

Preprint

An analysis of the inclusion and depiction of gender perspective in Spanish Geography textbooks

María Egea-Hernández^a, Aida Pinos-Navarrete^a and Juan Carlos Maroto-Martos^a

^a*Department of Human Geography, University of Granada*

An analysis of the inclusion and depiction of gender perspective in Spanish Geography textbooks

Quality education requires institutional commitment to promote gender equality. Yet, the materials utilized daily in pre-higher education sometimes reproduce gender-stereotyped behaviours deeply ingrained in our western culture. The main aim is to analyse the content of the three predominant Geography textbooks used in Andalusia, Spain, to verify whether the gender perspective is incorporated into their treatment. The findings obtained reveal that textbooks contain a compilation of descriptions that exclude women from their study, both in theory and practical exercises. Nonetheless, variances among publishers become apparent, with certain strategies emerging to integrate egalitarian content, notably through the incorporation of diverse imagery.

Keywords: teaching innovation; feminist geography; education research; gender equality

Introduction

Gender equality in the Spanish educational context is evidenced by the institutional efforts around the so-called notion of coeducation (Venegas 2013; Venegas, Villar-Aguilés and Santos 2020; Vila-Carneiro 2020). The achievement of Gender Equality (Sustainable Development Goal, SDG 5) and Quality Education (SDG 4) are two of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (Razavi 2016). Its initiatives and policies are directed towards exposing and eliminating all manifestations of discrimination against

girls and females (De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina 2022). However, sexist stereotypes entrenched within the school setting serve to uphold and reinforce traditional gender roles, both masculine and feminine, within our culture (Aragonés-González, Rosser-Limiñana and Gil-González 2020). Educational institutions function as the primary avenue for socialization and transmission of established universal values and communal norms (Gebregeorgis 2016). In this regard, textbooks reinforce these beliefs and norms by presenting themselves as active agents in shaping gender identities and, at times, contributing to the perpetuation of sexist biases (Ahmad and Shah 2019; Lee 2019). As Gómez-Carrasco and Gallego-Herrera (2016) stated, textbooks not only contain disciplinary content but also serve as conveyors of social models and fulfill an evident ideological and identity-forming function. This holds particular significance in the examination of Social Sciences wherein students encounter concepts spanning social, cultural, political, economic, and civic realms (Košir and Lakshminarayanan 2023). Despite the existence of a robust legislative framework regarding gender equality in the educational system, it is necessary to review the contents included in compulsory education Spanish textbooks as they act as the primary source of information used by teachers in the classroom (Subirats Martoni 2010). Through an examination of all aspects of textbooks – academic texts, images (photographs, maps, graphics) and activities – this study aims to explore the current state of gender mainstreaming in contemporary Spanish Geography textbooks in pre-higher education stage.

Literature review

Textbooks in Geography Education

In the Spanish educational context, textbooks assume a pivotal role, serving as the cornerstone of information and knowledge dissemination for students, guiding the educational process and conforming to governmental educational standards and objectives (Brugilles and Cromer 2009; Bernabé-Villodre and Martínez-Bello 2018). This teaching material constitutes the quintessential tool utilized by educators in the education of Social Sciences, particularly in Geography, across all levels of compulsory education (López Sánchez, García Prieto and Travé González 2017). A study by Area-Moreira, Hernández-Rivero, and Sosa-Alonso (2016) concluded that textbooks continued to be the primary resource used by educators in Spanish classrooms, while Information

and Communication Technology (ICT) functioned mainly as a supplementary and supportive material. Examining textbooks is a necessary practice, as demonstrated by the systematic review conducted by González-González et al. (2024), which reaffirms the significance of this educational material in Spanish classrooms.

The Ideal Textbook, published in 1997 by Rüsen, a historian and philosopher, stands as one of the early works translated into Spanish with a significant influence on studies concerning educational manuals. This research focused on establishing criteria for the analysis of history textbooks, aimed at determining how they could contribute to the development of historical consciousness (Bel Martínez and Colomer Rubio 2018). The ideas presented by this author were embraced in Spain by Prats Cuevas (2012), who put forth relevant proposals forming the methodological foundation for the development of research related to textbooks in the education of Social Sciences. In 2013, Escolano defined "manualistics" as the knowledge area that examines school manuals through various approaches, ranging from their internal composition to their methods of use and production. Since then, it has evolved into a highly relevant research focus within the educational field.

From the perspective of Geography teaching, geographical thinking is conceived as crucial for contextualizing students within their living environment, ranging from their immediate local scale to regional, national, and global scales. Geographical knowledge contributes to shaping individuals who actively engage in social life, as it fosters an understanding of geographical space and its role in social practices (Araya Palacios and de Souza Cavalcanti 2018). The manner in which textbooks present their content can influence students' comprehension and formation in their geographical education (Johnson 2006).

It is noteworthy that the Spanish Geography Association (AGE) established the Geography Didactics Group in 1986. Yet, limited attention has been paid to textbooks analysis and, in general, to any topic related to teaching, in contrast to developments in other geographical contexts, such as Anglo-Saxon countries (Bednarz 2004). This is evident in the scarcity of articles published in the Spanish journal *Didáctica Geográfica*, issued by the AGE, totaling only six since its inception (Oliveira 2006; Vera Aranda and de Lázaro y Torres 2010; Raja García and Miralles Martínez 2014; Fernández Caso and Guberman 2015; Ramos Santos and Calongue Cano 2016; Romero Pardo and Palacios Mena 2024). Consequently, there is a certain scientific gap in the production of research that analyses textbooks within the Geography Education in Spain.

