

Development, production and exhibition of documentaries on video platforms. Analysis of four works related to Peru.

Desarrollo, producción y exhibición de documentales en plataformas de video. Análisis de cuatro obras vinculadas al Perú

10

ARTICLE



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Abstract

This research explores the way of working, from the development of the project to the premiere, of four documentaries linked to Peru that were shown in commercial movie theaters and on video streaming platforms. The research and analysis carried out points to the position taken by producers and directors to be cautious about the exhibition on video streaming platforms, recommending to calmly verify the alternatives that allow them to make their work more profitable during the lifetime of the same.

KEYWORDS

Documentary, video streaming, production, distribution, exhibition, Peru

Resumen

Esta investigación explora el modo de trabajo, desde el desarrollo del proyecto hasta el estreno, de cuatro documentales vinculados al Perú. Estos fueron exhibidos en salas de cine comerciales y en plataformas de video en *streaming*. La investigación y análisis efectuados apuntan a que la postura tomada por productores y directores es ser prudentes frente a la exhibición en plataformas de video *streaming*, por lo que recomiendan verificar con calma las alternativas que permiten rentabilizar, de una mejor manera, su obra durante el tiempo de vida que dure la misma.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Documental, video *streaming*, producción, distribución, exhibición, Perú

1. INTRODUCTION

The way we watch movies, series, or audiovisual products has changed significantly in recent years. Netflix, an over-the-top (OTT) platform that launched its current service in 2007, revolutionized the market and the audiovisual entertainment sector in Peru at the beginning of the last decade. This platform offered an easier way to access hundreds of movies and series by simply logging into an application that could be accessed from a TV or laptop.

Today, Netflix shares the global market share of streaming video platforms with others such as HBO Max, Disney Plus, Star Plus, or Amazon Prime Video. In recent years, it has been observed that there are movies or series that can only be found on a specific platform. This is because the platforms own the exhibition rights of the product; in some cases, there are

audiovisual productions that are original to the platform. The latter means that the platform was involved in the production and, therefore, owns the rights to the product.

Some of the most representative cases of this dynamic are the series *House of Cards* (Willimon, 2013-2018) and *Stranger Things* (Duffer and Duffer, 2016-2023) on Netflix. The same happens with *Game of Thrones* (Benioff and Weiss, 2011-2019) on HBO.

Beyond the dominant fiction genre, this film production and distribution logic also applies to the nonfiction and documentary genres. While there are documentaries that can be viewed on specific streaming video services (which own the rights to use the production for a certain period of time), other documentaries are conceived as original products of the plat-

form. These types of productions could belong to the same platform in perpetuity.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that the current market for audiovisual productions is very dynamic and changing. For this reason, platforms should not abandon any strategy to make their business more profitable.

For this reason, a smaller percentage of documentary projects no longer go through the long, tedious, and even exhausting process of raising funds at national and regional levels. These funds are used to finance and execute all phases of the project.

A project can take an average of five years, from the time the idea is conceived to the time it is shown in theaters or on exhibition platforms. The most important prerequisite for this years-long process is the hope that a platform will find the production proposal viable and agree to finance it. As a result, members of the documentary production team do not have to worry so much about fundraising but rather focus on meeting deadlines for the production of the documentary. In the process, they ensure optimal economic return but avoid the anxiety of knowing whether their project will ever see the light of day and be exhibited.

However, this dynamic can create some complications for creators. In the best case, their project may be seen by an entire continent or a specific market. In many cases, however, the platform will appropriate the work's rights and be able to do whatever it wants with the product during its useful life. Faced with these new production and distribution logics, the hypothesis proposed aims to answer the question of whether this new way of producing a documentary project is the most appropriate for workers in the audiovisual sector and, by extension,

how much interference and detachment they are willing to give up to the platforms.

For this reason, it is essential to understand the position of producers and directors regarding the future exhibition of their work. This is because although the work reaches a much larger number of people when exhibited on a streaming video platform, some agreements and conditions take away certain rights from the filmmakers and original owners. These rights end up favoring the digital platform.

This situation is key to understanding which strategy is most appropriate during the life of the documentary. The goal is to achieve maximum profitability through various exhibition openings. At the same time, this research aims to provide valuable data, insights, and opportunities for agreements that are not necessarily exclusive. This will allow those involved in audiovisual art to make important decisions in order to reach a wider audience.

