



ISBN: 978-84-19506-95-5

Open Access

Received: April 29, 2025

Accepted: May 2, 2025

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RESEÑA / RESENHA / REVIEW

Gewerc, A., y Dussel, I. (Eds.). (2024). *Juventud, identidad de género y poder en las plataformas digitales*. Octaedro

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This book is the result of a project coordinated by Adriana Gewerc, Professor of Educational Technology in the Department of Didactics and School Organization at the University of Santiago de Compostela, and Inés Dussel, Research Professor in the Department of Educational Research at Cinvestav-IPN in Mexico. The research has been funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (PID2019-108221RB-I00).

The book explores how adolescents in Ibero-America construct their gender identities through digital platforms such as Instagram, focusing on the contexts of Spain, Mexico, and Uruguay. It analyzes the influence of social media on the construction of gender subjectivity during adolescence, and seeks to reinterpret the sociocultural patterns specific to Ibero-American contexts. The findings reveal that, although there is a widespread pressure to be visible and socially acceptable on social media, adolescents' explanations vary according to their cultural and social contexts. The characteristics of digital platforms play a key role, generating discourses on gender identity that can be both normative and subversive.

The book emphasizes the importance of sociocultural contexts and platform economies in shaping identity and gender experiences, identifying a tension between the desire for visibility and the need for privacy, which results in complex forms of self-representation. Social networks shape people's lives by establishing synergies between personal experience and the logics of social or informational capitalism.

The book is structured around an introduction divided into three sections, which present the research context and objectives, as well as the importance of studying the construction of gendered subjectivities in digital environments. This introductory section is followed by seven chapters that address topics such as the study's methodology, the digital practices of Galician adolescents, the dynamics observed in Mexico, and the way gender affects self-perception. Each chapter concludes with a references section documenting the sources used. This structure allows for a comprehensive examination of the relationship between digital platforms and the construction of gender identities during adolescence, taking into account various sociocultural contexts across Ibero-America. Additionally, the book analyzes the production of gendered subjectivities among adolescents from different regions who share similar dynamics on social media.

The introduction, structured into three sections, organizes and frames the content of the book from a theoretical perspective to methodological development. The first section analyzes digital platforms as devices of subjectivation. In this context, algorithms collect data focused on user content and experience in order to guide behavior through continuous interaction with digital devices. As people publish and interact on social media, algorithms become increasingly specialized in learning from each user and presenting content aligned with their preferences, thereby generating experiences that progressively reflect their behavior. The purpose of this data collection is to utilize the information for commercial, political, or social purposes. The second section addresses the issue of gender in digital environments. Gender is defined as a set of effects produced on bodies, behaviors, and social relationships through a complex political technology. It is an inseparable element of the process by which individuals conceive of themselves and establish identity relationships with themselves and others. Gender construction begins with the assignment at birth and evolves throughout life, shaped by family, social institutions, and, increasingly, by social media. The third section outlines the structure of the book.

The research combines qualitative and quantitative data through a case study that includes ethnographic observation centered on the social media platform Instagram. The researchers analyzed posts made by adolescents in Spain and Mexico. This

platform is characterized by its audiovisual nature—primarily images and videos—which fosters an aesthetic influenced by influencer culture, adopted by adolescents as both an aesthetic and moral model. Finally, the last chapters of the book focus on the use of multiple accounts and the management of privacy in each one, as well as on the content adolescents choose to share based on the number of followers associated with each profile.

Chapter one outlines the methodological design of the research, which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The EDIGA project emerged with the aim of analyzing and understanding the role that digital environments play in the process of constructing gender identities during adolescence. This analysis is carried out across various sociocultural contexts from a gender perspective. To study adolescents' practices on the social media platform Instagram, the researchers created a "friend account" that allowed them to follow participants and observe their profiles, as well as the content they posted during the analysis period. The observation focused on the content generated and shared, and on the role that the body plays in these posts, including the figure of influencers. The adolescents studied came from diverse backgrounds, defined not only by their country of origin but also by their socioeconomic status, gender, and the influence of their family environments.

This chapter focuses on Galicia, a region where rural and urban areas coexist, along with both inland and coastal zones, which makes it possible to observe significant socioeconomic differences. High levels of academic achievement and educational equity in the Galician school system stand out in comparison to other regions of Spain. The adolescents analyzed represent a generational shift, as they surpass the educational attainment of their parents. This chapter examines digital practices on Instagram among Galician adolescents, who use this social network to connect and share aspects of their daily lives. The study also seeks to dismantle the stereotype of Galician conservatism and to demystify the notion of a traditional matriarchy. The latter, associated with the role of the youngest daughter as a caregiver within the family, is viewed as a burden that may limit her future choices. Interviews were conducted with adolescents of different sexes to explore how they identify in terms of gender, sex, and sexuality.