Geography education for gender equality

Over the past century, science has exhibited a pronounced androcentric character, portraying men's experiences as representative of society as a whole. This universalizing approach is problematic as it neglects to acknowledge the distinct experiences of males and females (Acheson, Holland and Oettle 2020). This has had significant implications for education, particularly in teaching materials, which sometimes function as subconscious mechanisms through which gender inequalities emerge and are reinforced (Subirats Martoni 1994; García Perales 2012; Varela 2017). When students are exposed to gender stereotypes in their learning materials, it can affect their self-perception, aspirations and expectations (Gouvias and Alexopoulos 2016; Gebregeorgis 2016; Islam and Asadullah 2018). The curriculum content itself, alongside the images and text within textbooks, contributes to a persistent invisibility and exclusion of women in the educational sphere, subsequently reproducing these behavioural patterns in the social domain (Moreno-Vera and Díez-Ros 2018; Cocoradă 2018). Several studies demonstrate that the presence of women in textbooks for Compulsory Secondary Education in Spain is exceedingly scarce across virtually all subjects (López-Navajas 2014; Saenz del Castillo 2015). Cultural heritage results in girls and young women lacking references in which they can feel represented and inspired.

Activities function as resources for students' autonomous learning, enabling the application of theoretical knowledge to practice and fostering curiosity, critical thinking and creativity (Martínez Medina and Arrebola Haro 2016). Publishers tend to include a larger number of exercises that focused on memorization and content reproduction, rather than addressing the current and increasing need for more cognitively challenging and active proposal exercises that incorporates gender as a cross-cutting dimension.

Within geographical studies, notwithstanding the fact that gender and feminist studies have solidified their position within geographical science internationally (Monk 2016), there are still areas of the discipline that further attention is required to be strengthened. It was not until the 1990s that the first studies emerged in the Anglo-Saxon context on how to teach geography from a gender perspective, led by authors like Rose (1990) and Hanson (1992). Later, this theme extended to the Spanish and Ibero-American context where the geographer María Dolors García Ramón stands out, whose role was essential in the epistemological and methodological renewal of university geography in Spanish and Catalan (Monk and García Ramón 1987; García Ramón 1989).

One of the earliest academic manuals on gender geography in Spain, *Women, Space, and Society* (Sabaté Martínez, Rodríguez Moya and Díaz Muñoz 1995), already discusses the evident sexist attitudes embedded in texts, especially in the language and imagery of books. It is at this juncture that a gender perspective should be applied to demonstrate that geographic space is not neutral but rather the outcome of power relations related to class, ethnicity, religion, generation and gender (Varela 2016). This approach offers a fresh perspective on contemporary society and its changes, highlighting the role of women in various socio-economic processes occurring within the territory and society.

Achieving the objective of gender equality in education entails intricate processes of transformation (Rao and Sweetman 2014). It is crucial for both the political and academic domain to recognize the importance of integrating gender issues into curricula, teaching-learning processes, and educational materials, as well as recognizing the ongoing progress required in this realm (Hinton-Smith et al. 2022). Hence, the analysis of textbooks is a first step towards gender equality, as they are not only the most widely used material in classrooms but also the primary mechanism through which students acquire discursive understandings of gender identity (De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina 2022).

Research objectives

Studies over the past three decades on gender geography and education in Spain has concluded that teaching materials used in classrooms exhibit a gender bias, perpetuating stereotypes and rendering women invisible (Sabaté Martínez, Rodríguez Moya and Díaz Muñoz 1995; Fernández Caso and Guberman 2015). These materials are characterized by an encyclopedic and descriptive approach, presenting content and resources with closed, conceptual and factual information, highlighting the need for updates to educational materials (Vaillo, 2016). Based on this, the hypothesis arises that a gender approach is still not considered when addressing topics related to cultural and social geography in textbooks. The main aim is to meticulously analyse the content present in Geography textbooks for 2nd year of Compulsory Secondary Education, from the main publishers used in Andalusia, Spain, to verify whether the gender perspective is incorporated into their treatment. The specific objectives are to:

- (1) Examine the resources presented in human geography topics in textbooks
- (2) Analyse the role of women in the academic texts proposed by different publishers
- (3) Identify the location and design of the activities included in textbooks and assess how gender variable is depicted based on their level of cognitive complexity
- (4) Evaluate whether the images represent women equally to men in terms of quantity (frequency of appearance) and quality (roles portrayed)

Methodology

To conduct this investigation, a thorough review and examination of textbooks from the main publishers used in Andalusia, Spain, was undertaken. The three most widely employed manuals in Andalusian educational institutions for the Geography and History subject at the second level of compulsory education were selected (Table 1). Out of 1379 educational centers, 843 utilize one of these manuals, representing 61.3 percent of the total sample. The data source was provided by the Department of Educational Development and Vocational Training of the Andalusian Regional Government.

