforce to the shifting demands of their clients. As described by the executive producer from Blind Spot, producers need to have the capacity to bring the right people to a specific project, but they also need to have the economic resources to deliver. Prestige, capacity of delivery, and proven success are required elements in this equation. Success in delivery defines some level of continuity for these indies, while failure may lead to their demise.

Similarly, professionals working for indies offer their services to an array of potential clients, opening doors for possible future projects. To lessen the anxieties of job uncertainty, professionals actively work at networking and diversifying their skills. Some of the professionals revealed that they combine short-term and long-term strategies to survive. As the artistic director from Del Barrio Producciones explains, working for advertisers pays well, while producing television series is
not as profitable; however, waiting for a paycheck from an advertising firm takes several months, while working for television offers a monthly paycheck.

The defining feature of independent production houses is that they are separate from the corporations that own the means of content distribution: the television networks. This definition is also at the center of their vulnerability, which has been reframed by professionals as a space of opportunity. While lacking the stability of permanent jobs, these professionals are motivated by notions of innovation and creativity as well as specific ideological convictions and aesthetic commitments. They believe that talent and skill can create success, while their emphasis upon gaining the trust of producers is a prevailing notion that fits into a market-oriented economic approach which requires the *illusion* of free competition. Within this ideological framework, this free-floating army of professionals seems to conceive of unionized labor and hiring quotas as constraints upon the very specific creative needs of particular projects. The lack of permanent job status is also reinterpreted as a lifestyle choice representing agency and freedom. Following Bourdieu's explanation of the dynamics of the field of cultural production, these professionals take innovation, socially–oriented narratives, and quality production as their reasons for working for indies as an assumed restricted space within the larger field of television production. Paradoxically, the precarious conditions of this sector seem to be precisely the ideological engine that supports professionals’ imagined conditions of freedom, creativity, and innovation.

NOTES

1. Toby Miller and Marie C. Leger, “Runaway Production, Runaway Consumption, Runaway Citizenship: The New International Division of Cultural Labor,” *Emergences* 11.1 (2001): 89–115.
2. David Hesmondhalgh, *Cultural Industries*, 2d ed. (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2006).
3. In the last five years there has been a reformulation of telecommunication laws in the main domestic markets across the region with respect to quotas on the distribution of national and independently produced content with economic incentives for independent productions; however, the results of such legislation are uneven.
4. Toby Miller, chapter 2 in this volume.
5. Michael Curtin and Kevin Sanson, chapter 1 in this volume.
6. Petr Szczepanik, chapter 7 in this volume.
7. Michael Keane, chapter 16 in this volume.
8. Joseph Straubhaar, “Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependency and Cultural Proximity,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991): 39–59.
9. Among the most visible indies are Argos, Adicta Films, El Mall, Lemon, and Canana Film, Blind Spot in Mexico; RTI, Teleset, Vista Producciones, FoxTelecolombia, Laberinto Producciones, BETV in Colombia; Cuatro Cabezas, Underground, Ideas del Sur, RGB, Chris Morena, Pol-ka, and Endemol in Argentina; Del Barrio Producciones, Imizu, Teatro Libre, and Sol Entertainment Producciones in Perú; and Bueno Puerto Producciones, Valcine Producciones, Wood Producciones, and My Friend Entertainment Producciones in Chile. Conspiração Filmes, HBO O2 Filmes, and Mixer Brazil represent the most visible examples of a much larger group of indies.
10. The recognition of the Latin American television context is the product of years of research as part of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (Obitel); but this chapter is based on ethnographic work done at NATPE in summer 2012, and a handful of interviews done in Fall 2014 with high executives and above-the-line creative personnel from independent production houses: Blind Spot and Argos (Mexico), Laberinto Producciones (Colombia), Del Barrio Producciones (Peru), and MicroTime (Uruguay). The pool of interviewees from independent production houses is composed of six top executives. Their shared characteristics are active involvement in the production of television programming for television networks in their countries as well as involvement in coproduction or commissioned productions, particularly fiction, with a U.S. or global media conglomerate.

11. Jesús Martín-Barbero, “Memory and Form in the Latin American Soap Opera,” in The Television Studies Reader, ed. Robert Allen & Annette Hill (London: Routledge, 2004).

12. James Schwoch, The American Radio Industry and Its Latin American Activities, 1900–1939 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

13. Noreene Janus, “Advertising and the Mass Media in the Era of the Global Corporation,” in Communication and Social Structure: Critical Studies in Mass Media Research, ed. Emile McAnany, Jorge Schnitman, and Noreene Janus (New York: Praeger, 1981).

14. John Sinclair and Joseph Straubhaar, Latin American Television Industries (London: British Film Institute, 2013).

15. Elizabeth Fox, Latin American Broadcasting: From Tango to Telenovela (Bedfordshire: University of Luton and John Libbey Media, 1997); Elizabeth Fox and Silvio Waisbord, eds., Latin Politics, Global Media (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

16. Joseph Straubhaar, World Television from Global to Local (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007).

17. Joseph Straubhaar, “Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependency and Cultural Proximity,” Critical Studies in Mass Communication 8 (1991): 39–59.

18. Guillermo Orozco, ed., Historias de la televisión en América Latina (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2003).

19. Ibid.

20. Nora Mazziotti, La industria de la telenovela: La producción de ficción en América Latina (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1996).

21. Raúl Trejo, “Muchos medios en pocas manos: Concentración televisiva y democracia en América Latina,” Revista Brasileira de ciencias da comunicação 33.1 (2010): 17–51.

22. For instance in Mexico, TV Azteca sued Alan Tatcher for working with indie Nostromo in a new reality show for Telemundo in 2006; TV Azteca also sued talent working with indie Argos in a series for Cadena Tres in 2013.

23. There were five in Argentina, six in Brazil, seven in Chile, five in Colombia, seven in Ecuador, five in Mexico, six in Peru, four in Uruguay and fourteen in Venezuela. Guillermo Orozco and Maria I. Vassalo, eds., Transmedia Production Strategies in Television Fiction (Porto Alegre, Brazil: Globo Comunicação e Participações and Sulina Editora, 2014).

24. In Mexico, Televisa and TV Azteca hold 95 percent of the audience share; in Colombia, RCN and Caracol TV holds 97 percent; in Venezuela, Venevisión and Televén 81 percent; in Brazil, TV Globo holds 40 percent; in Argentina, El Trece and Telefe hold 60 percent; in Peru, America TV, ATV and Frecuencia Latina hold 86 percent; and in Chile Canal 13, Chilevisión, and TVN hold 70 percent of the audience share. Ibid.

25. LAMAC, “Penetracion de TV de paga,” Latin American Multichannel Advertising Council, www.lamac.org/.

26. Interview with executive producer from Laberinto Producciones, Colombia, November 25, 2014.

27. Interview with executive producer from Argos, Mexico, January 29, 2013.

28. Interview with artistic director from Del Barrio Producciones, Peru, November 27, 2014.

29. Interview with executive producer from Blind Spot, Mexico, November 19, 2014.
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