



Identity and Citizenship from the Post-truth in Peruvian Cinematographic Fiction

Oscar Alfredo Aybar-Cabezudo^(✉) and Lorena Teresa Espinoza-Robles

Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, Lima, Peru

pcavoayb@upc.edu.pe

Abstract. Cinema has always been a mirror of reality, therefore it is important to reflect on the role of Peruvian cinematography in the construction of identity and citizenship. The identity reflected in stories that are capable of generating a sense of national belonging among their audiences and citizenship understood as the condition that recognizes the characters in fiction with social and political rights. Since the boom of Peruvian commercial cinema, starting with the film *Asu Mare*, dozens of Peruvian films have been released each year with great public acceptance. That is why the research aimed to know how are the representations that build models of identification and citizenship from the Peruvian commercial cinematographic fiction in box-office films. The research was carried out from the interpretive paradigm with a qualitative approach through a case study. A content analysis guide was applied to three films of the musical comedy genre that develop multiple stories and are aimed at a young adult audience, produced by Tondero Films (Peru), which were a box office success in the year of their release. The analysis categories from a narrative perspective were: characters, context and conflict. The main results of this research showed that the characters have hegemonic traits, they have no agency, no past and do not correspond to Peruvian identification models. The situations and conflicts draw a conservative society that maintains heteronormative values and excludes representations that reflect the diversity of the Peruvian context where the story unfolds. The post-truth of the author's cinematographic truth becomes evident by offering a narrative that does not question the public with a story that, without ceasing to be commercial, has an artistic proposal. The article contributes to the research line of communication and film studies and opens a debate on what Peruvian cinema is and what elements from the narrative are likely to be valued to consider a production as national.

Keywords: Identity · Post-truth · Peruvian Cinema · Citizenship

1 Introduction

1.1 Identity and Post-truth in Film Fiction

Fictions interpellate us about who we are, what we do and where we are going. There is an approach that indicates that a history of Peruvian cinema cannot be written because there is no complete research on it [1]. The truth of Peruvian cinema would be unapproachable,

because it has the most diverse proposals, which over the years have been blurring the traditional vision of cinema, by integrating resources from YouTube or social networks in its narrative [2] and denaturing for some the true meaning of a cinema that shows identity. The identity reflected in stories that are capable of generating a sense of national belonging among their audiences [3]. In this context it is difficult to speak of the existence of a national cinema [4]. The post-truth of images in the cinema has to do with what is the cinematographic truth of the author and the constant debate between a transparent cinema and a cinema of expression [5]. In a way, post-truth is almost a paradigm of our times [6]. There is a clear precedent in the beginnings of cinema in Peru, where the representation in the first reportage films shot in Lima were of a stately cinema that chronicled a lifestyle of those who produced these films [7].

In the same way, in Peru today there are films that tempt massive success and include television figures known by the audience with the aim of generating greater attendance at theaters [8]. And in these proposals, traditional narrative formulas are adopted that support their feasibility on factors other than quality expectations [2]. This commitment to the massive is a commitment to the near [8]. In this context, audiovisual content often reflects racism [9]. These representations end up being confused and alienated. Actors and actresses with non-hegemonic features have fewer employment opportunities, given the argument of the producers that they need “attractive” actors [9]. Yalitzá Aparicio, Mexican actress from the film *Roma*, is an emblematic case of institutionalized racism in Latin American audiovisual media [10]. Televisa (Mexico) and its telenovelas are a clear example of this, the characters have traits that are totally different from ordinary Mexicans [11, 12]. This has to do with a Eurocentric perspective and the concept of coloniality of power, according to which there are issues of race that still remain [13]. Finally, what little we know about said post-truth in Peruvian commercial cinema, we intuit from movies viewing, but not from the critical analysis of their contents. There is research on Peruvian cinema, but said research is more concentrated on auteur cinema [2].