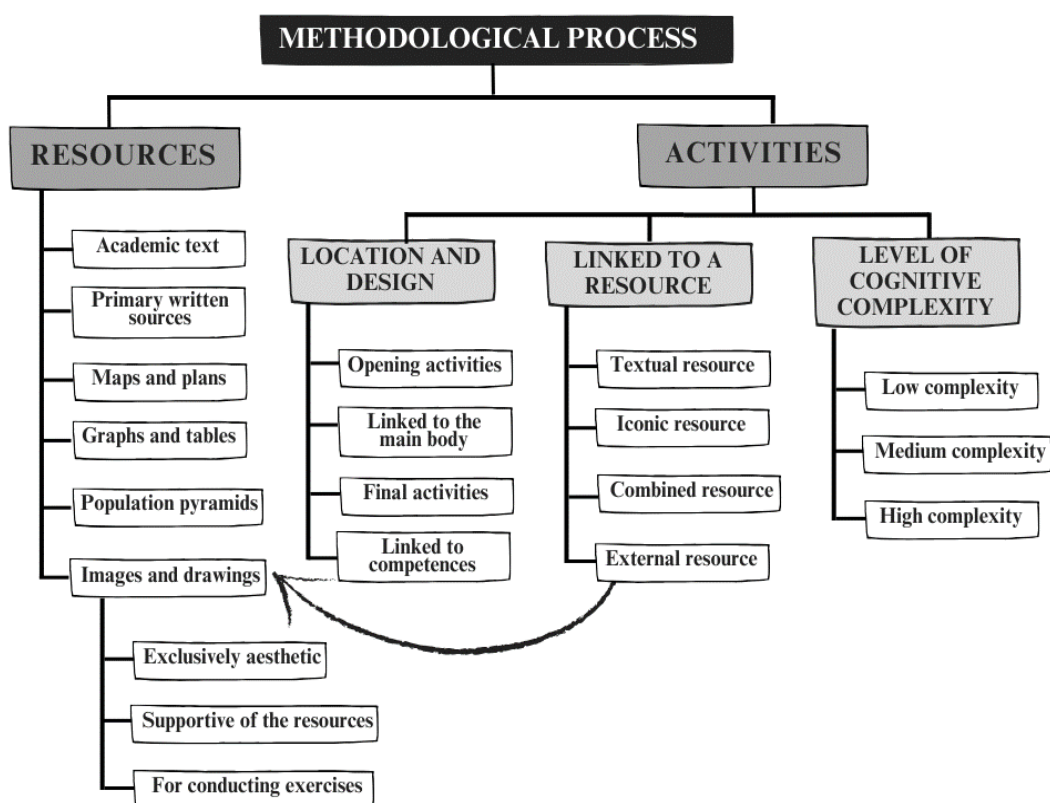
The textbooks are divided into historical and geographical content, with geography accounting for only 23% of the 39 chapters across the three publishers. A total of 210 pages, corresponding to nine teaching units, were analysed. The publishers focus on two main topics: population (e.g., Unit 10: *The Study of Population*, SM; Unit 10: *Unequal Growth*, Vicens Vives) and urban space (e.g., Unit 12: *A World of Cities*, SM; Unit 11: *Cities*, Santillana). All units provide a multiscale analysis (Europe, Spain and Andalusia), both demographic and territorial.

Table 1. Social Science textbooks. Source: the authors.

Title	Author	Publisher (Edition)	Geography Chapters (% of the total)	Geography Pages (% of the total)
<i>Geografía e Historia 2º ESO Savia Nueva</i>	Cortés, Fernández-Mayoralas, Fernández, Lázaro, de la Mata y Mesegar	SM (2021)	3 (25%)	50 (21%)
<i>Geografía e Historia en Red GH 2 Andalucía</i>	Gatell, de Miguel, Domínguez, González, Lucero, Sebastián y Sobrino	Vicens Vives (2021)	2 (18,2%)	52 (17,4%)
<i>Geografía e Historia, Serie Descubre, 2º ESO</i>	Grence y López-Sáez	Santillana (2017)	4 (30,8%)	108 (32.5%)

The analysis of the textbooks followed the methodology designed by Sáiz Serrano (2011), who examines history textbooks, and which was later used by other authors to study Geography textbooks (Bel Martínez and Colomer Rubio 2018; Morote Seguido 2020). This model consists of the following phases (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Phases of the methodological process. Source: the authors.



Firstly, it was necessary to distinguish between resources and activities. Resources are considered materials, techniques or elements inherent to the teaching and learning of geographical science: the academic text itself (prepared by the author of the book), primary written sources (reports, historical documents, news, etc.), maps, plans, graphs, tables, population pyramids, illustrations (drawings), photographs, images, and conceptual maps. As for activities, they encompass all formulations or statements that require student work.

A second step sought to classify activities according to their location and design within the topics through the following classification: opening or introductory activities, activities linked to the main body, final or synthesis activities and activities designed to work on or develop basic competencies. Then, activities were classified according to the resource they are linked to as follows: textual resource (academic text, primary textual

sources), iconic resource (maps, tables or graphs, photographs, illustrations, etc.), combined resource (textual and iconic) and resource external to the book (web pages, multimedia links, encyclopaedias and others).

