City, aging-oldness and education: Elements to unveil a conflict between the conceived city and the practiced city[1]

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Abstract

Its article is the result of a research about on the uses and representations that old people have of the city. Its purpose is to reveal a conflict between the conceived city and practiced city, according with Manuel Delgado. It is warned, as hypothesis, that our cities have been formed without an inclusive arrangement with the elderly, as few people have worried about adapting the city´s infrastructures and services to be accessible to old people according to their different social conditions, needs and abilities . It is undeniable that this situation affects their quality of life, for the environment affects them in terms of insecurity, isolation and self development. Likewise, it is relevant to mention the challenge of education and, in particular, to allow the gerontology its to lead knowledge and reflection on the implications and challenges in the medium and long term derived from this process of population aging. Starting with a review of the phenomenon called demographic revolution in the global, regional and national levels; it is explored a conceptual approach addresses the city and the urban. Finally, the minimum elements that make up the existence of a conflict between those who plan, design and order the cities, and those who live on it, used and represent, are shown.

Keywords: Education, age, city, urbanization, aging.

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Introduction

This investigation, and concern in studying the city, aging, and oldness, parts from the Political Declaration of the Second world Meeting on Aging, when states: "We stress on importance of international investigations on aging, and matters related to age, as an important instrument for setting policies related to aging" (Article 13, 2002).

Likewise, this justification recognizes, as stated by the Madrid Action Plan on Aging (2002), that,

> Population aging will become a great importance question in developing countries, that, as projected, will quickly age by the middle XXI Century. It is expected that by 2050, the percentage of old people will increase from 8% to 19%, while children percentage will decrease from 33% to 22%. This demographic change poses an important problem in terms of resources. Although developed countries have been able to gradually age, they face problems resulting from relationship between aging and unemployment, and pension system sustainability, while developing countries face the problem of development simultaneous with population aging (UN, 2002:6).

In this sense, one requirement to enforce the Plan is:

> Promote and perform an integral research, diversified and specialized about aging in all countries, in particular, in developing countries. Such research, including data collection and analysis, including age and genre, provide essential foundations to adopt effective policies... Reliable information availability is indispensable to identify new problems and adopt recommendations. In order to ensure timely adoption of policies, it is also necessary to prepare and use, as needed, practical and complete evaluation instruments as key indicators (UN 2002:47).

Therefore, population aging has turned into an interesting topic, since human societies have observed that demographic and social dynamics of world population is transforming. As an evidence of the above, in Colombia, in early XXI Century, the DANE (Statistic Department), referred to countries like Canada, France and Spain who, due to marked aging of their population, were forced to restructure their policies and social services around this population group, in order to improve their life quality. In addition, this demographic phenomenon was considered as a human, social, cultural and scientific achievement, that is, a development indicator that allowed aging to cease being conceived as a negative event, which main characteristic was reduction of all physical, mental, psychological and social abilities, or, as waiting for such so feared death, to turn into a biological, psychological and social process, presented along the whole vital cycle, and that does not depend on only on genetic and biologic factors, but also, on a great part of social, cultural and individual construction of a determined individual.

Currently, in countries like Colombia, where the largest population groups are made up by people whose age is between 15 and 59 years, that is, a young country, it becomes paradoxic, that in front of implications of population and individual dynamics, surging worldwide, knowledge about aging and oldness continue to be poor. Hence, the importance of education role for awareness and social diffusion of such phenomenon, and its impact in the middle and long term.

Another reason that justifies this kind of studies, is the need of overcoming stereotypes and engative image on aging, which have become a discriminating factor toward elderly individuals. The panorama continues to be dominated by beliefs and opinions, based on prejudices that reflect a vision on aging, related to an unavoidable negative destiny, more associated to deficiencies than dynamics related to life cycle, beliefs, representations and images on oldness, and old individuals, that seem to be anchored to a supposedly homogeneous, non-combinable and shortage-like past, where the young, beautiful and the effective, in modern productive terms are deified and privileged, therefore, most frequently is incurred in devaluation of the elderly, as an important actor or agent in social, political, labor and family life.