Therefore, it is essential to understand how to make a profitable feature film that will have an impact on a significant number of people. It is also important to know how to find stability in the different stages of production and distribution of a documentary project, which also provides fair remuneration for the entire team. We also want to know how to guarantee that the documentary will be seen not only in the country of origin but also in other countries.

These three issues, which are the focus of this paper, lead to an assessment of whether it is really worthwhile to partner with a streaming video platform to ensure the viability of a documentary film.

This research focuses on the profound change in the logic of production, distribution, and ex-

hibition that documentaries are experiencing in streaming video content platforms. It delves into the analysis of the development, financing, structure, theme, and distribution of four documentary projects related to Peru. This generates the possibility of identifying and knowing if there are significant changes in the different phases of the realization of a documentary project.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 CURRENT CONTEXT OF STREAMING PLATFORMS

A decade ago, the generic and conventional way to make a film was to get mixed funding - public and private - and apply to film competitions around the world. This allowed you to get more funding to start shooting the project; this funding also had to consider the post-production of the work.

Then came the distribution phase of the film, whether it was fiction, non-fiction, or experimental. The last stage of the projects that reached this point was the exhibition of the film at various international festivals; in the best cases, awards and mentions were obtained at these festivals. In this way, the film could be screened in cinemas, also in foreign ones, trying to reach as many people as possible.

By the beginning of 2023, the panorama and the market of streaming video platforms had increased significantly. For example, for the first time since their emergence and consolidation, many business or technology portals claim that the major streaming platforms plan to include ads that alternate with their content offerings;

this was not considered years ago. Attracting more subscribers by offering original content is expensive for the platforms; therefore, these platforms are struggling with the loss of users. This has led to the cancellation of several original productions in order to make the business more profitable.

Generating attractive content, reducing the cost of million-dollar productions, and offering original content in their catalogs that has been produced on a limited budget are some of the options for monetizing the business of streaming video platforms. In this context, this scenario can be a great opportunity for filmmakers and audiovisual producers in Latin America, and in this case, Peru, to present their projects to the platforms and ensure that the work will be accessible to millions of people around the world.

Although the production and exhibition of Peruvian films with a wide variety of themes has increased in recent years, it is worth noting that local themes important to the Peruvian collective imagination may not find their place in the content of the major platforms. As a result, some productions may be relegated to seeking traditional financing through the public promotion of the audiovisual sector. This creates uncertainty since there is no guarantee that the message or the film will be accessible to the masses.

2.2. STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FILM PROJECT

The time it takes to complete a film project varies greatly depending on a number of factors, as well as the nature of the project itself. More independent projects may take longer than

commercially oriented projects; however, three to five years is generally considered an average from the start of a project to its release in theaters or on streaming video platforms.

In the book *Financiamiento, distribución y marketing del cine peruano*, it is pointed out that “viability is equally determined by the project’s potential to continue calling for grants or co-productions” (Tamayo and Hendrickx, 2018, p.16). Its authors define, in the publication, the stages or phases that are budgeted in a film project. They state that:

‘pre-production’ includes the outline, preliminary budget, casting, art direction design, logistics and shooting schedule; ‘shooting’ includes the work of the actors (in their interpretation of the characters), the recording of all the images or shots into which the action of the script is broken down, and the recording of the sounds that will accompany these images; ‘post-production’ develops the technical processes involved from the editing of the images obtained during the shooting to the manipulation and generation of complementary images, as well as the assembly of sound and music, which also complete the cinematic experience; and ‘exhibition and distribution’ includes the process of launching the film, marketing, theatrical and festival screenings. (Tamayo & Hendrickx, 2018, p. 16-17)

Focusing on the distribution of a film project, Miñarro (2013) points out that “audiovisual distribution is not governed by closed and immovable theoretical principles, but is a dynamic activity that adapts to the needs of the market

in general and of each audiovisual production in particular” (p. 12). Audiovisual distribution is, therefore, the process that allows an audiovisual work to reach its target audience. Still, it is also the tool that allows it to be marketed and economically profitable.