Next, activities were reviewed in light of the level of cognitive complexity they pose. To do this, the model proposed by Sáiz Serrano (2011) was followed, who uses the taxonomy of learning objectives-stages designed by Bloom (6 increasing levels) in its updated version adapted by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). Three levels of activities were differentiated according to their cognitive complexity:

- Type 1 (Low complexity): These involve the mere reproduction and location of resources present in the textbook. In other words, the response is extracted literally from the book.
- Type 2 (Medium complexity): These are characterized by summarizing, interpreting or describing the information present in a resource, requiring an understanding of it. It also demands the processes established in level 1, locating main ideas, summarizing and/or paraphrasing the information contained in the resource.
- Type 3 (High complexity): These activities involve analysing, applying, evaluating information from different resources or that demand the creation of new information. In general, they require previous steps derived from solving inferential questions and the application of procedural content as strategies. Examples include case studies, critical assessment or contrasting information provided by different sources on the same geographical phenomenon or process, simulation exercises, hypothesis development based on information obtained from solving open questions or learning problems, report writing, self-explanations, or conclusions drawn from the analysis of different resources.

Finally, images included in each teaching unit were taken into account, ordering them according to their function: exclusively aesthetic, supportive of the resources used and for conducting exercises. These images encourage critical thinking among students, "learning to think" or present a problem to solve.

This research was carried out by applying the aforementioned methodologies to analyse topics related to the study of Human Geography present in the textbook contents. Simultaneously, the gender variable was applied to illustrate how the female gender is

represented, how often it appears and in which specific topics it is addressed for each of the studied resources. Units related to demography and settlements were examined independently.

Results

Typology of resources

A total of 354 resources were accounted for the population units, wherein 183 (51.7 percent) correspond to Santillana, 87 (24.6 percent) to Vicens Vives and 84 (23.7 percent) to SM. By typologies (Table 2), the academic text was the most utilized resource across all publishers (35 percent in total), followed by images (19 percent). Santillana employed the use of maps and plans, key resources in geographical science, far more than the others.

Table 2. Resource typology in demographic content. Source: the authors.

POPULATION TOPICS	SM		VICENS VIVES		SANTILLANA	
	TOTAL	GENDER VARIABLE	TOTAL	GENDER VARIABLE	TOTAL	GENDER VARIABLE
ACADEMIC TEXT	26 (31,0%)	5 (19,2%)	30 (34,5%)	2 (6,7%)	68 (37,2%)	8 (11,8%)
WRITTEN PRIMARY SOURCES	6 (7,1%)	-	-	-	4 (2,2%)	2 (50%)
IMAGES	19 (22,6%)	10 (52,6%)	20 (23,0%)	12 (60%)	29 (15,8%)	16 (55,1%)
MAPS AND PLANS	15 (17,9%)	-	9 (10,3%)	-	33 (18,00%)	-
POPULATION PYRAMIDS	8 (9,5%)	8 (100%)	6 (6,9%)	6 (100%)	13 (7,1%)	13 (100%)
TABLES AND GRAPHS	10 (11,9%)	2 (20%)	22 (25,3%)	7 (31,8%)	36 (19,7%)	9 (25%)
TOTAL	84	25 (29,8%)	87	27 (31%)	183	48 (26,2%)

Within the contents covered in the academic text, the primary resource used, the incorporation of the gender perspective was limited. The analysis of the three publishers revealed numerous commonalities.

Women appeared in the text exclusively when explaining the reduction in birth and fertility rates in developed countries. The main justification given was the massive incorporation of women into the labor market, followed by access to contraceptive

methods, the legalization of abortion and increased independence. Reference was made to high economic costs, job instability, housing prices or the difficulty of balancing family and professional life as reasons for delaying the age of having the first child.

Regarding other geographical phenomena and processes, all publishers referred to the population in general, without considering gender inequalities. In the case of population structure, studied through population pyramids which incorporate a segregation by sex, it was identified that the number of male births was higher than that of female births and the number of older women was much higher than that of men. However, the causes of this phenomenon were not clarified. The same happened when addressing life expectancy and population aging in developed countries. In the case of migration movements, it was identified that the number of young men migrating was significantly higher, leading to issues of family uprooting due to separation. The SM publisher illustrated this phenomenon with an image depicting a mother and her daughter alone. When the causes and consequences of migration in both origin and destination areas were examined from a generic perspective, it led to a distorted understanding of migration processes, which were strongly influenced by other criteria including geographical context, gender, education level or socioeconomic conditions.

In the topics related to the study of settlements, 244 resources were identified, with a notable emphasis on the use of images (Table 3). Academic text remained prominent, as does the use of maps, with a greater presence in Santillana's publications. The gender variable was not included in the analysis of settlement topics since no evidence of its inclusion in any type of resource was found.

Table 3. Resource typology in settlement contents. Source: the authors.

