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Playing forever: exploring the world of older women video game streamers

By Mabel Andrea Navarrete Vega & Ana Isabel Zermeño Flores**

Abstract

This article examines the streaming practices of older women, a new phenomenon that challenges stereotypes about what it means to be a gamer. It analyzes, from an epistemological justice perspective, how these women defy gender and age stereotypes on platforms like Twitch. Using the channel of the Uruguayan streamer Aqumadre as a case study, the discourses of her audience are reviewed, and the player's narrative is explored. The results show that Aqumadre has fostered a community based on affection and cooperation, questioning the predominant logic in online video game streaming. The study helps redefine the categories of gamers and highlights new intergenerational dynamics in digital culture. It confronts the categories of gamer and older adult woman, highlighting new intergenerational dynamics in video game streaming and making visible emerging figures and practices that move away from the conventional, while at the same time providing tools to understand the transformation of identities in digital culture.

Keywords: digital consumption, digital platforms, epistemic injustice, older adults, Twitch.

**Mabel Andrea Navarrete Vega & Ana Isabel Zermeño Flores*, University Center for Social Research, University of Colima, Colima, México

Introduction[1]

Older women video game streamers are an emerging phenomenon that challenges common ideas about aging, women, video games, and live streaming. In a world where video games and streaming are associated with youth and masculinity, these women over 60 are breaking stereotypes and immersing themselves in a cultural space dominated by young men.

Video games were promoted in the 1990s as an activity for young men, with consumption shaped toward this profile, establishing male dominance in gaming spaces and communities (Lavenir 2022). This scenario created significant barriers for the participation of non-traditional demographic groups, such as women. Nowadays, this exclusion is reinforced by the constant stereotypical representation of the "gamer girl" as a male erotic fantasy or as a decorative accessory in video games, rather than an active, competitive, and recognized participant (Ruotsalainen 2022).

Live streaming platforms, such as Twitch,[2] have expanded the gaming culture by facilitating participatory online communities. These take the shape of channels where there is a streamer who broadcasts content, viewers or followers who consume it, and a chat space where these actors interact in real-time. Live video game streaming is usually directed to a teenage audience and streamers are usually young, displaying notable parasocial and digital skills, high capacity for performance, expressiveness, and geek knowledge (Gandolfi 2016; Woodcock & Johnson 2019).

This contrasts with the relationship between older adults and video games as depicted in the predominant scientific literature. According to Iversen (2016) and De Schutter (2017), a functionalist approach has featured prominently in research on older adult gamers, where the emphasis tends to portray them as aging subjects and video games as tools to prevent physical and cognitive decline.

[1]Note: The ChatGPT generative artificial intelligence tool is used to automatically translate the text from Spanish to English, which was then reviewed by a human being, improving writing and suggesting the order of ideas.

[2]Twitch hosts a wide range of content categories. Among the most common are Let's Plays (real-time, commentary-driven gameplay), Just Chatting (direct interaction with the audience without the need to play), and streams dedicated to music, art, or sports, which expand the platform's use beyond traditional gaming content.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that older adults, commonly identified within the so-called boomer generation, have been identified as content producers for about a decade, first as creators of blogs or radio programs, and more recently as TikTokers. Through these media, older adults express their voices and highlight their realities, strengthening socio-digital skills and reinforcing the preference for creating content collaboratively (Celdrán et al. 2019; Möller et al. 2017; Reuter et al. 2019). However, these evident practices of agency had not yet reached live video game streaming, a scenario widely dominated by teenagers, characterized by continuous real-time exposure, demanding high digital skills, and assuming the operation of the streaming channel autonomously without the support of a third-party or a peer collective (Figure 1).

On video game streaming platforms like Twitch, the characteristics that define popular streamers include charisma, charm, the ability to diversify content, and a professional competitive level often associated with masculinized roles within gaming culture (Zhao et al. 2019). In contrast, women face additional pressures and challenges, often being harassed and judged for their physical appearance, and expected to occupy secondary or support roles, such as healers within the game world (Ruotsalainen 2022). These expectations reinforce gender stereotypes, limiting women's capacity for autonomy and participation in gaming narratives.