In this sense, this article retakes the commitment of recognizing a positive image of aging, as proposed by the International Action Plan on Aging:

> Recognition to authority, wisdom, dignity and prudence, coming from experience of a whole life has normally distinguished respect for the elderly along history. In some societies, such values are often ignored, and the elderly are disproportionately represented as remoras for the economy, due to their growing needs in terms of health care and support (UN, 2002:43).

However, for those in charge of planning and arranging cities, it is not easy to overcome stereotypes and negative images about the elderly, commonly associated to a deficit perspective, loss, deterioration, disease and insulation. Cities we inhabit are not planned and arranged for all ages, and if so, it is from this deficit perspective, that it is limited to make urban spaces functional and accessible, disregarding old individuals as an active, autonomnous and participartive subject. Therefore, studies of urban environments revealing awareness, comprehension, valuation and evaluation given by individuals to the city they inhabit, are necessary and applicable to urban planning criterions, and preparation/enforcement of policies aimed at finding effective strategies of citizen cohabitation, and project, as stated by Martin Barbero, an "Enjoyable city for all people".

At approaching and discussing the matter of city, aging and oldness, a contribution is made from the academy, toward seeking a more equalitarian and solidary city, as stated in the stake of Friendly Cities:

> It is linked to fitting those spaces where citizens inhabit and relate. Construction of more friendly cities, arranged under a planned urban development model, with suitable public space, deserving housing, with no restrictions on basic services coverage, such as drinkable water and basic sanitation, and affordable transportation system, would greatly contribute to achieve a fairer city with major opportunities (DNP, 2006:1).

Current society undergoes a global aging, which at a great extent, determines the need of integrating studies on aging and oldness, into development processes of countries, and in compliance with commitments subscribed worldwide, which implies that in Colombia, these topics and investigation must be included in development plans, territorial arranging plans (POTs), and in social policies; and establish mechanisms to enforce them, taking into account such challenges posed by population aging, in terms of social security, health promotion and prevention, social and economic participation, respect for human rights, etc.

When linking this phenomenon to education, it is necessary to retake statements made by Lowenstein and Carment (2000), who hold that, in countries like the United States, it was evidenced the role that education institutions should begin to assume, in order to facilitate social adaptation in front of the challenge of social needs and health, related to global aging. Likewise, it was foreseen that development of skills and education programs on gerontology, were one of the essential means to create public awareness, and skills by professionals working for elderly individuals, in front of the impact of aging societies. They state that recognition of this demographic revolution, experimented by modern societies, should be founded through creation of specific and unique gerontologic basic skills (2009:708).

Within the national context, after the First World Assembly on Aging (Vienna,1981), it is known about existence of academic programs dedicated to formation of Gerontologists in Colombia. Dulcey Ruiz et. al (2001), of the Interdisciplinary Society of Gerontology (AIG), commnents that during this decade, the scope of Gerontology showed an important emphasis on education, research and elderly-oriented services.

According to authors, (Dulcey et al 2001), gerontology programs in Colombia, promoted formation of student organizations and gremial, interested in matters related to aging and oldness, as well as performance of actions oriented to welfare or the various generations, and in particular, elderly population. These organizations have performed an important role, not only regarding continuous education, updating gerontologic skills, and diffusion of research progress on this matter, by means of congresses, symposiums, and domestic and international seminars, but also, because of their participation in political and social scope.

In 2008, the SENA, contracted and coordinated "Description of Gerontology in Colombia. A look from labor competences", in order to provide guidance on labor competences and occupational profiles, required to meet the trend of national policy on aging and oldness, and challenges associated to regulations in effect. The purpose was to describe current situation of Gerontology in Colombia, in organization, economic, technology, occupational and education matters.

Regarding future trends of education environment, emphasis was made on "the need of integral formation to manage consequences and effects caused by individual aging and collective". Likewise, in "consolidation of research on this area, in order to facilitate comprehension and interpretation of processes in individuals life in front of aging and oldness" (SENA, 2008:140-141).

In the case of Latin America, and the Caribbean, it is necessary to state that the Regional Conference of Higher Education held in Cartagena city in 2008, regarding regional integration guidance, and internationalization, made a series of recommendations to higher education institutions, including the following: "Promote teaching and research on areas related to Latin American and Caribbean integration, sustainable development, intercultural studies, learning and valuation of our cultural and environmental patrimony, and studying contemporaneous phenomena" (Cress, 2008:8).