	SM	VICENS VIVES	SANTILLANA
ACADEMIC TEXT	26 (31,0%)	30 (34,5%)	68 (37,2%)
WRITTEN PRIMARY SOURCES	6 (7,1%)	-	4 (2,2%)
IMAGES	19 (22,6%)	20 (23,0%)	29 (15,8%)
MAPS AND PLANS	15 (17,9%)	9 (10,3%)	33 (18,00%)
POPULATION PYRAMIDS	8 (9,5%)	6 (6,9%)	13 (7,1%)
TABLES AND GRAPHS	10 (11,9%)	22 (25,3%)	36 (19,7%)
TOTAL	84	87	183

Gender inequalities occurring in various aspects of urban life, such as access to education, basic services, decent housing or employment did not appear in the content of any publisher. In the case of Vicens Vives and Santillana, the distribution of the population in the territory was explained by the price per square meter of land, which conditions the possibility of buying or renting a home. In other words, the income level of the population significantly explained their place of residence. Both publishers agreed that the population with higher per capita income resides near the city center, in neighborhoods with greater security and access to services, while those families with fewer economic resources settle in degraded or distant neighborhoods from the center. Yet, they did not explain the resulting consequences, as this fact causes the spatial segregation of certain vulnerable social groups. SM publisher only briefly referenced the social problems of cities in countries considered as developing or underdeveloped, mentioning the phenomenon of shantytowns or slums. It was confirmed that all publishers provided very descriptive and theoretical explanations of the urban environment, without considering the use of city space, which is greatly limited by economic position and thus conditions equality of opportunities in access to housing and public services for the inhabitants.

Typology of proposed activities based on their design, location and inclusion of the gender perspective according to their cognitive complexity.

The number of activities in each book ranged from a low of 54 (Vicens Vives) to a high of 91 and 101 (SM and Santillana respectively) regarding population topics (Table 4). Pertaining to urban space units, the number of activities was lower, totaling 146. All focused on activities linked to the main body. Santillana excelling in particular as it dedicated a large number of practical exercises at the end of each topic where various competencies established by law were employed.

Table 4. Typology of activities according to design and location. Source: the authors.

	PUBLISHERS	TOTAL	OPENING	LINKED TO THE MAIN BODY	FINAL OR SYNTHESIS	DEVELOP BASIC COMPETENCIES
POPULATION	SM	91	2 (2,2%)	53 (58,2%)	34(37,3%)	2 (2,2%)
	SANTILLANA	101	2 (2%)	47 (46,5%)	25(24,8%)	27 (26,7%)
	VICENS VIVES	54	2 (2,4%)	41 (75,9%)	7 (13%)	4 (7,4%)
	TOTAL	246	6 (2,4%)	141 (57,2%)	66 (26,8%)	33 (13,4%)
SETTLEMENTS	SM	36	1 (2,8%)	20 (55,6%)	14(38,4%)	1 (2,8%)
	SANTILLANA	52	5 (9,6%)	20 (38,5%)	15(28,9%)	12 (23,1%)
	VICENS VIVES	58	2 (3,5%)	45 (77,5%)	7 (12,1%)	4 (6,9%)
	TOTAL	146	8 (5,5%)	85 (58,2%)	36(24,7%)	17 (11,6%)

After a comprehensive evaluation (Table 5), it became evident that all publishers devoted a considerable number of activities to a low-medium cognitive level across all units, merely reproducing the contents found in the textbook. Ideally, there would be a greater presence of activities with a high cognitive level as they require a critical examination of information, aiming for students to reflect, explain and deduce the reasons behind their answers. As an example, different activities are mentioned according to the degree of complexity by publishers:

- Low cognitive level activities: 1) *What does population aging consist of?*
2) *Explain what the influence area of a city is. What factors determine it?*
- Medium cognitive level activity: 1) *Why do less developed countries have the highest population growth, while more developed ones increase their population little?* 2) *What differences are there between urban space and rural space?*
- High cognitive level activity: 1) *Observe the map. How is the population distributed in the territory? Can the so-called 'empty Spain' be observed?*
2) *Interpret the graph: What factors can influence housing prices? Do these price differences cause social segregation in urban space? Explain it.*

Table 5. Typology of activities according to their cognitive complexity and inclusion of the gender variable. Source: the authors.

	PUBLISHERS	TOTAL	LOW	GENDER VARIABLE	MEDIUM	GENDER VARIABLE	HIGH	GENDER VARIABLE
POPULATION	SM	91	15 (16.5%)	-	55 (60.4%)	-	21 (23.1%)	-
	SANTILLANA	101	51 (50.5%)	3	26 (25.7%)	3	24 (23.8%)	2
	VICENS VIVES	54	22 (40.7%)	3	18 (33.3%)	1	14 (25.9%)	
	TOTAL	246	88 (36.8%)	6 (2.4%)	99 (40.2%)	4 (1.6%)	59 (24%)	2 (0.8%)
SETTLEMENTS	SM	36	8 (22.2%)	-	15 (41.7%)	-	13 (36.1%)	-
	SANTILLANA	52	21 (40.4%)	-	19 (36.5%)	-	12 (23.1%)	-
	VICENS VIVES	58	21 (36.2%)	-	30 (51.7%)	-	7 (12.1%)	-
	TOTAL	146	50 (32%)	-	64 (41%)	-	32 (20.6%)	-

Then, it was assessed whether the development of various activities, considering their level of complexity, included a gender perspective. Concerning SM publisher, its activities were characterized by very generic formulations, sometimes perpetuating sexist stereotypes, as exemplified by the following: *Activity 7. Reason. Many young footballers in the Spanish League have several children. Why doesn't that happen among other young men of the same age?* In activities incorporating texts, documents or written sources, there was a tendency to generalize phenomena such as migration, the refugee issue or population aging.