This author states that the distributor will provide differential benefits, such as the development of the sales strategy, direct contact with the ideal clients for the exhibition of the work, negotiation of the release dates of the film, as well as the release plan, advertising and marketing investments, and the management of commercial and legal actions (Miñarro, 2013). She adds that one of the main tasks of a distributor is to ensure that theaters release films with the maximum possible number of copies and that these copies remain in exhibition for the maximum possible number of days.

Distribution leads to the exhibition of the cinematographic work, which has historically taken place in cinemas. Exhibition in cinemas is therefore called the first window because, in the case of feature films, it is the first commercial exploitation of the title, at least in theory. The exploitation window is the order in which the various audiovisual rights are to be exploited. The exploitation windows will mark the order in which each of the rights of the audiovisual work will be exploited and, therefore, sold by the distributor (Miñarro, 2013).

2.3. OVERVIEW OF PERUVIAN CINEMA

The Peruvian film industry is one of the least developed in South America. According to a UNESCO study, twelve films were produced in Peru in 2013. In the report *Economic Impact of the Film and Audiovisual Sector and Cost-Bene-*

fit Analysis of the Implementation of the Preliminary Draft of the Film and Audiovisual Law, it was found that, according to data from the Ministry of Culture, “between 2011 and 2015, 82 Peruvian films were presented in commercial theaters” (Huanqui, 2017, p. 21). In addition to this situation, it is a difficult task to achieve a solid and consistent exhibition of Peruvian films in commercial theaters. More often than not, Peruvian films face a complex situation that derives from the decisions made by exhibitors. In this sense, blockbusters are the most widely shown films.

According to Huanqui (2017), regarding the origin of the films exhibited in national cinemas, “during the period 2011-2015, the exhibition of 1462 films is registered, whose predominant origin is American (73.5% of the total number of films exhibited). Only 6.2% of the films exhibited in Peru were national productions.” (Huanqui, 2017, p. 14). When analyzing the panorama of the Peruvian film industry, blockbusters are the most exhibited films:

A first field of Peruvian film production is the making of films that rely on proven formulas to communicate with the audience. To achieve this connection, they use narrative, dramatic, setting, and staging resources from the genres of classical narrative fiction or humorous Saturday night television programs. (Bedoya, 2016, p. 17)

Bedoya (2016) states that:

Multiplex theaters are identified with the most spectacular modes of Hollywood production (the blockbuster paradigm), becoming spaces for the consumption of titles with interchangeable

profiles and proven standards of storytelling and emotion. (p. 25)

When the focus is placed on documentary production, Bedoya (2016) mentions that:

Documentary practice is open to multiple forms of representation, such as the personal diary, autobiography, the memory of the most important events of the recent past, the “exposed self” or urban derivations. These documentaries often follow free and even experimental creative paths. (2016, p. 66)

Concerning the crucial moments of exhibition and diffusion, he adds:

As is the case with films that do not find a stable place in commercial public programming, documentary filmmakers organize alternative venues for the exhibition and dissemination of their work, either in specialized exhibitions, such as the Peruvian Documentaries organized by Docuperú, or in special sections programmed within the context of festivals such as the Lima Film Festival, La Noche de los Cortos, Filmocorto, Festival Internacional de Cortometrajes (Fenaco), the Fiacid festivals (Festival Iberoamericano de Cine Digital, Lima Independiente, Transcinema, among others. (Bedoya, 2016, p. 66)

In view of this situation, which clearly discriminates against national productions, the Peruvian State subsidizes different processes and stages of the film industry. Through the Ministry of Culture, the Peruvian State grants non-refundable economic awards to individuals and legal entities that present their projects relat-

ed to different phases of the film and audiovisual industry; these phases are development, production, post-production, distribution, research, and international promotion, among others.