Figure 1. Streamer on the Twitch platform



Additionally, the typical strategies of young streamers, especially white heterosexual men, include collaborations and events that consolidate power groups, reinforcing their dominant position in gaming communities (Ruotsalainen 2022; Ruvalcaba et al. 2018; Welch 2022). These dynamics, supported by certain content policies of platforms like Twitch, reflect and perpetuate gender gaps, creating a space where opportunities for success are deeply influenced by traditional power structures (Zolides 2021). This context poses an additional challenge for older women, whose trajectories on the platform face both generational and gender barriers, as well as established power structures.

In this scenario, older women video game streamers, such as the ones listed on Table 1, challenge social expectations by breaking into this cultural space. Their incipient presence confronts gender and age norms,

Table 1. Older women video game streamers

Streamer name	Age	Nationality	Games streamed	Channel link
Abuela Vengadora	65	Spanish	*League of Legends*	https://www.twitch.tv/abuelavengadora
Aqumadre	64	Uruguayan	*Minecraft, Rust*	https://www.twitch.tv/aqumadre
Grandma	81	American	*World of Warcraft*	https://www.twitch.tv/wowgrandma78
Gamer Grandma	93	Japanese	*Resident Evil*	https://www.youtube.com/@GamerGrandma
Mami Nena	79	Chilean	*FreeFire*	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCK-35JqsLd7Ehg7q2eVs-CA8g
Shirley	88	American	*Skyrim*	https://www.youtube.com/@ShirleyCurryTheOlderGamer/featured
Tactical-gramma	70	American	*Call of Duty*	https://www.twitch.tv/tacticalgramma

showing that older women seek a legitimate place in live video game streaming culture. This research assumes that it is necessary to understand them from a different and inclusive perspective, where these women, who resist stigmas and exclusions through their practice, are recognized as social agents with their own interests, seeking autonomy and visibility in a medium that has traditionally omitted them.

The theory of hermeneutical injustices (Fricker 2021) points out that certain social groups, defined by traits such as gender, class, ethnicity or age, lack the interpretive resources necessary to make their experiences understandable due to structural prejudices. From this framework, it is necessary to recognize and address the biases and stereotypes surrounding these older women, not only to make them visible but also to understand them. This will allow for solid and updated frameworks to understand the new profiles and practices they are engaging in, which will help decipher social complexity and promote better equity and justice policies.

In this sense, we pose the following research question: What characteristics define the streaming practice of older women that challenge prejudices about who is a gamer? At the core of this question lies a critique of the mechanisms that determine which forms of knowledge (skills or practices) are deemed as valid, and how such mechanisms can exclude certain individuals – such as older women streamers – from gaming as a social practice. This exclusion often operates through identity-based biases – such as ageism – that distort perceptions of their credibility or interpretive capacity.

This study seeks to explore their streaming practice through the analysis of a case study, in order to contribute to the categorization of streamers and demystify the gamer universe as exclusive to young experts. The aim is to advance towards the agency of older women and close hermeneutical justice gaps, understood as the limitations that certain social groups face in order for their experiences to be understood and legitimized within the dominant interpretive frameworks.

Methodology

This is an exploratory qualitative study that addresses the case of Aqumadre, an adult woman over 64 years old, who has been a video game streamer for more than 3 years. Aqumadre was selected as an

information-rich case due to the continuity of her streaming practice. While not statistically representative, her case is analytically relevant as it reflects emerging practices among older women who actively participate in streaming cultures. Unlike other adult female streamers, Aqumadre transmits in real time on Twitch for around 3 h a day, instead of publishing pre-recorded videos on YouTube. In addition, the geographical origin makes her a particularly relevant case study, since Latin America faces a greater digital divide compared to other regions, where internet access reaches 87% of the general population (ITU 2023) but drops by about half among older adults, and in the specific country of this case study, it falls to just 36% (EUTIC 2019). Additionally, research on Twitch streaming coming from this area is still quite limited (Navarrete 2024).