In this sense, changes and consequences of demographic aging for our cities, is a contemporaneous phenomenon that calls for a series of studies and investigations, which account for how cities are being planned and arranged, in response to demands for social inclusion, so that, rights of elderly individuals are recognized and respected. At this point, it is necessary to call the attention for Gerontology, and other undergraduate and graduate programs of Social Work, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Architecture, among other, to implement curricular contents which allow major and better interdisciplinary, contextualized and proper comprehension of aging and oldness.

Approach to the investigation object: demographic aging, and urban design

There are many relationships and questions among categories which allow to limit, found and structure the research problem: aging, oldness and city. This approach to the research object, starts from statements made at the Second World Assembly on Aging, held in Madrid city in 2002, that included a call toward construction of an including society, with no discrimination, in particular, because of age. In this sense, the Political Declaration stated the following:

> Commitments are indispensable to strengthen policies and programs aimed at creating including and cohesioned cities for everybody – men, women, children, young individuals, and old people. No matter circumstances of elderly people, all of them are entitled to live within an environment which promote their capabilities (UN, 2002:37).

The first two articles of the Political Declaration, set forth the immediate gloal commitment of assuming challenges, before demographic changes that the world will face in XXI Century. Government Representatives gathered in Madrid (2002), decied to adopt:

> An International Action Plan on Aging to meet opportunities offered, and challenges posed by populationg aging in XXI Century, and to promote development of a society for all ages. Within this Action Plan, we are determined to make steps at every level, including domestic and international, in three priority directions: Elderly individuals and development; promotion of health care and welfare in oldness; and achievement emancipating and suitable environments (UN,2002, Article 1).

Such responsibily is expanded in article 2, which states:

> We celebrate increase of life hope in many regions of the world, as one of the greatest achievements of humanity. We recognize that the world is undergoing the greatest demographic transformation, and from here to 2050, the of individuals over 60 years age, will increase from 600 million to almost 2.000 million, and it is expected that the percentage of 60 years age or more will duplicate, from 10% to 21%. This increase will be major and faster in developing countries, where, it is expected that old population will quadruplicate in the next 50 years. Such demographic transformation will pose all of our societies the challenge of increasing people opportunities, in particular opportunities for old people aimed at taking maximum advantage of their ability to participate in every aspect of life (UN, 2002, article 2).

This Political Declaration, at talking about a society for all ages, is also an invitation and a commitment to think and talk of a city for all people, with no discrimination, or exclusion because of race conditions, social, ethnic or age. Universal declarations and international pacts on human rights, do not include any specific prohibition to discrimination because of age. However, human rights of old individuals are not recognized, or are brached in many places of the world, specially, y Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Likewise, it is stated that old individuals suffer serious situations of poverty, and social exclusion, they are not provided with deserving life conditions, and they are an "invisible"

group for governments and institutions, in spite of achieved progress and social improvements. Although they have serious deficiencies, they do not have the recognition required by their population importance. Notwithstanding, contemporary society has becoming aware of social situation of them. Aspects such as demographic aging, negative stereotypes, and social pressure exercised by previous generations, little by little has turned aging and oldness into a concerning problem for the States, governments, political parties, and the civil society, where it should be lighlight that the society performs a determining role to research, question and propose actions which allow to make more including acitions for elderly people.

The Madrid Action Plan (2002) in Aging, has included within its priority orientations, creation of a suitable and favorable environment for elderly people, where one of the basic questions is, housing and life conditions, for which purpose, three objectives are set forth:

> i)Encourage aging situation experienced by individuals, taking into account personal particularities, and possibilities in terms of affordable housing for elderly people; ii) improvement of environmental design, and housing in order to promote independence of the elderly, taking into account their needs, in particular those suffering any disability, and iii) improve access to transportation availability, and economically affordable for old people (UN 2002:36-39).

In turn, the WHO, in its study Friendly Cities for the Elderly, recognizes that the world is quickly aging, since " 60-year age individuals, or older, representing 11% in 2006, will have duplicated to 22% by 2050. By then, the number of old people, for the first time in humanity history, will surpass the one of childred 0-to-14 years age" (WHO, 2007:8).