In this way, with the money granted, they can complete the different stages of production of their projects. For the year 2023, as well as for previous years, the Ministry of Culture has carried out the promotion of film and audiovisual activity in Peru through the program *Economic Stimuli for Culture 2023*. Huanqui (2017) adds:

According to the Ministry of Culture, between 2012 and 2016, a little more than 33.8 million *nuevos soles* in prizes (feature and short films) were awarded to different film companies. Of these, 237 correspond to national productions and 28 to international co-productions, mostly related to the Ibermedia project. (Huanqui, 2017, p. 22)

The University of the Pacific report, prepared by Huanqui (2017), states that:

Thus, in the period 2012-2016, 327 films were financed/co-financed, 299 by the Ministry of Culture and 28 thanks to external sources (the annual average financed by Ibermedia is five films, but in 2013, DocTV financed one documentary and Ventana Andina financed two). The years with the greatest coverage were 2014 and 2016, with 77 and 78 films funded each year from all sources, respectively. (Huanqui, 2017, p. 41)

Among the various prizes awarded each year by the Ministry of Culture, the *National Competition for Documentary Projects* (Economic

Stimulus for Culture, 2023) stands out, with a grant of S/. 3,024,000.00 (approximately equivalent to more than US\$79,5000.00). In addition, S/1,512,000.00 (more than US\$397,000.00) is reserved for production companies located in the country's regions. In 2017, 43 projects from Lima and the regions of Peru were submitted to the contest. In this contest, five projects were winners in the categories "documentary" and "documentary under construction" (project that has a first cut of the work). According to the rules of the contest, "the project must be carried out within a maximum period of two (2) years after the economic incentive is granted". (Ministerio de Cultura, 2023).

Likewise, production companies seeking funding for their documentary projects can apply to DocTV Latinoamérica, a program that promotes the production and broadcast of Latin American documentaries. The winning projects "receive funding for the production of the documentaries, which are broadcast on 21 public channels in the 17 participating countries". (Huanqui, 2017, p. 40).

2.4. PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION OF PERUVIAN CINEMA

According to Bedoya (2016), the diversity of current Peruvian cinema allows us to imagine the construction of a "national cinema," that is, a cinema that contains multiple representations of others and ourselves. Filmmakers from different backgrounds, formations, and languages represent third parties and themselves. With increasingly cheap access to technology and multiple digital windows for sharing content, cinematographic and audiovisual activity is growing in Peru.

Following Tamayo and Hendrickx (2018), these authors state that:

The cost of a Peruvian film can vary significantly depending on a number of factors, the most critical of which is determined by the cost of the filming format and the technology used in the process, as well as the nature of the story and its requirements. (p.26)

In the publication of these authors, ranges of production costs for Peruvian films are established:

[...] with ranges (in Peruvian soles) between 30,000 to 80,000, from 80,000 to 140,000, and from 140,000 to 250,000. In this last stage, a launch and marketing campaign is developed to achieve better results." There are 250,000 to 450,000 and productions costing more than 450,000, which tend to be produced less frequently in Peru due to the high investment risk. (Tamayo y Hendricx, 2018, p. 27)

These authors comment that "based on this information, we conclude that films with a cost range of US\$30,000 to US\$200,000 predominate in Peru today" (Tamayo and Hendricx, 2018, p. 27). The average cost of a Peruvian film exhibited commercially between the years 2000 and 2017 ranges from US\$60,000 to US\$300,000. According to these authors, these amounts are among the lowest among Latin American countries, where the average cost of a commercially exhibited film is above US\$500,000.

They add:

The generic average they determined for the total cost of a feature film in Peru is distributed as follows: 16% goes to the purchase and rental of supplies and equipment; 25% goes to the payment of artistic and technical salaries; 22% goes to general production expenses; 20% is used to pay for post-production processes; and the remaining 17% is invested in launching and marketing expenses. (Tamayo y Hendricx, 2018, p. 28)

In addition, concerning the figures of the producer and the distributor, they point out that:

The relationship established between the producer of a Peruvian film and the distributor is a transaction between two parties. The producer provides the rights to the films and the corresponding copies to be presented; the distributor, on the other hand, designs, coordinates and executes the exhibition campaign approved by the producer and the exhibitor, who is the owner or administrator of the theater and who charges an additional cost, the VPF for the use of each screen at each screening. (Tamayo y Hendrickx, 2018, p. 216)

According to this information:

From the net income of the collection, the Distributor collects the Producer's share, that is, the income after deducting the percentage corresponding to the Exhibitor. From the amount collected, the distributor keeps the percentage in which its services have been valued, which is usually between 15% and 20% of the producer's income. (Tamayo and Hendrickx, 2018, p. 218)

Regarding distributors, Huanqui (2017) comments:

Distributors play a very important implicit role in the film industry; considering that their income comes from a percentage of the box office, as well as merchandising and other goods and services derived from the cinematographic work to be exhibited, they represent an important agent for the promotion of national films. Some authors focus on the problem of the weakness of national cinema at this stage of the production process due to the "foreignization" of distribution and exhibition. (p.18)

In Peru, the distributors of the *majors* are usually Peruvian companies. Production companies usually delegate the distribution of films to local companies when the market is relatively small. The best-known companies are New Century Films, Andes Films Peru, Cinecolor Films, and United International Pictures-UIP (Huanqui, 2017).