We used content analysis techniques, which allowed observing the streamer's channel, her narrative and the discourses of her followers.

We selected and defined a set of categories for each of the study's observation units, based on a documentary review of video game streaming broadcasts, with an emphasis on Twitch. The selection and description of these categories arose from an exploration of research that investigated different aspects of live streaming, such as the dynamics of interaction, community building, and the technical elements of streaming. Although the categories we present come from contributions by several authors, their organization and adaptation refer to the particularities of this study. In this way, the model of analysis we propose allows observing the practice of video game streaming from the vantage point of three observation units: (a) the streamer's channel, (b) the streamer, and (c) the channel's chat (Table 2). This approach systematizes the key elements of the streaming experience for the case studied here and it also offers a basis for future research in similar contexts.

For data collection and analysis, the procedure began with a detailed review of the streamer's public channel on Twitch, exploring and identifying categories of interest. The discourses of the followers in the chat and the streamer's narrative were taken from a streaming session in May 2024, among six other transmissions available on the streamer's channel. The selection criterion for the streaming session was a typical day's broadcast with a standard average of views.

The discourse of both the followers and the streamer was captured in a word processor in order to clean the corpus by removing elements

Table 2. Analytical categories

Observation unit	A priori category	Description	References	Codes
Streamer's Channel	Streamer's profile	Sociodemographic characteristics of the streamer, number of followers, subscribers, and average viewers; type of game streamed, social media of the channel, description, aesthetics, and branding of the channel, monetization methods.	Sjöblom et al. (2019); Törhönen et al. (2020)	Origin, name, and age of the streamer; audience size; types of games; social media presence; channel branding; monetization strategies.
	Technical aspects	Software and hardware used for streaming, audio and video quality, use of a webcam; frequency and adherence to streaming schedule.	Zhao et al. (2019)	Webcam, microphone, streaming schedule and frequency.
	Rules and norms	Behavioral guidelines for the audience to maintain a positive environment, regulated by moderators or bots according to the stream's norms.	Mihailova (2022)	Behavioral norms, rules, number of moderators.
Streamer	Personality and charisma	Refers to personal style, such as the way of speaking, sense of humor, way of relating to the audience, and the genuine affinity projected.	Zhao et al. (2019)	Warm and affectionate language, welcoming phrases, light humor, laughter, constant interaction, expressions of gratitude, shared activities, transparency about technical issues, personal disclosures, enthusiasm.

(*Continued*)

Table 2 (*Continued*). Analytical categories

Observation unit	A priori category	Description	References	Codes
	Parasocial skills	Skills to interact with the audience in real-time, respond to messages, conduct interactive activities, and balance gameplay and entertainment to offer a dynamic experience.	Törhönen et al. (2020)	Message reading and responses, interactive activities, interaction across multiple channels, entertainment skills, viewer experience personalization, participatory and communal atmosphere.
	Gaming skills	Corresponds to the streamer's skills, including skill level, achievements, and gaming style; knowledge of the game world, related jargon, and gaming strategy.	Sjöblom and Hamari (2017); Woodcock and Johnson (2019)	Gameplay strategy, achievements, play style, interaction with other players, in-game difficulties, specific jargon, problem-solving.
Channel chat	Community style	Refers to the treatment within the community, cohesion, response to projected content (game), responses and reactions to comments and requests from the streamer, moderators, and among followers.	Giertz et al. (2022); Cabeza et al. (2021)	Greetings, gameplay, relaxed discourse, norms, instructions, requests, loyalty, encouragement.