1.2 Citizenship and Diverse Identities in Peruvian Cinema

Peruvian fiction cinema continues to influence the formation of a sense of collective identity [14], then it is necessary to promote the debate on the imaginaries it proposes. When analyzing certain cultural manifestations in Peru, including the cinema, identification models with a racist matrix were found that are confused with the cultural: the aristocrat “pituco”, the “criollo” astute, the “cholo-chicha”, the Andean-traditional, the Afrodescendant or “zambo”, the European “gringo”, the Asian-Chinese, the jungle-“charapa” [15]. From Peruvian cinema imaginaries of the Andean and class emerge, where the gaze of the director is evident [4]. In this context, it is important to review citizenship understood as the condition that recognizes fictional characters with social and political rights, since societies create an ideal image of citizenship where it is important to review equality, especially for class issues [16]. In some Peruvian auteur film characters, the issue of citizenship has been addressed by showing characters without rights and obligations, with uncertain affiliation and without memory [17]. In the case of Peruvian commercial genre cinema there is a pending discussion from the academy.

2 Methodology

The objective of the research was to know how are the representations that build models of identity and citizenship from the Peruvian commercial cinematographic fiction. The paradigm of this research is interpretive [21] with a qualitative approach. A case study [22] was designed and a content analysis guide was applied to three films (see Table 1) based on 3 categories of analysis from a narrative perspective (see Table 2).

Three films of the musical comedy genre have been selected that develop multiple plots and are aimed at a young adult audience, produced by Tondero Films (Peru), which were a box office success in the year of their release [26–28] (see Table 1).

In a first stage of the investigation, the representations of identity and citizenship were analyzed through the construction of the characters and their motivations and in the second stage through the context, situations and conflicts shown in the multiplot. The search for identification models was transversal to both stages.

2.1 Ethical Considerations

Regarding the actors involved, only the characteristics of their image in the films are handled.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Identity and Citizenship Representations Through Construction and Motivations Character

In the analyzed films, of a total of 27 characters, 25 are white and in some cases blond. Most of them are upper middle class, heterosexual and hegemonic in appearance (see Table 3).

In LDA, the characters belong to the upper middle class, dress in fashionable clothes, move in urbanized areas of Lima and have medium or high-end cars. In these stories there are no shortages, the characters are citizens who seem to have rights related to their access to consumption, but they have no memory. In the construction of the characters, the occupation of Gabriel, Ignacio, Martín or Fernanda is not clearly defined (see Table 3). Lucía dreams of commitment and suffers because her partner does not value her, Viviana is cheated on by her husband and returns with him, Gloria is bored with her husband, she leaves, but returns with him and Fernanda has an affair, she gets pregnant, Juanca harasses her and she decides to stay with him. They are female characters who reflect suffering as a way to reach happiness and base their happiness on the presumed transformation of the man who looks at them again to exalt them as an object of desire. They are characters without agency and without a past.

In LDA 2, women continue to ignore their rights, mainly to be seen as equals by their male peers. The woman desperate to have sex on Tinder, motherhood as the dream ideal of a woman, is made visible, in addition to handling the cliché of the indecisive woman who makes erratic romantic decisions like Alejandra from LDA2 who apologizes to an ex of yesteryear for resisting to bring him back into your life. In the case of LDA3,

Table 1. Technical sheet of selected films

Films	Technical sheet
Locos de amor (2016) [23] (LDA)	<p>Director: Frank Pérez-Garland Country: Peru Length: 1 h 33 min Genre: Musical comedy Cast: Gianella Neyra, Jimena Lindo, Rossana Fernández Maldonado, etc. Producer: Tondero Films Synopsis: Four friends live different love dramas. Lucía is a journalist who is disappointed in her boyfriend. Viviana is a housewife who feels distant from her husband and discovers his infidelity. Fernanda hopes for a promotion, but is fired and falls in love with her yoga teacher. Gloria is a housewife who suddenly feels the need to leave her family in search of new emotions, but she begins to question whether she made the best decision.</p>
Locos de amor 2 (2018) [24] (LDA 2)	<p>Director: Frank Pérez-Garland Country: Peru Length: 1 h 44 min Genre: Musical comedy Cast: Carlos Alcántara, Marco Zunino, Paul Vega, Vanessa Saba, etc. Producer: Tondero Synopsis: Daniela, Santiago and Luis are three brothers who experience different love disappointments. Daniela separates from her husband after his lack of commitment and his refusal to have a child. Luis has suicidal ideas, almost forced to meet Soledad on a speed date, to impress her he lies to her and now he must support his lie. Santiago returns to Peru after some time and meets an old love, they start dating again, he falls in love, but she is afraid of commitment.</p>
Locos de amor 3 (2020) [25] (LDA 3)	<p>Director: Frank Pérez-Garland Country: Peru Length: 1 h 40 min Genre: Musical comedy Cast: Ebelin Ortiz, Katia Kondos, Patricia Portocarrero, Aldo Miyashiro, etc. Producer: Tondero Synopsis: Three friends live different love problems. Sarah is cheated on by her new husband in the midst of their wedding celebration, victim of depression ends up going to a therapist with whom she ends up falling in love. Marta is starting the divorce process, but she has to fight against her feelings and against a husband who doesn't want to separate from her. Doris is convinced that her husband is cheating on her and wants to surprise him or make him confess.</p>