We would like to emphasize that a Peruvian documentary film that deserves attention due to the success of its exhibition and that will be analyzed in this research, is *La revolución y la tierra* (Autocinema, 2019), directed by Gonzalo Benavente. According to this director, "the documentary does not deal specifically with the phenomenon of the agrarian reform, but how it marks a before and after in a longer history of a long struggle for citizenship in Peru" (Asociación de egresados y graduados PUCP, 2020).

This documentary is the most watched in the history of Peru, with a total of 100,000 viewers in 2019. In its first week, it brought more than 10,000 viewers to the theaters, and in its third week, it already had more than 38,000 viewers, making it the most-watched Peruvian documentary in the country. Gonzalo Benavente was also the director of the film *Rocanrol 68*, which brought about 100,000 people to theaters.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this paper presents a qualitative approach through a multiple case study and semi-structured interviews. The sample consists of directors or producers who have been involved in the distribution agreements of four documentaries related to Peru (either Peruvian productions or those whose central theme revolves around Peru). In addition, these projects must have been screened in commercial cinemas as well as on a streaming video platform. These documentaries have similarities in the process of production, distri-

bution, and exhibition, but at the same time, they have considered different ways of exhibition.

The case study is associated with the qualitative tradition (Colin *et al.*, 2016). Stake (2005) sees the case as something specific that follows consistent and sequential behavior patterns, an entity that is the object of study. A case study can be based on a single, unique case, or it can involve more than one unit of analysis. The single case study is appropriate for exploring the specificity of a particular case, while the second corresponds to the multiple case study, which allows for the exploration of more than one unit of analysis where the basis for generalization is provided (Rule & Mitchell, 2015). Authors such as Ragin (1992; 2011) consider the multiple case analysis as a comparative approach since its tactic allows the study of similar and different patterns among a moderate number of cases. An essential feature of comparative methods is their interest in diversity.

The qualitative research, based on semi-structured interviews, consists of the elaboration and application of questionnaires to obtain the necessary information. The following table shows a brief technical data sheet detailing information on the film, the main character, the production company, the country, the year of release, and the type of exhibition. All this is related to the people interviewed (Table 1)

The variables analyzed in the discussion of this paper are the phases or stages of production designated by the industry to develop audiovisual work. In particular, it focuses on non-fiction narratives and one of its most emblematic genres: the documentary. These phases or stages are development (1), production (2), and

distribution/exhibition (3). Development comprises the idea, choice of theme, development of the structure and production plan, among others; production consists of shooting, editing and post-production; finally, distribution/exhibition focuses on the entire circulation of the project through different spaces and platforms.

Rolling Strong and *The Revolution and the Land* were produced and distributed conventionally. They were also shown in commercial theaters and, for a limited time, on streaming video platforms. *Pacificum* was produced and distributed conventionally, shown in theatres, and signed a permanent agreement with Netflix. *Perú, hidden treasure* was also produced conventionally and generated a long-term agreement with Netflix for its exhibition.

4. DISCUSSION

The following is an analysis of the results obtained from the semi-structured interviews in relation to the three main phases or stages previously described in an audiovisual/documentary production.

4.1. DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENT, THEME, AND STRUCTURE

Documentaries are born from the need to tell a story, an idea that serves as a drive that needs to be told. In the four documentaries analyzed, we find the premise that the ideas arose from the need to show these stories and explain them to the audience. In *Rolling Stone*, the idea was to tell the story of quadriplegic athletes; in *The Revolution and the Land*, the idea was to tell

Table 1

Informative table regarding the director and/or producer, film and relevant information for the analysis.