(*Continued*)

Table 2 (*Continued*). Analytical categories

Observation unit	A priori category	Description	References	Codes
	Streamer characterization	Ways in which followers perceive and experience the streamer's presence, based on qualities, attributes, personality, and interaction styles with her community and personal brand building.	Sjoblom and Hamari (2017)	Grandmother, Aquamadre, gamer, appreciation.
	Collective self-esteem	Refers to how viewers and streamers support each other, strengthening their confidence and sense of worth through positive interactions in the stream.	Li et al. (2020); Johnson and Woodcock (2019)	Positive descriptors, requests for affection, expressions of affection, recognition.
	Systemic gender or age discrimination	May manifest in streams as subtle or overt attacks against individuals based on their gender identity or sexual orientation; as well as ageism.	Obreja (2023)	These categories were not identified in the observed narratives.
	Negativity	Negative feedback from viewers during live streams, which may include exclusionary language, sarcasm, trolling, or spam, affecting both the streamer's experience and the community's dynamics.	Mihailova (2022)	

irrelevant to the analysis, such as usernames, message timestamps, channel commands (!discord, !contacto, !speak), and automated messages generated by the channel bot. In the case of emotes, only those involving direct interaction with the streamer were retained.

Coding was carried out using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, where each message was classified under a predefined system of categories (Table 2). The coding process unfolded in three stages. First, a work meeting was conducted by the authors (as coders) to align coding criteria and ensure consistency in the application of categories. Then, the dataset was evenly distributed to manage the volume of data. Finally, regular meetings were held to compare, discuss, refine, and resolve ambiguous codings, which ensured interpretive consistency and reliability. Filtering and frequency counts were then used to identify the most representative codes and uncover relevant patterns and meanings, allowing for an inductive approach to thematic saturation.

Results

The analysis and discussion of results were guided by the previous categories, asking a set of questions, such as: how does the older woman video game streamer assume her practice? Is she assumed or treated as a competent gamer by her followers? On the other hand, does the player lean toward the stereotype of "gamer grandmas," using this label to connect with the audience, or does she resist this categorization? Additionally, do her followers associate their loyalty with affection for "the grandma" or project their aspiration to remain gamers over time?

Further in the text is the application of the analysis model to the case study of Aqumadre (Figure 2), an older woman who is a video game streamer and has a public streaming channel on Twitch (https://www.twitch.tv/aqumadre). Her channel has been active from August 2021 to date, and it is produced in Spanish from a Latin American country.

Streamer's Channel

A streaming channel on Twitch is considered a space where streamers can build and present their personal brand through various elements such as

Figure 2. Aqumadre's streaming channel



the description, aesthetics, and norms, which reflect the personality and style of the content creator. This information facilitates the creation of a recognizable identity for audiences. Table 3 presents these aspects identified in Aqumadre's channel.

The average number of viewers in Aqumadre's streams remains at a standard level, which is understandable given that Twitch has over 100,000 simultaneous streams, creating a highly competitive environment where very few streams achieve a high number of viewers.[3] Regarding her equipment, it is also average, using a camera like many others on the platform, which implies high real-time exposure. This contrasts with current trends among young streamers, such as the use of avatars, an option that is gaining popularity.[4] Regarding her channel's rules, they are brief and precise, following a standard format on Twitch, although there is the possibility of expanding these rules, something many streamers implement to manage larger communities.[5]

[3]Twitch statistics and graphs: https://twitchtracker.com/statistics
[4]Twitch annual summary: https://streamscharts.com/recap
[5]Twitch etiquette: https://www.twitch.tv/creatorcamp/en/paths/getting-started-on-twitch/twitch-etiquette/