they focus again on female protagonists (now in their 50's), again we never hear about their jobs or their professional aspirations, they are only interested in finding love. Their marriage problems revolve around cheating and deception. Sarah is cheated on, Marta goes back to the husband she wants to divorce and Doris persecutes her husband to find out if he is cheating on her without any self-esteem or dignity.

Table 2. Analysis categories

Genre	Categories
Comedy	Characters (physical, social and psychological dimension, and its evolution) [18–20]
	Conflict (what does the character want, what is against him, what is he willing to do) [18–20]
	Context (where and when the story is told) [18–20]

Table 3. Character profiles

Movie	Character	Physical	Social		Psychological
		Appearance	Status	Job	Feature
LDA	Lucía	White, thin	Single	Reporter	Dreamer
	Rodrigo	White, thin	Single	Cameraman	Introvert
	Gabriel	White, thin	Single	Not known	Outgoing
LDA	Viviana	White, thin	Marries	Housewife	Naïve
	Ignacio	White, thin	Married	Administrative	Selfish
	Dalia	White, chubby	Single	Secretary	Liar
LDA	Gloria	White, thin	Single	Housewife	Dissatisfied
	Martín	White, thin	Single	Administrativo	Bored
	Santi	White, thin	Single	Parapentista	Funny
LDA2	Fernanda	White, thin	Single	Administrativ	Dissatisfied
	Juanca	White, thin	Singles	Yoga teacher	Calmed down
LDA2	Lucho	White, thin	Single	Desempleado	Calmed down
	Soledad	White, thin	Single	Periodista	Extrovert
	Lola	White, chubby	Single	Turista	Extrovert
LDA2	Daniela	White, thin	Single	Housewife	Shy
	Gianpietro	White, thin	Single	Not known	Selfish
	Vicente	White, thin	Widower	Entrepreneur	Noble
LDA2	Nicolás	White, thin	Single	Architect	Unsafe
	Alejandra	White, thin	Single	Producer	Nostalgic
LDA3	Sarah	Zamba, thin	Single	Not known	Naive
	Arturo	Asiatic, thin	Single	Terapist	Calmed down
	Luciano	White, thin	Single	Not known	Egocentric
LDA3	Marta	White, thin	Married	Not known	Noble, docile
	Orlando	White, thin	Married	Counter	Selfish
LDA3	Doris	White, thin	Married	Not known	Distrustful
	Santiago	White, thin	Married	Administrative	Introvert
	Gianina	White, thin	Single	Terapist	Formal, serious

The characters make incomprehensible decisions according to their psychological and social profile. For example, Gloria, who has been a housewife all her life and her

Table 4. Story context

	Spaces
LD1	TV channel
	Business
	Discoteque Paragliding practice place
	Yoga practice place
LD2	Restaurants Radio studio
	Shopping center Therapeutic office
	Therapeutic office
LD3	Law firm

situation has not changed, leaves home to live new adventures: nobody knows how this new lifestyle is financed. Finally, we see characters with models of representation such as the aristocrat “pituco” (Gabriel) or the “criollo” astute (Ignacio, Santi), however, the “cholo-chicha”, the Andean-traditional, the Afrodescendant or “zambo”, the Asian-Chinese or the jungle-“charapa” are invisibilized [15]. Sarah is “zamba”, but have no agency.