Film	Main character: Director (Dir.) or producer (Prod.)	Production company	Country	Year of re- lease	Type of exhibition
Rolling Strong	Marianela Vega (Dir. y Prod.)	Blue Productions	Perú	2015	Mainly alternative theater and digital exhibition
<i>The revolution and the land</i>	Gonzalo Benavente (Dir.)	Autocinema Films	Perú	2019	Commercial and digital exhibit
<i>Pacificum</i>	Evelyn Merino-Reyna (Prod.)	Visart Photography	Perú	2017	Commercial and digital exhibit
<i>Perú hidden treasure</i>	Luis Ara (Dir.)	Trailer Films	Uruguay	2017	Mainly digital exhibit

Source: own elaboration

the story of the struggles for citizenship in the context of the agrarian reform in Peru; *Pacificum*, tells the story of the importance of the Peruvian sea; and in *Perú, hidden treasure*, the idea was to tell the story of the wonders that Peru has to offer.

As for the development of the documentary project, it is usually articulated as a collaborative work. Although there is one person who is the head or leader of the team, the work is carried out by various team members who contribute their visions and suggestions as the project develops.

Gonzalo Benavente, director of *The Revolution and the Land*, mentioned in the interview about the subject of the film and the way the story is told:

It was a collaboration, mainly with Grecia (screenwriter and art director of the film). The project came out of conversations, ideas, and a lot of conversations over time. The story of what we wanted to tell was articulated because the scripts also start from there; they also come from a lot of conversations, from starting to manage new questions that had not been asked before, or we had not done it, or Peruvian cinema had not asked them (...). With Grecia, it was a journey from beginning to end because she was involved in the editing process. Along the way, many points of view were added, and those of the team were fundamental. The accompaniment of the people who are

part of the group undoubtedly ends up generating small new ways of going through the story.

For her part, Marianela Vega, director and producer of *Rolling Strong*, mentioned that:

Independent cinema and documentaries depend a lot on the collective and the desire to tell a story and that other people fall in love with you (the story) and have the same conviction (...) it was a project that was made as it took shape and thanks to the fact that other people were committed before the financing.

All of the interviewees agree that the financing phase of the project is fundamental, and they say that the production funds granted by the Peruvian Ministry of Culture or a public fund are crucial to get the project off the ground. It could be deduced that if the expected funding is not obtained at this stage, it is likely that the project will not be carried out, and over time, it will be put aside or 'shelved'.

As far as the narrative structure of the documentary and the artistic proposal of the project are concerned, there is no relevant change. We continue to propose stories with conventional narratives and the audiovisual language used in documentary and non-fiction genres. We will follow the characters, show the context in which they are and where the story takes place, and conduct personal interviews to know the characters' points of view or relevant information about the subject, as in *Rolling Stone* and *The Revolution and the Land*. When necessary, and when the nature of the project requires it, drone shots are used to reinforce what is being communicated. This can be seen in *Pacificum*

(including aquatic shots to show marine biodiversity) and in *Peru, hidden treasure*.

It is also clear from the interviews that directors and producers seek creative freedom in the development and direction of the project. For the directors interviewed, this is a fundamental factor in making a film.

4.2 DISCUSSION AT PRODUCTION LEVEL

In terms of the number of members of the production team, it can be seen that smaller or independent projects such as *Rolling Stone* have no more than five members; in *The Revolution and the Land*, no more than ten; in *Pacificum*, no more than fifteen people; while in *Peru, hidden treasure* there were at least fifteen people working.

From this information, it can be concluded that the average number of people who are usually part of the teams is generally between five and ten people. However, it depends on the type of project. In more independent projects, the team is made up of people who are close and trustworthy, and in this way, bonds of camaraderie, teamwork, and even friendship are created or have already been created.

Regarding narrative language, the documentaries *Rolling Stone* and *The Revolution and the Land* present characters who tell the story or part of the story addressed in the documentary. They use the 'talking heads' format, or present interviews in which a person gives his or her point of view on a given event. On the other hand, in *Pacificum* and *Peru, hidden treasure*, due to the very nature of the project and the narrative proposal, there is a voice-over that

describes what is happening in the documentary. The video can be made with a hand-held camera following a character, or the fixed camera could also be used with more closed shots or with a large general shot captured with a drone camera.