Demographic aging per areas in the world by 2006, and projection for 2050, may be seen in the following graphic.

Graphic 1. Demographic aging per areas in the world
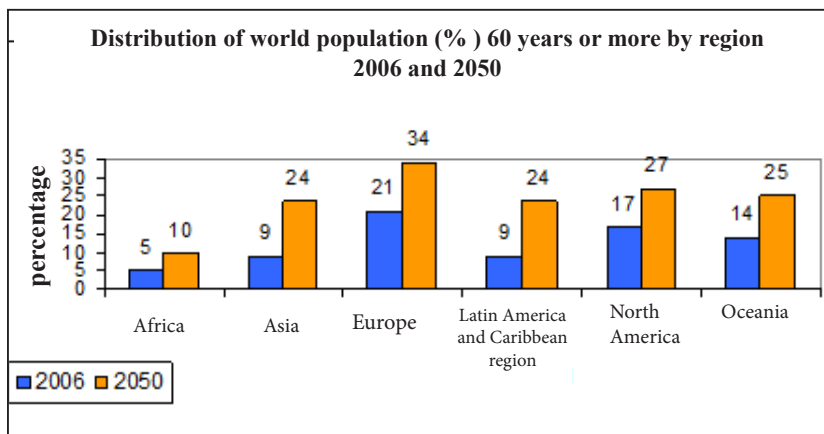
Source: WHO, 2007.

Europe, historically has kept the highest aging level, and projectios for middle XXI Century, show that it will continue to be the oldest continent. However, it is highlight such acceleraged aging of Latin America and the Caribbean, comparable only to Asia, since its population older than 60 will pass from 9% in 2006, to 24% by 2050.

In a recent publication, the UN Population Fund (2012), when analyzing current situation of old individuals, and at examining achievements after the Second World Assembly on Aging, has warned the world that:

> Population aging is one of the most meaningful trends in XXI Century. It poses important impact, and great scope in every and all aspects of the society. Worldwide, each second, two people reach 60 years age, that is, every year a total of 58 million individuals reach 60 years age. Taking into account the fact that, one of each nine individuals is 60, or over, and projections show that proportion will be of one of each five individuals by 2050, population aging is a phenomenon that may not be ignored any longer. (UNPF, 2012:3).

Likewise, it is shown that today in 33 countries in the world, life expectation is over 80 years age, and that for 2010-2015, the average in developed countries is 78 years, and in developing countries is 68 years. By the middle XXI Century such figure will increase to 83 and 74 years respectively. This report is clear when warning on global figures and projections:

> In 1950, there were in 205 million people of 60 year age, or more in the world. and by 2012 such amount reached 810 million. According to projections, it will reach 1,000 million in less than ten years, and will duplicate by 2050, when it will reach 2,000 million (UNPF, 2012:3).

Latin American situation is revealed by a Report of the Economical Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), which states that 60 years age, or over, representing 5.5% in 1950, passed to 8.8% in 2000, warning that, according to projections, it will reach 23.6%, by 2050. The above demonstrates that Latin American population ages faster than expected, and "in absolute terms, individuals or 60 or more, in one century will pass from 9 to 180 million". Otherwise, the number of young people will be reduced 17% between 2005 and 2050. Therefore, according to estimations, adult population will surpass in a 30% young population (El Tiempo journal 2008:1-10, International).

The Latin American and Caribbean Demography Center –CELADE (2009), has recently stated that, during the last decades, population of this region has considerably increased the amount of people ranking 60 years age, or older. According to date of this Center:

> In 2000, regional populating aging 60 years or more, was 43 million, and by 2025 it will reach 100,5 million approximately, and by 2050 it may reach 183,7 million, that is, one of each four individuals will be 60 year age, or more, by the middle XXI Century (CEPAL-CELADE-UNPF, 2009:13-14).

It is important to stress that mortality and fertility decrease are the main causes of aging in the region, as CELADE states:

> Population aging is related to historical demographic trends. Mortality rate reduction in the 50s, and in particular infantile mortality, increased life expectancy in Latin American countries. However, and

no doubt, fertility decrease in the 60s and early 70s, has been the main remodeling force in demographic structures (2009:16).