3.2 Identity and Citizenship Representations Through the Context, Situations and Conflicts Shown

Regarding the story context, it takes place in restricted access places for most Peruvians (see Table 4). The story takes place in their homes and places identified with the middle class. There is no greater reality in which the story is contextualized, it could be said that everything happens in Lima, but it could also be another country and it would not require adaptation, because there is no social, political, economic or any other context.

Post-truth is revealed when there is an intention to show stories with Peruvian characters and context, but features of Peruvian identity or citizenship are not made visible. These are narratives that promote aspirational stories. Characters do yoga, paragliding, go to therapeutic consultations when they have a personal problem, toast in bars and visit shopping malls.

As for the conflicts and situations that are triggered, the characters seem to live in a bubble, where only the love plane exists (see Table 5). These love stories are not developed with complexity, but are presented as a mere product of popular consumption, which prevails over an artistic product that challenges us as citizens. Any other type of conflict that may arise from living in a city as big as Lima is nullified. The analyzed comedies deal with clichéd characters and situations, where gender stereotypes are repeated, without ever forgetting product placement. There is a conservative view regarding gender roles, no protagonist clearly shows professional success. Except for

Table 5. Story conflicts

	Characters	Conflict
LD1	Lucía-Rodrigo-Gabriel	Lucía is engaged to Gabriel, they argue and become a couple with his roommate
	Viviana-Ignacio-Dalia	Viviana discovers her husband's deception with Dalia, they separate and then return
	Gloria-Martín-Santi	Gloria has a crisis and leaves Martín, she goes out with Santi, but then she comes back.
	Fernanda-Juanca	Fernanda gets fired and gets involved with her yoga teacher and gets pregnant.
LD2	Lucho-Soledad-Lola	Lucho is single, he meets Soledad and has a date with Lola.
	Daniela-Gianpietro-Vicente	Daniela wants to get pregnant and Gian does not. They separate and Vicente fall in love with her.
	Nicolás-Alejandra	They meet after time, they were young sweethearts and they reconnect.
LD3	Sara-Arturo-Luciano	Sara is cheated on at her wedding and falls in love with Luciano, her therapist.
	Marta-Orlando	Marta wants to divorce Orlando, but in the end they give each other another chance.
	Doris-Santiago-Gianina	Doris thinks her husband is cheating on her, but he was actually in therapy with Gianina.

Soledad, whose professional success is socially devalued by being media and apparently controversial. The society that houses these stories is one where citizens have consumption as their main value and women make decisions in these conflicts with self-sacrifice. Women suffer before they are happy and live to meet the demands of a heteronormative and patriarchal society.

Undoubtedly, the analyzed genre films do not intend to become a benchmark for Peruvian cinema beyond their audience figures [20–22]. However, it is necessary to evidence narratives that show gender inequality, racism and institutionalized classism in the narrative of genre film fiction to reveal how this type of commercial cinema represents and promotes identity and citizenship, especially because they are products that had great reach.

4 Conclusions

The present article shows us as the main result that commercial Peruvian genre films are cultural products that show Eurocentrism, coloniality of power in their contents and maintain certain categories -such as race, gender and class- as differentiating elements in their content, aspirational narratives for the bulk of the population, which is incongruous with a mestizo and diverse society. As a result, it was identified that the characters

have hegemonic features, they have no agency, no past and do not correspond to Peruvian identification models. The situations and conflicts draw a conservative society that maintains heteronormative values and excludes representations that reflect the diversity of the Peruvian context where the story unfolds.

The post-truth of the author's cinematographic truth becomes evident by offering a narrative that does not question the public with a story that, without ceasing to be commercial, has an artistic proposal. This research contributes to the media literacy of audiovisual communication students who are preparing to produce films and their training as artists committed to their environment. It contributes to the research line of communication and film studies and opens new lines of research related to genre films from their production methods, their context and their audiences. Finally, the research opens a debate about what Peruvian cinema is and what elements from the narrative are likely to be valued to consider a production as national.

Acknowledgments. Our acknowledgements to the Research Directorate of Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas (Peru) for the support provided to carry out this research work through the UPC Research Incentive Fund A-020-2021. Also, to Universidad de Navarra where Oscar Alfredo Aybar-Cabezudo is actually developing his PhD studies on Communication about Peruvian cinema.