Drones and underwater equipment are also used in the documentary *Pacificum* to record marine species. In *Peru, hidden treasure*, the drone's aerial camera is of great importance, as it is used for large cross-camera shots of the selected natural scenery. The goal is to show the Peruvian tourist scenarios fully.

Regarding the ownership of the work, the producers of the documentaries *Rolling Stone*, *La revolución y la tierra*, and *Pacificum* retain their rights to the ownership of the documentary and do not wish to transfer their rights to the work exclusively to a platform. Furthermore, they point out that their idea is to have a catalogue of projects or works of the production company, with the idea that this catalogue could be commercialized in the future. They are also considering the possibility of producing commissioned works for the platform, but they do not plan to transfer their rights entirely to the platform.

The production company from *Perú, hidden treasure*, although exhibited in theaters, has done so less and less. They focus on exhibiting their product on streaming video platforms like Netflix. They also work with HBO, Amazon, and Nat Geo, among others. For the production company, the economic return in commercial theaters is small, while the return through exhibitions on platforms is greater and is a better business. The production company, through its director, states that they try to understand

what the market wants. This has led them to make more than ten productions; in addition, in the documentary analyzed, they worked with more than fifteen members in the production.

4.2 DISCUSSION ON DISTRIBUTION/EXHIBITION

From what has been analyzed, it can be concluded that it is essential to work with an intermediary who is in charge of the distribution of the film, because it would be very tiring for the production company itself, which is made up of only a few people, to make all the arrangements for the exhibition.

In this regard, Gonzalo Benavente points out that "it is important to work with someone who works on this type of issue (distribution) week after week. Otherwise, it is very difficult". Also, a very interesting alternative is to generate distribution agreements with the educational and university sectors, with special licenses, to reach school audiences or undergraduate and graduate students in Peru and abroad.

Producers point out that it is also an interesting alternative to exhibit the work on VOD platforms, where more profit can be made from viewing, downloading, renting, or purchasing the film. This is done on sites such as Vimeo. Similarly, an alternative, social, and community exhibition should be maintained in the various spaces and windows that are created.

Regarding exhibition agreements on streaming video platforms such as Netflix, the agreements are diverse. Through the interviews, it was possible to learn that in one type of agreement, they ask for exclusivity for three years to host a documentary on their platform. The documen-

tary can be shown in other spaces as long as it is a free viewing (cultural purposes).

After those three years, the work may be in the catalog of another streaming video platform, but Netflix will keep the documentary in its catalog forever. The agreements with Netflix and the amounts received by the production companies are confidential and cannot be disclosed. As for information about the performance of the film, Netflix can report on how the film is doing in general terms, but there is no further information.

Netflix also does not provide information about how many people watched the movie or other data that might be interesting and provide insight into how the movie was viewed. Therefore, there is a limitation in terms of knowing the metrics and views. At the same time, it is not possible to know the strategies of promotion or distribution of the documentary by Netflix.

As a final contribution and synthesis of this process and discussion, a comparative table is presented as a summary of the information gathered. Each phase has a series of items and questions that allowed detailed comparative analysis and facilitated discussion and conclusions. A description of the variables used in each category can be found in Annex 1.¹ (Table 2)

5. CONCLUSIONS

After the research, it is concluded that the basic premise for determining the theme of the documentary is the filmmaker's need to tell a story or address an issue that needs to be told. In

the documentaries analyzed, it is not observed that the choice of themes is conditioned by any commercial factor.

Similarly, there is no significant change in the themes, structures, or production model of the documentaries analyzed that would point to a future transformation in terms of exhibition on streaming video platforms. Moreover, they continue to respond to personal motivations and stories that need to be told and shared in the collective and social scenario. The structure of three of the documentaries analyzed continues to be executed through collaborative work, but always with the guidance or final look of the person who directs the feature film or the project leader.

It is concluded that the financing of all the phases of the project is essential to the making of the film and thus does not generate adverse scenarios, such as, for example, that some phases cannot be completed. This would lead to the abandonment of the project since each phase depends on the rest and, in turn, is articulated as a whole. No relevant changes were observed in the development of the projects or their financing compared to the way they have traditionally been carried out. Similarly, *pitching* as a strategy for presenting projects in the search of funding is considered a key mechanism. The visual presentation of projects is also important for obtaining project funding.