Table 3. Results by categories of the streamer's channel

Category	Result	
Streamer profile	Authentic	Fanny is a 64-year-old Uruguayan woman who plays online games like *Minecraft* and *Rust* individually or with followers. She describes herself as a retired woman who enjoys plants and knitting, with her favorite animal being the cow. She has over 64,000 followers with an average of 30 viewers in her daily 3-hour streams. Her channel has social media accounts on TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and Discord. Aqumadre projects a vibrant and welcoming aesthetic for her channel, accompanied by a background with plush toys, soft lights, signs, or figures that add color and a relaxed atmosphere. Regarding her personal branding, Aqumadre plays with her pseudonym and links it to her online personality. The monetization methods enabled on the channel are subscriptions, donations, and advertising.
Technical aspects	Reliable	The streamer uses a mid-to-high-range webcam and microphone to project her face and voice during her streams. The channel does not specify the characteristics of these devices, or the hardware and software of the computer used for gaming and maintaining the online stream; however, it is assumed that she has robust internet and equipment due to the image quality, sound, and performance of the video game and the channel during real-time streaming. Aqumadre's streams are consistent in schedule and frequency.
Rules and norms	Precise control	The stream has two basic rules: no spamming or flooding[6] during the live stream and no insults or discrimination against anyone in the community. There are two moderators in the channel's chat to regulate and keep viewers' messages within the stream's norms. Two bots are used for chat moderation, one to greet viewers as they enter the channel and another to provide information about the streamer's social media.

[6]Spam refers to junk messages in the chat where social networks, websites or servers are advertised. Flooding, on the other hand, consists of sending a lot of information in a short time to saturate the chat.

Streamer Persona

Streamer persona refers to the particularities or attributes of the streamer that encompass personality, social skills, and gaming skills. Table 4 presents the dimensions that reflect the streamer's performance during streams and her ability to connect and interact with her followers.

Aqumadre is characterized by interacting warmly, cordially, and particularly affectionately with her followers. Her tone of voice is soft and affectionate, frequently using diminutives and gentle expressions like "my love," "how beautiful," and "how nice," creating a welcoming atmosphere. She often refers to herself in the third person and laughs frequently, giving her streams a playful and relaxed aspect. She continuously reads and acknowledges comments, showing attention and closeness with her followers, and thanks the audience's contributions for the proper functioning of the stream. In her gaming style, she uses humor and exposes her own vulnerability to create authentic interactions.

Channel's Chat

Table 5 presents the categories observed to describe the behavior of the channel's chat. During live streams, the chat is the space where followers post real-time written, sound, and/or emoticon messages in response to the streamer's narrative and practices during the live stream, as well as comments and questions among followers, generating an interaction dynamic that varies between streams.

The community style is characterized by being affective, attentive, and fun. The community's messages are close, friendly, and entertaining, where the streamer and her viewers maintain a continuous and respectful interaction. The most common types of comments are greetings, expressions of affection, support, questions, requests, reactions to the game, and technical topics.

The channel's audience predominantly perceives the streamer as a grandmother figure, affectionate and authentic. Her ability to personally and closely attend to messages, as well as her friendly disposition to play with followers, is valued. The audience recognizes her passion for gaming, where the streamer's age and experience are respected. The audience maintains a protective and affectionate tone toward Aqumadre's skills as a streamer and player.

Table 4. Results by categories of the streamer persona

Category	Result	
Personality and charisma	Affectionate	"my love" "little one" "beautiful" "I love you all, see you tomorrow"
	Enthusiastic	"Let's go again, let's give that little bug some work, who does it think it is, can it handle us, right?" "How beautiful your invention turned out, I love it, now you just need to put a pressure plate here" "Oh, but how beautiful, she has an intelligence and creativity that is incredible" "Well, grandma fell, but she got her strength back, so let's go again"
Social skills	Active listening	"Thanks for the follow Nicky, hi, how have you been? Are you coming from TikTok? Thank you so much, beautiful" "Hi, Chusi, how are you? I know, all good, my love, you're fine, how nice, I'm so glad"
	Reciprocal	"I'm going to enter OBS to see Josef's purchase, what does the camera say. Yes, thank you, guy, for letting me know." "Thank you so much, let's see if we can download it." "They're letting me know on WhatsApp, thank you so much"

(*Continued*)