Funding. This work was supported by Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas / UPC A-020-2021.

References

1. I. León Frías, *Tierras bravas. Cine peruano y latinoamericano*. Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Universidad de Lima, 2016.
2. O. Aybar-Cabezudo, L. Espinoza-Robles, and E. Gallardo-Echenique, "Comedy As a Success Formula in Peruvian Cinema," *INTED2020 Proc.*, vol. 1, no. March, pp. 7080–7089, 2020, doi: <https://doi.org/10.21125/inted.2020.1872>.
3. A. Higson, *Film England*. New York: Tauris & Co, 2011.
4. J. Protzel, *Imaginario sociales e imaginarios cinematográficos*. 2016.
5. S. García Catalán, J. Marzal Felici, and A. Rodríguez Serrano, "Recobrar La Mirada En Tiempos De Posverdad: El Estilo De Paolo Sorrentino Ante La Obscenidad En Silvio (Y Los Otros) (Loro, 2018)," *Signa Rev. la Asoc. Española Semiótica*, vol. 31, pp. 373–400, 2022, doi: <https://doi.org/10.5944/signa.vol31.2022.29442>.
6. M. Aguilar et al., *La posverdad: Una cartografía de los medios, las redes y la política*. Barcelona: Gedisa, 2019.
7. R. Bedoya, "La formación del público cinematográfico en el Perú. El cine de los señores," *Contratexto*, vol. 9, pp. 57–70, 1995.
8. R. Bedoya, "El cine peruano en tiempos digitales," 2016.
9. J. C. Callirgos, "El racismo peruano," *Rev. Ser. Divers. Cult.*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 57–213, 2013, [Online]. Available: <http://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/sites/default/files/rb/pdf/el-racismo-peruano.pdf>
10. L. P. Beauregard, "Un terremoto llamado Yalitzá Aparicio," *El País*, 2019.

11. J. Típa, “El capital y las prácticas corporales entre actores y modelos,” *Estud. sobre las Cult. Contemp.*, vol. XXVI, pp. 151–183, 2020.
12. P. D. Murphy, “Television and cultural politics in Mexico: Some notes on Televisa, the state, and transnational culture,” *Howard J. Commun.*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 250–261, 1995, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10646179509361702>.
13. A. Quijano, *Cuestiones y horizontes: de la dependencia histórico-estructural a la colonialidad/descolonialidad del poder*, no. 28. Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2020. doi: <https://doi.org/10.15381/rsoc.v0i28.16897>.
14. S. Barrow, “Out of the Shadows: ‘New’ Peruvian Cinema, National Identity and Political Violence,” *Mod. Lang. Open*, vol. 0, no. 0, Dec. 2014, doi: <https://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.18>.
15. E. W. Llanos, “La ciudadanía como conexión política entre las identidades en el Perú,” vol. 79, no. 1, pp. 13–20, 2018.
16. T. Bottomore and T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class*. London: Pluto Press, 1992.
17. R. Bedoya, “Ciudadanía y cine,” pp. 20–21.
18. R. McKee, *El guión story: sustancia, estructura, estilo y principios de la escritura de guiones*. Barcelona: Alba Editorial, 2016.
19. S. Field, *El manual del guionista: ejercicios e instrucciones para escribir un buen guion paso a paso*. Madrid: Plot Ediciones, 2005.
20. D. Comparato, *De la creación al guion*. Madrid: Instituto Oficial de Radio Televisión Española, 2007.
21. J. W. Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 2013.
22. R. Stake, *Investigación con estudio de casos*. Ediciones Morata, 2007.
23. IMDB, “Locos de amor,” 2022.
24. IMDB, “Locos de amor 2,” 2022.
25. IMDB, “Locos de amor 3,” 2022.
26. EGEDA, “Panorama Audiovisual Iberoamericano 2017,” 2017.
27. EGEDA and FIPCA, “Panorama Audiovisual Iberoamericano 2019,” 2019.
28. EGEDA and FIPCA, “Panorama Audiovisual Iberoamericano 2021.” p. 416, 2021.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter’s Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