The results indicate that favorable attitudes toward the LGTBQ+ community are not necessarily linked to age or environment, but rather to family values and the gender of the participants. The use of social media typically begins around the age of 12, which is below the minimum age recommended by the platforms themselves. Moreover, adolescents often use multiple accounts: a main account for interacting with general acquaintances and a secondary account reserved for close friends. Female adolescents express greater concern about meeting certain quality standards in their posts, in contrast to male adolescents, who tend to take and upload fewer photos, displaying a more relaxed attitude toward posting.

Chapter three examines the influence of role models on social media, framed within the context of Mexican society. It is structured into four sections that address the sociopolitical context, educational dynamics, general findings from surveys, and the role of the family. Despite significant socioeconomic inequalities, Mexico is one of the countries with the highest wealth generation in the region. However, many areas are controlled by criminal gangs, which creates ongoing concern about digital security. This concern is reflected in the widespread use of private social media profiles as a means of protecting against account theft and other cybercrimes. In terms of social media usage, Mexico has a high number of users. Facebook is used more frequently than Instagram, and the average time spent on social networks surpasses that recorded in Spain. Adolescents acknowledge the authority exercised by families and teachers, and gender emerges as a factor that exacerbates the violence they experience, often originating within the family environment.

Digital affiliations function as forms of social capital. In the Mexican context, adolescence tends to be rendered invisible, lacking clear age boundaries and often associated with passivity. The educational level of the study sample falls below the national average, and many families have low levels of higher education. New lines of research are identified, focusing on the role of families and representations of romantic love. The interviewed adolescent girls perceive both society and their own families as patriarchal. Male adolescents, for their part, reproduce traditional gender roles: they associate women with caregiving responsibilities while positioning

themselves as leaders or protectors within the family structure, reinforcing their place at the top of the patriarchal hierarchy. In addition, the symbolic importance of appearing in a relationship on social media is observed, reconfiguring affective relationships according to logics of consumption and digital mediation. Finally, the chapter documents a negative attitude toward individuals who are not originally from the community, reinforcing a more closed and exclusionary local identity.

The following chapter focuses on how adolescents interact with influencers and the feedback they receive. It presents four case studies of adolescents from Mexico and Spain, with the aim of analyzing the influence of Instagram's architecture on their digital visual practices. In Spain, digital migration has followed a progression from Tuenti to Facebook, and from Facebook to Instagram; currently, this migration is shifting toward TikTok. In contrast, in Mexico, there is greater female participation in social media use, with Facebook being the most widely used platform. Families play a key role in shaping parental mediation regarding adolescents' use of these platforms. Moreover, algorithms—designed in predominantly male-dominated environments—introduce biases in user interactions and content production. Instagram is a clear example, as it promotes the pursuit of aesthetic forms through filters that enhance images, primarily to attract likes.

This chapter also explores the influences that adolescents receive and the differences between the Spanish and Mexican contexts. The dominant social media platforms differ, as do the levels of privacy and security configured in their profiles. Additionally, the chapter analyzes the aesthetic organization of adolescents' posts and accounts, as well as the influence exerted by their digital role models in shaping these aspects. Instagram fosters user dependency through mechanisms that encourage continuous presence and engagement on the platform. Four main areas of action are highlighted: the homogenization of youth expression; the promotion of constant activity on the platform; the aesthetic design of profiles; and the use of hashtags and music as tools to increase visibility.

Chapter five presents the culture of influencers and everything it entails, grounded in the notion of celebrity capital. This emerging industry has multiple economic and social effects, and its growth is driven by image-centered digital platforms. For adolescents, influencers represent both a professional and personal ideal, associated with the potential to achieve fame and financial gain independently. The culture of celebrities has extended to a micro level, becoming a reference point for individual behaviors that imitate the aesthetics and gestures of these figures. In the case of Mexico, adolescents identify singers, musicians, friends, and family members as role models, who are increasingly gaining relevance as new influencers on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. With regard to gender, there is a growing trend toward following male figures. These include both international and national personalities from sports and music, as well as influencers who are dedicated exclusively to content creation on social media. Notable differences exist between countries in terms of the figures adolescents follow and the gender identities those figures embody.