Regarding Vicens Vives publisher, in formulating its activities, women had a more prominent representation than in the previous. The use of population pyramids was constant, and in all of them, students were invited to reason about the structure and composition of the population according to sex. Only one activity, apart from population pyramid analysis, was identified where the visibility of women was present: *Activity 20. One cause of the decline in fertility in developed countries is reconciling the working life of mothers with family life. Watch the video at www.tiching.com/779068. What solutions does it propose?*

Santillana publisher followed a similar dynamic to Vicens Vives concerning activities that incorporated population pyramids. A great example would be the following activity aimed at raising awareness of the situation of refugee girls: *Activity 12. Search the Internet for what the Nansen Prize is. Who awards it? Who is it awarded to? Professor Aqeela Asifi received it in 2015. Explain how the life of a refugee girl will be.* It is worth highlighting that at the end of topic 13: *Spain and Andalusia: territory, population and cities*, there was a section with two activities on gender equality, including a text from the Andalusian Pact for Equality.

Throughout the entire geography section of the three editorials, there were few activities of a high cognitive level that promoted true reflection and meaningful learning for students in relation to gender inequalities in various geographical concepts, facts, phenomena and processes.

Resources to which the activities are linked

In the analysis of resources linked to population-related activities (Table 6), those associated with iconic resources (40.7 percent) and textual resources (39.8 percent) highlighted. In the topics dedicated to the study of cities, the dynamics differed significantly, since most of the activities were linked to combined resources (43.8 percent) and external resources (29.5 percent). Internet search stood out as the main external resource to which activities were linked. SM focused on activities tied to textual resources, Santillana on activities linked to iconic resources and Vicens Vives took a more balanced approach.

Table 6. Resources linked to the activities. Source: the authors.

	PUBLISHERS	TOTAL	TEXTUAL	ICONIC	EXTERNAL	COMBINED
POPULATION	SM	91	54 (59.3%)	25 (27,5%)	9 (9.9%)	3 (3.3%)
	SANTILLANA	101	20 (19.8%)	57 (56,4%)	14 (13.9%)	10 (9.9%)
	VICENS VIVES	54	24 (44.4%)	18 (33,3%)	6 (11.1%)	6 (11.1%)
	TOTAL	246	98 (39.8%)	100(40,7%)	29 (11.8%)	19 (7.7%)
SETTLEMENTS	SM	36	6 (16.7%)	4 (11,1%)	10 (27.8%)	16 (44.4%)
	SANTILLANA	52	11 (21.2%)	5 (9,6%)	19 (36.5%)	17 (32.3%)
	VICENS VIVES	58	7 (12.1%)	6 (10,3%)	14 (24.1%)	31 (53.5%)
	TOTAL	146	24 (16.4%)	15 (10,3%)	43 (29.5%)	64 (43.8%)

The use of images in textbooks

The last resource analysed was images, encompassing any technical-visual element within the content (graphs, maps, plans, photographs, illustrations), with a total of 193 in population-related topics and 169 in settlement-related ones. All publishers followed a similar pattern (Table 7). In the case of SM, the emphasis was mainly on images supporting academic content. Santillana stood out above the rest, with 57 percent of its images used for exercise analysis in population-related topics, with more equitable percentages for the study of urban space. An exceptional case was Vicens Vives, as 57.8 percent of the images in settlement topics served an aesthetic function, with a high number of photographs of urban landscapes that were unrelated to the text or the activities.

Table 7. Image classification. Source: the authors.

	PUBLISHERS	TOTAL	AESTHETIC	SUPPORTIVE OF THE RESOURCES	FOR CONDUCTING EXERCISES
POPULATION	SM	44	13 (29.5%)	20 (45.5%)	11 (25%)
	SANTILLANA	98	28 (28.67%)	14 (14.3%)	56 (57.1%)
	VICENS VIVES	51	20 (37.7%)	14 (27.5%)	17 (33.3%)
	TOTAL	193	61 (31.6 %)	48 (24.9%)	84 (43.5%)
SETTLEMENTS	SM	27	4 (14.8%)	16 (59.3%)	7 (25.9%)
	SANTILLANA	78	23 (39.5%)	28 (35.9%)	27 (34.6%)
	VICENS VIVES	64	37 (57.8%)	14 (21.9%)	13 (20.3%)
	TOTAL	169	64 (37.9%)	58 (34.3%)	47 (27.8%)

To verify the inclusion of the gender variable in the images, the frequency with which the female and male genders are independently represented were examined (Table 8).

Table 8. Frequency of representation by gender in images. Source: the authors.

		GRAPHS			MAPS			PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS		
	PUBLISHERS	Female gender	Male generic*	Total	Female gender	Male generic*	Total	Female gender	Male gender	Total
POPULATION	SM	2	8	10	-	15	15	10	12	19**
	SANTILLANA	9	27	36	-	33	33	16	20	29**
	VICENS VIVES	7	15	22	-	9	9	12	10	20**

*Uses the male gender to represent the entire population (women and men).

**The total number is not equal to 100 percent, since in some images both genders are represented together.

Firstly, concerning graphs Vicens Vives was the publisher that most represents the female gender in the depiction and inclusion of these, considering women in the study of global population, life expectancy or age and gender structure by nationality. The number of children per woman was a recurring theme in all publishers. Santillana also included a graph on childbirth healthcare and different types of households. Yet, these contributions were very low compared to the total number of graphs in each publisher. For the teaching of global, European and Spanish population or international and national migration movements, a generic presentation pattern was still used, not significantly reflecting gender inequalities. In the case of the study of urban space, deficiencies were even greater, as the evolution of urban population growth was studied without considering the movements between rural and urban areas, whether more women or men migrate or inhabit cities, and the conditions in which these phenomena occurred.