Table 4 (*Continued*)**.** Results by categories of the streamer persona

Category	Result	
Gaming skills	Strategic	"We use a strategy to kill the bug or keep shooting, we use the two-space strategy"
		"Let's look for a treasure, guys, what do you think? I'm bad with coordinates. But I have to learn."
		"But look at all this stuff, how great, grab everything, don't leave anything"
		"We need to get a cartographer and ask him to make us a little map to find a mansion"
		"My hiccups are gone, luckily they're gone. Oh no, I have little food, I have one and a half hearts, it's time to eat"
	Humorous	"Let's see, you who are smart and don't get lost, unlike grandma who gets lost all the time"
		"I hope the bugs don't attack me, like they did yesterday when I had to run away" "I didn't see where they went." "I can't find you" I don't know where you are, nooo"
		"How clumsy grandma is"

Table 5. Results by categories of the channel's chat

Category	Result	
Community style	Affective	"hi beautiful grandma, how are you?" "beautiful grandma" "I declare myself a fan of you, ma'am Aq" "adopt me?" "I want to be your granddaughter"
	Attentive/ protective	"Grandma, the camera froze" "Grandma, have you eaten?" "No, up, up, grandma" "don't talk about that here, grandma is relaxed"
	Fun	"I left for a few seconds and came back to see grandma on fire xD" "what a troll grandma haha" "oh kittens here, grandma, animal abuse, report them grandma XD"
	Grandma	"Hi grandma," "Hi grandma!" "How are you, grandma?" "Bye grandma"
Streamer characterization	Close	"! I almost got bitten by a dog for seeing her on the street" "A bit sick but fine, thank you, and you?" "I love you grandma" "ma'am, I love you" "Grandma, can I talk to you on Discord?"

(*Continued*)

Table 5 (*Continued*). Results by categories of the channel's chat

Category	Result	
Collective self-esteem	Player	"Grandma, why don't you go back home to keep them safe?" "you have a rare plant next to your trident, grandma" "! grandma has my boat!" "grandma, I'm scared, where are you?"
	Peer	"Grandma, are you going to see the Minecraft movie in theaters when it comes out?" "Grandma, what color are your nails?" "I've already sent you all the information by email, I hope for your response"
	Positive	"You're the best!!!" "you're doing amazing" "I got to see an angel play Minecraft" "see you grandma, rest, we love you a lot"
	Valuable	"today is my birthday and all I want is for you to congratulate me" "you remind me of my grandma who passed away 2 months ago" "I come to tell you about a project in development"
Systemic gender or age discrimination	No comments in these categories	
Negativity		

Note: The original texts of the users in the chat are maintained despite writing errors.

Affective, empathetic, caring expressions, and requests for attention in the channel's chat reinforce the streamer's self-esteem and reflect the fact that viewers feel valued and supported. This fosters an atmosphere of emotional support and a sense of community and belonging.

Discussion

The streamer challenges established norms of what it means to be a gamer, demonstrating that gamer identity is not homogeneous. Through her participation in a streaming platform, she generates a community that validates and recognizes her presence and experience in a space traditionally dominated by young and competitive stereotypes.

In this sense, her disruptive approach, centered on naturalness and family affectivity, allows her to build a community on Twitch without resorting to traditional success mechanisms on the platform, such as technical skill or competitive collaboration (Ruotsalainen 2022; Welch 2022) which challenges established power dynamics and contributes to reconfiguring the meaning and practices associated with gaming. It is worth noting that this sense of naturalness may stem from a communicative strategy aimed at eliciting sympathy and support from followers through the performance of authenticity – an aspect identified as highly valued by streaming audiences (Woodcock & Johnson 2019).

On the other hand, she expands the definitions of categorization of older adult video game players proposed by De Schutter and Malliet (2014).[7] Aqumadre transforms the activity of gaming beyond occupying her "free time," as she creates and maintains a community centered on emotional connection and building bonds. Additionally, by practicing shared games with young people, the streamer challenges the stereotype of the isolated video game player and promotes intergenerational social networks. This fosters forms of empowerment, as by nurturing interactions with young people, she strengthens these new meanings that redefine the traditionally assigned role of grandmothers.

[7]They identify five profiles: those who play to have free time (wasting time), those who find enjoyment and relaxation (freedom fighters), those who seek to escape loneliness (compensators), those who value games for their contribution to interests (value seekers) and those who enjoy the medium and consider themselves gamers (ludophiles).