Through content creation, users receive feedback from their followers, which highlights the tyranny of the like among Generation Z. Adolescents incorporate their role models into their modes of expression and their posts, as well as into the construction of the identity they wish to project to their audience. In Mexico, adolescents tend to follow athletes or musicians who have overcome significant barriers, allowing them to imagine personal success stories—such as "rising from nothing" to achieve prominence. Compared to Spain, there is a greater preference in Mexico for morally acceptable role models, albeit within certain critical limits. This tendency reflects a search for psychological and emotional well-being. A social hegemony of patriarchy is also evident, reproduced through social media. Additionally, a difference is observed between the two countries: in Spain, there is a higher level of content production and engagement on social media, while in Mexico, a more reflective stance prevails regarding the role these platforms play in the construction of youth identity.

Chapter six presents the personal profile as a practice of self-representation, in which the individual's image and personal information become a showcase for the commodification of subjectivity. In this context, the user becomes an entrepreneur of the self, making visible the practices developed by adolescents on Instagram, with

particular attention to how they manage privacy across their profiles and personal spaces. Updates that allow the use of multiple accounts (multi-accounting) provide an opportunity to experiment with different forms of self-representation. The use of several accounts enables the construction of simultaneous representations of the same person, each with differently configured levels of privacy.

The main account is typically dedicated to an idealized self-representation, driven by popularity and virality. In this space, aesthetic pressure leads to a stylized and conservative version of the self. In contrast, the secondary account reflects a more relaxed attitude, where adolescents step away from the persona created on their main profile. This secondary account is more personal, generally limited to close friends, unlike the main account, which is open to a broader audience. The main account is characterized by more polished, detailed, and carefully curated content compared to the secondary one. In relation to these practices, the chapter introduces the concept of *instagramismo*, understood as a set of aesthetic codes that both propose and encourage the display of the best version of the self, of one's experiences, and of daily life. In this context, privacy becomes a form of currency to gain visibility, accumulating social capital through controlled exposure. Adolescents engage in a constant negotiation between what is public and what is private, establishing the boundaries of what can be shown to a wide audience. This process influences not only the expression of emotions but also the representation—and, in some cases, the sexualization—of their own bodies.

The final chapter analyzes visual practices and the construction of gender identities on the platform. Emphasis is placed on the poses adolescents adopt in their images, where a dynamic interplay emerges between intimacy, self-awareness, and bodily appropriation. The illusion of ephemerality is especially evident through the use of stories. Adolescents tend to repeat styles and behaviors considered "trendy," aiming to project a positive image based on attributes linked to aesthetic and physical beauty. They follow famous individuals as a symbolic way of connecting with their popularity. The findings suggest that adolescents seek to express their identity and gain social recognition.

Their posts often reflect meticulous preparation, particularly in solo photographs. Within the patriarchal imaginary, women are associated with sexualized physical attributes, while men are linked to a form of masculinity grounded in traits such as aggression or rebellion, reinforcing the role of the man as a protective and territorial figure. In the case of non-binary individuals, the use of filters and camera angles stands out as a strategy to avoid certain poses or direct exposure of the body, driven by feelings of discomfort or insecurity. The various forms of representation adolescents adopt in front of the camera can be understood as multiple agencies that intersect and shift through contemporary aesthetics and fashion. To conclude, the chapter poses open-ended questions that invite future research on the gender dispositif and how platforms shape identities in ways that serve their economic interests.

This book addresses topics such as identity construction during adolescence through the use of the social media platform Instagram as a space for gender expression, highlighting notable differences among various gender identities. It analyzes how adolescents use this platform to express themselves, emphasizing the influence of images and performance in the construction of femininity, as well as the tensions between authenticity and conformity in their identity expressions. The book examines the distinction between public and private spaces on the platform, as well as between permanent content posted on feeds—which is generally more curated—and the ephemeral content shared via stories, where a more casual and authentic expression tends to prevail. The impact of aesthetic culture, combined with the influence of influencers, drives adolescents to conform to visual standards imposed by trends in order to gain likes, even when these representations do not faithfully reflect their reality. Such practices may reinforce gender stereotypes and social expectations that restrict authentic self-expression.

The analysis reveals that digital platforms like Instagram function as complex spaces in which adolescents negotiate their identities within a context of social surveillance and aesthetic pressure. Posting practices not only reflect personal experiences but are also shaped by cultural norms and gender expectations. This study provides a solid foundation for future research on the intersection of gender, youth, and digital media.

Furthermore, it underscores the need for a critical approach in educational processes related to the use of social networks and highlights the urgency of further investigations into the construction of gender identity and subjectivity in today's digital context.