Secondly, in reference to maps and plans (Table 8), no publisher incorporated a gender perspective in their representation. All contents presented on maps at different scales (global, European, national, and regional) reflected a homogeneous society, without considering the specificities of each space, its population, and diversity.

Finally, with respect to the use of images as a resource (including photographs and illustrations), it was observed that all publishers presented a more balanced use in the representation of females and males (Table 8 and Figure 2). Whether supporting academic text, with an aesthetic function or for exercise analysis, images (photographs and illustrations) throughout the curriculum showed broad diversity in gender representation, as well as age, culture or ethnicity. In topics related to the study of the population, women appeared as frequently as men in images, often together, and, more importantly, without implicitly incorporating sexist traits, thus avoiding the perpetuation of gender roles. These images covered various phenomena, featuring women studying, migrating and working. Several photographs conveyed shared responsibility in the household, as women are not the sole caregivers of children. In older age groups, they were also represented, emphasizing the co-parenting role of grandparents. Regarding settlement topics, almost all images included corresponded to photographs of cities in general, making it challenging to incorporate a gender perspective into these resources. None of the

publishers considered the social differences that develop in cities, as evidenced by the absence of images reflecting this issue.



Figure 2. Examples of images displayed in textbooks. Source: the authors.

Discussion

In the last two decades, there has been an increasing amount of research focused on how to incorporate a gender-inclusive perspective in geography education (García Perales 2012; Rao and Sweetman 2014; Vaillo 2016). Albeit, thus far no specific investigations have been conducted to analyse how this approach is addressed in the content of textbooks used in pre-higher education classrooms in Spain. This research aims to fill a gap in the scientific literature by providing a more detailed assessment by publishers on gender studies and education in the geographical discipline.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings partially validate the initial hypothesis, as there is a lack of evidence supporting the integration of a gender perspective within the activities and resources. Instead, such incorporation is observed primarily in the imagery utilized by the analysed publishers.

Geographically themed subjects, namely population trends, life expectancy, migratory movements or urban social inequality, predominantly offer descriptive and generic content, rather than comprehensive and explanatory material, thereby neglecting

the development of capacities associated with geographical thinking. Araya Palacios and de Souza Cavalcanti (2018) already emphasized the necessity of establishing mechanisms that enable students to comprehend their immediate context, critically engage with the reality of their environment, and foster an understanding of geographical space and its role in social practices.

As noted by Moreno-Vera and Díez-Ros (2018), academic discourse in geography textbooks perpetuates sexist traits in the explanations of their contents. This is evident in the fact that the presence of women in demographic studies is limited to topics related to natality or fertility, relegating them to a secondary and exclusively reproductive role (Varela 2017). This aligns with studies conducted in other geographical contexts and across different subjects, as exemplified by Lee's (2019) research, which highlights the continued underrepresentation of women and their achievements in contemporary Japanese textbooks or the study by Brugeilles and Cromer (2009), which concludes that in mathematics textbooks used in French-speaking African countries, girls and women are consistently portrayed within family roles or in informal employment.

In relation to activities, the publishers examined in this study follow what Martínez Medina and Arrebola Haro (2016) have already explained regarding the marked memorization-based nature of the activities proposed in textbooks, which exhibit low cognitive levels, hindering genuine reflection and reasoning on the topics covered. These are presented as closed contents, which do not encourage creative and active learning and do not require a certain degree of autonomy from students in their formulation. Hence, it is imperative to create activities that focus on attitudes rather than exclusively on concepts and procedures. In terms of equality, exercises are highly conceptual and theoretical, thereby impeding a profound examination of the gender inequalities inherent in the geographical contents studied, along with their underlying causes and resulting consequences.

Regarding the evaluation of images, the recurring absence of women in textbooks is a topic that requires greater attention within educational innovation (López-Navajas 2014). This study has revealed a more promising outlook, as the representation of women in the use of images compared to men is proportional. Notably, these images do not reinforce and perpetuate certain gender roles prevalent in our society. Girls, young women, adults and elderly women are depicted alongside men in the explained geographical processes. In discussions related to urban environments, the gender perspective entirely absent, resulting in a lack of detailed exploration of the social

dynamics in cities and their varying impacts based on gender and other categories of analysis such as age, socioeconomic status, place of origin, religion or sexual diversity.

The progress observed is significant when compared to other studies. Acheson, Holland, and Oettle (2020), concluded that gender stereotypes persist, despite achieving a quantitative balance in female and male gender depiction in the photographs included in *Introductory Human Geography Textbooks*. Cocoradă (2018), for the case of Romanian primary textbooks and Gouvias and Alexopoulos (2016), in the Greek context, observed a domination of the masculine gender and a correlation between activities developed by gender, with a predominance of woman-private space and man-public space. In comparison with studies carried out in developing countries, where sexist stereotypes remain deeply entrenched, research indicates that textbooks present a biased academic discourse, which deters female students from the field of geography, as they do not encounter interests or references in which they can feel represented or inspired (Islam and Asadullah 2018; Ahmad and Shah 2019).