Similar to the depiction of the grandmother figure in video games described in Iversen's (2015) work, older adults in streaming contexts can be portrayed as subjects who combine traditional qualities such as warmth, wisdom, and trustworthiness with attributes of agency, expanded opportunities, and active participation in digital culture and entertainment. This contributes to more complex and positive social imaginaries within digital culture. Instead of being seen as limited or outdated, they demonstrate gaming and streaming skills that even many young and adult players have yet to master.

Continuing with De Schutter and Malliet's (2014) categorization, the enjoyment she derives from playing video games is evident in the streamer's narrative, but additionally, she positions herself as a "freedom fighter" by confronting generational and gender norms in the video game streaming universe without adopting the typical strategies of young streamers. These presences contribute to a more inclusive representation that challenges the "hegemony of play" (Fron et al. 2017), in which specific configurations of power – technological, commercial, and cultural – dominate the video game industry and tend to overlook the needs of minorities, such as older adults. In this regard, the presence of figures like Aqumadre, along with communities that foster more diverse environments, confronts the video game industry and calls for a rethinking of its design, development, and marketing practices.

Although no negative or age or gender discrimination discourses are identified in Aqumadre's streams, her presence on Twitch exposes her to an environment where aggression and negative discourses are frequent (Mihailova 2022). To mitigate these risks, she has a team of moderators, formed by some of her followers, who closely monitor interactions in the chat. This strict control seems to reflect a protective tone from her followers, who take an active role in maintaining a safe space for the streamer. This sense of protection could stem from two factors: on one hand, the certain vulnerability that Aqumadre projects in some of her narratives; and on the other, an intergenerational imaginary where young people assume that older adults need protection.

From this study, possible hypotheses for future research can be developed. For example, in response to the question: What factors influence the choice of a streamer who deviates from the prevailing youthful profile on the platform? And do young people see the streamer as a symbolic

substitute for the limited or absent intergenerational relationships in their daily lives? A possible hypothesis is that the streamer's narrative of care and empathy may play a central role in this aspect, given her sweet and friendly tone may resonate with the possible desire for attention, listening, and affection from young people. Compared to other video game streams that focus more on jokes and trolling (De Wit et al. 2020), Aqumadre's young audience seems to have chosen a more emotional and connected space. These particularities can be observed through the lens of parasocial relationship theories and/or the discourse surrounding the concept of digital kinship (Hjorth 2022), which recognize that audiences can develop emotional bonds with media figures, and that digital technologies facilitate the formation of closeness and relational ties beyond biological or in-person kinship.

This line of inquiry may contribute to a broader understanding than that offered by the functionalist approach to older gamers, where video games are viewed solely as tools to mitigate physical or cognitive decline, leaving little room for other dimensions such as the ludic, expressive, or meaningful potential of gaming for this age group (De Schutter 2017; Iversen 2016), or for other capacities outlined in this study, such as socioemotional and interpersonal skills. In turn, it is possible to contradict interpretations of intergenerational dynamics in digital communities that emphasize the fragility of older adults, focusing on their almost exclusive dependence on emotional support and digital skills provided by younger generations (Freeman et al. 2020; Xie et al. 2024), reinforcing stereotypes of vulnerability and passivity instead of recognizing their agency and active contribution.

In contrast, while in Aqumadre's streams intergenerational interactions are characterized by a transversal and collaborative relationship, here, the intergenerational character of these interactions is inferred from the chat discourse itself, where commenters frequently self-position as younger through generational language, direct references to age (e.g. addressing the streamer as "grandmother"), and comparative statements such as "you remind me of my grandmother." Young people seem to find a sense of personal value by feeling like experts in guiding and supporting the older streamer's performance. This may suggest a reinforcement of their identity, an opportunity to rehearse leadership roles that perhaps

their environment has not facilitated, or competencies in the field of live video game streaming, although it may also denote subtle power dynamics, where apparent equality entails invisible hierarchies fueled by notions of gaming and digital expertise. That is, the power hierarchies of young people over the older adult may be being reinforced. This perspective aligns with Iversen's (2016) analysis, which highlights the tensions between empowerment and symbolic subordination in representations of older adults, whose presence and participation tend to be valued insofar as they fulfill a functional role. In this case, the role of older women streamers may be associated with receiving guidance, entertaining, or generating emotional satisfaction for younger audiences.