The production logics of conventional documentaries, which receive more independent funding from the state, have not changed their mode of production. They have few members in the production team (between five and ten people), which generates more collaborative work. As a result, different roles can perform different support functions in the documentary production process.

¹ Access to Annex 1: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Qa8wAzUmufdKfP7H07LCZOLXNc5QJfEQ>

Table 2

Comparative table in relation to the 3 main phases or stages in an audiovisual/documentary production.

Documentary production stages	Rolling Strong	The revolution and the land	Pacificum	Peru, hidden treasure
Pre-Production / Development / Thematic Structure				
Development of the documentary idea	Need to tell the story	Need to tell the story	Need to tell the story	Need to tell the story
Financing of the documentary	Peruvian Government Fund	Peruvian Government Fund	Peruvian Government Fund	Sponsor
Production time				
Time to complete the project	3 years	4 years	8 years	1 year
People involved in the project	No more than 5	No more than 10	Between 10 - 15	Over 15
Approach to construction and work in the documentary	Collaborative	Collaborative	Collaborative	No information
Bonds between production members	Close	Close	Close	No information
Profitability of the project	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Type of realization	Freelance	More than independent	More than independent	Lightly industrialized
Distribution / Display				
Exhibition in showrooms?	Yes, but for a short time	Yes	Yes	Yes
Display on streaming/VOD platforms?	Yes, but for a limited time	Yes and in Vimeo	Netflix	Netflix
Access to information from showrooms?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No information

Access to data on streaming platforms?	No	No	No	No
Other questions				
Want to do projects the same way?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Position on streaming platforms	An alternative, but not the main one	An alternative, but not the main one	An alternative, but not the main one	A main window
Modality of a possible deal with a streaming platform	Continue with Copyrights	Continue with Copyrights	Continue with Copyrights	Possibility to sell the copyrights of the work

Source: Own elaboration

The difference found in the documentary *Peru, hidden treasure*, with respect to the other three analyzed, is that the documentary was made in less time, with at least fifteen members in the production team, with a larger budget than the other documentaries analyzed, and more focused on being exhibited on a streaming video platform. Unlike the other three documentaries, it could be inferred that *Peru, hidden treasure* is made in a more “industrialized” way, while the other three documentaries analyzed are developed in a more “independent” and long-form style, but with the possibility of reaching different and large audiences, as well as touring specialized festivals worldwide.

It is recommended that a documentary project with a mixed structure be carried out that can be financed and produced with public funds, that is, in commercial cinemas, but that also adapts to the new distribution and exhibition rules of the market. It is necessary to consider what is sought for the project and what is convenient for the production company to reach a wider audience and obtain profits after the premieres.

The research did not reveal any relevant changes in the distribution and exhibition phase, but rather a wider range of exhibition windows. Although there is an alternative for documentaries to be exhibited on streaming video platforms such as Netflix, it is still important to find an appropriate festival route that strengthens the documentary on a promotional level with a view to its commercial exhibition, either in national cinemas or for international distributors.

Similarly, the possibility of not necessarily entering into agreements through a distribution company with certain streaming video platforms is raised. However, the possibility of hosting documentaries on other video-on-demand platforms becomes relevant. Through these platforms, documentary filmmakers or producers can obtain greater profitability. Nevertheless, exhibiting the documentary on streaming video platforms is always a possibility, but it will depend on the conditions offered by the platforms to the documentary producer.

As in the case of Netflix, the conditions and agreements that are given when exhibiting

documentaries through platforms vary. As a result, the amount that the documentary production company could receive by exhibiting the work on the platform varies. There is also the alternative of distributing documentaries in the educational sector, with special licenses at national and international levels.

The experience of the analyzed documentaries in commercial cinemas is very different. From the information gathered, it appears that the documentaries analyzed brought between 5,000 and 20,000 people to theaters, but the documentary *The Revolution and the*

Earth brought more than 100,000 people. By extension, each exhibition experience is very different, and each project responds to various needs and contexts.

It is proposed that the research be continued by focusing on the reception of these documentaries. A comparison can be made, especially in terms of satisfaction, between documentaries that are more independently produced and shown in cinemas and documentaries that are more industrially produced and focused solely on being shown on streaming video platforms.

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