The results of the study by De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina (2022) in Spanish primary education indicate that textbooks are gender-biased, perpetuating discursive strategies that devalue and exclude women as social actors, while maintaining male dominance. Even so, efforts to achieve gender equality in the Spanish Education System (Vila-Carneiro 2020) are gradually being reflected in the latest editions of textbooks analysed in this study, showing significant advances with respect to previous investigations (Subirats Martoni 1994; 2010). Gender analysis is configured as an unavoidable dimension to consider in student teaching and learning processes. This involves integrating novel epistemological and methodological insights, reevaluating core concepts of geographical science like space, territory and place, as well as incorporating new levels of analysis such as the household and the human body into educational content (Fernández Caso and Guberman 2015). In this context, no publishing entity studied emerges as a trailblazer in integrating a gender perspective into its materials. According to Johnson (2006), textbooks are not impartial document as they reflect manifestations of the authors' and publishers' strategic determinations concerning prospective markets and intended objectives. They serve as a juncture where ideological, economic and social considerations intersect. In essence, they constitute an interpretation of what each publishing house understands from the established curriculum within the national legislative framework regarding education. This study highlights the need to establish alternatives or administrative mechanisms that allow for the definition of

comprehensive and global guidelines regarding the integration of gender equality in educational textbooks. Similarly, it is pertinent to complement the study with an examination of how educators utilize these resources, as they ultimately determine how the curriculum is taught. Both factors significantly influence students' acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities.

As Hinton-Smith et al. argue (2022, 12), courses and disciplines can vary widely in how far gender has been considered in terms of substantive topics; theoretical, methodological and pedagogic approaches; and canons of perceived disciplinary expertise. Therefore, the methodology used can be applied to other educational levels and geographical contexts when appropriate. Subjects related to economic geography are studied in the 3rd year of compulsory education, so it would be pertinent to examine how gender inequalities prevail in different sectors of the economy or the weight given to reproductive work within textbooks. This research presents certain limitations insofar as the subject of Geography in Spanish pre-higher education is shared with the discipline of History. Various studies have demonstrated how the history of humanity has been narrated predominantly by men, relegating women to a secondary and stereotyped role in the discourse and disregarding their presence within the social imaginary (Saenz del Castillo 2015; Gómez-Carrasco and Gallego-Herrera 2016). It would be valuable to assess the entirety of textbook content.

Gender and education in geography persist as a prominent concern from both pedagogical and scholarly perspectives. Prospective research avenues may encompass targeted examinations, including investigating educators' utilization of instructional resources, scrutinizing the correlation between inclusive educational materials and their influence on student learning or carrying out a comprehensive review of legislation pertaining to education and gender equality

Conclusion

This study has examined the content -academic text, resources, activities and images- within the three most widely used geography textbooks (SM, Santillana and Vicens Vives) in Andalusia, Spain. The findings indicate a certain imbalance in gender mainstreaming across each of the analysed components, with images standing out as the only primary contributor to gender equality.

Textual resources tend to adopt a gender-neutral stance and, at times, perpetuate certain gender stereotypes, with women being predominantly included in contexts related to maternity and fertility. This reinforces the stereotypical binomial—productive for men, reproductive for women—which form the basis for maintaining inequalities in rights and opportunities. All of this indicates the deep-rooted influence of androcentrism, which manifests as a genuine cultural and social scourge that geography educators and researchers must actively combat through their contributions. The analysis uncovers a plethora of closed and factual activities characterized by a low cognitive demand, which fail to establish a meaningful connection between classroom instruction and real-world social dynamics. Photographs and illustrations demonstrate a higher degree of equality in the representation of the female gender both quantity and quality. Women are depicted performing the same or other roles or jobs traditionally assigned to men (e.g., scientists, presidents), as well as men appear in tasks historically associated with females (e.g., caregivers, housewives). In addition, there is an intersectional approach in portraying both genders in various spaces (work, education, home), considering other categories such as age and the representation of diverse cultures and ethnicities. The images presented in the population topics are a clear and good example of how gender parity and non-sexist representation are depicted.

This research enables educators and geography education researchers to recognize and challenge the gender biases present in the educational materials used daily in classrooms, fostering critical reflection on how such content may influence students' perceptions and learning processes. It provides a starting point for the review and updating educational standards, curricula and the development of new educational resources. While academic texts allow for the contextualization of the geographic phenomena studied, there is a need for a greater inclusion of activities and resources focused on case studies. This encourages reflection on how territorial inequalities and gender issues are present in key geographic themes (access to resources, the labour market, migration movements and urbanization, etc). This approach involves delving into specific cases that eschew overarching generalizations and embracing a wider array of interactive elements, for instance, debate-based activities, role-playing and simulations or a more detailed disaggregation of data presented in graphs, tables or thematic maps, minimizing the portrayal of society as homogeneous and neutral in research and educational content. Such initiatives would enable students to better connect with the proximate dimensions of their social milieu, thus influencing their self-perception and

individual identity, enhancing their educational experience, and engaging them in the pursuit of solutions conducive to fostering gender equality in key topics.

To sum up, it is essential to continue periodically reviewing textbooks to ensure that advancements in gender research and policies are reflected in future editions.

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