Conclusions

The phenomenon of older women video game streamers is not coincidental and is articulated in a multidimensional way. A key aspect has been the promotion of a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding framework that draws on human rights and theoretical and epistemological approaches that promote the participation of these women in a variety of activities actively, including the adoption of technology. Additionally, the positioning of information and communication technologies has facilitated access to streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube. Similarly, the increase in life expectancy has led, among other things, to the emergence of older adults who, far from continuing with the mandate of a passive and retired life, have become content creators on social networks. This phenomenon reflects a cultural shift to recognize and value the participation of older women in areas traditionally dominated by young people. This points toward epistemic justice for a social group traditionally rendered invisible, although such progress remains partial and contradictory.

The streamer's experience demonstrates certain gains in epistemic justice by allowing an older woman to be heard and recognized as a gamer within a space that has historically marginalized this group (thus reducing testimonial injustice). Likewise, her presence and practice help expand – albeit incipiently – the hermeneutical frameworks concerning who can be considered a gamer, what kinds of performances are possible, and what values can be foregrounded within the community. However, the public recognition she receives still operates within stereotypical frameworks

that associate her figure with that of a kind, familial "grandma gamer," reinforcing ageist and gendered imagery. This typecasting reveals the persistence of hermeneutical injustice, as the community lacks the interpretive resources to understand and value the practices of these women beyond traditional frames of old age and femininity. Thus, the agency of older women streamers should not be overstated, as they continue to face oppressive structures that limit both the recognition of their subjectivity and their capacity to fully transform collective imaginaries.

This analysis suggests that efforts toward epistemic justice in these contexts must consider not only increased visibility and credibility, but also the need to expand and diversify available hermeneutical frameworks – without romanticizing the individual capacity to resist structural forms of oppression such as ageism.

On the other hand, there is a voluntary choice of two generations that seek each other and coincide in these streaming spaces, which may reflect, among other things, various unmet social needs or the valuation of accumulated experience in the face of the immediacy of today's world.

These practices are reconfiguring the social perception of old age, promoting new inclusive narratives and challenging traditional stereotypes through inclusive leadership. Aqumadre does so by building a collaborative, affective, protective, and human community. This is indicative of a different category of streamer that diverges from the prevailing youthful model.

The narrative promoted by Aqumadre is under construction and, paradoxically, could have an ephemeral character. This particular narrative, linked to boomer women, could transform with the imminent arrival of Generation X to the stage of older adulthood. Unlike boomers, these women interacted with video games from their adolescence, in a period when this practice was socially accepted, and throughout their lives, they have strengthened their rights as women. That is, they will reach old age with visions and skills more aligned with women's rights and the techno-digital entertainment environment.

This places video games as a phenomenon in a particular moment that must be carefully observed. The category represented by women like Aqumadre could soon disappear, giving way to new narratives. These narratives could move away from both the known characteristics of

young streamers – centered on vitality and expressiveness – and the affective, human, and collaborative qualities observed in Aqumadre. The change will be guided by what the process of cultural and technological evolution itself triggers.

Ethical Statement

This study did not require approval from an ethics committee, as it did not involve the collection of sensitive data, human intervention, or the use of private information that could compromise the identity or well-being of the participants. All information used comes from publicly accessible sources, adhering to the principles of scientific integrity and good research practices.

Corresponding Author

Mabel Andrea Navarrete Vega, University Center for Social Research, University of Colima, Avenida Universidad 333, Las Víboras, C.P 28040 Colima, México. Email: mnavarrete@ucol.mx

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