Other data which allows to confirm this phenomenon, shows that population which, in terms of longevity, was 547 million in 2005, will reach 763 million by 2050. This is due, among other factors, to the fact that an average of 21.6 years of life has been gained during the last 60 years; since life expectation of 51.8 in 1955, passed to 73.4 in current days. As stated by Marcela Suazo, Director of the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, of the UN Population Fund: "It is a media eight years higher than the total of developing regions, and only 1.2 less than the one in Europe today" (El tiempo journal, 2008:1-10 International).

CELADE is clear at pointing out that countries of the region are in various phases of demographic aging process. Four phases are observed: i) incipient aging, ii) moderated aging, iii) moderately advanced aging, and iv) advanced aging. Colombia is in the second group, which features low fertility rates (between 3 and 2,3 children per woman), and an aging index between 20% and 32% (CEPAL-CELADE-UNPF, 2009:17).

It is worth to mention that this demographic aging will occur mainly in cities, while urban growth has also accelerated from last century. Since 2007, more than 50% world population lives in cities. WHO document states:

> By 2030, near three of each five individuals will live in any city, and the number of urban inhabitants in less developed regions will be almost four times higher than developed regions". Likewise, it points out that during XX Century, cities with 10 million inhabitants, or more, maned "mega-cities", will multiply ten times, and this growth is also higher in developing regions (WHO, 2007:8).

This phenomenon, and its comparison for regions of the world, may be seen in the following graphic:

Graphic 2. World population urbanization
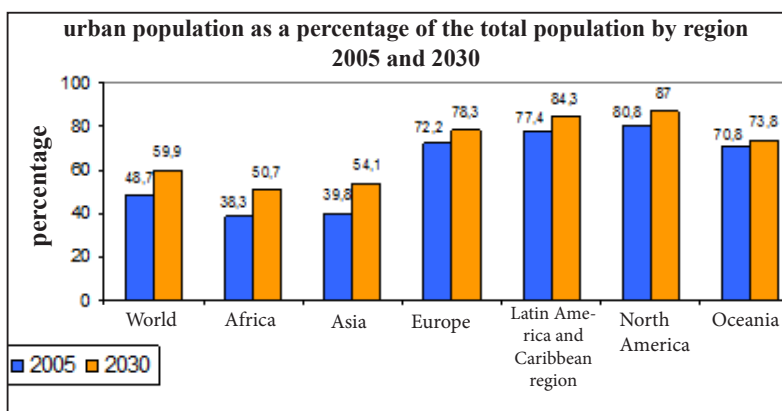
Source: WHO, 2007.

For the United Nations, these phenomena, demographic aging, and population urbalization are the product of a successful human development in the last century, but in turn, it poses important challenges that, in the concrete case of old people, requires for them: "facilitating life environments, and support to compensate for physical and social changes associated to aging" (WHO, 2007:9).

As the above document states, in the International Plan of Action on Aging (2002), endorsed by the United Nations, such adult need was recognized as one of the three priority guidances. Therefore, the study on 35 friendly cities in all continents concluded, regarding global aging and urbanization, as follows:

> Achieving that cities become more friendlyfor old people, is a necessary and logic answer, to promote welfare, and contribution by older urban resident, and keep cities prosperous. Since active aging is a lifelong process, a friendly city for the old, is a city for all ages (WHO, 2007:9).

It is worth to mention that the idea of friendly cities for old adults, is within the WHO active aging policy, understood as the "process of optimizing opportunities of health care, participation and safety, in order to improve life quality as individuals age WHO, 2007). From an integration between the proposal of active aging, and the idea of friendly city for old adults, would result that policies, services, environment, and structures provide support, and facilitate people active aging, through:

- Recognition of the wide scope of capabilities and existing resources among elderly people;

- Prevision and flexible answer to needs and preferences related to aging;

- Respect for their decisions and election of lifestyle;

- Protection of the more vulnerable individuals; and

- Promotion of their inclusion in every area of community life, and their contribution to the same (WHO, 2007:10).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, according to CELADE, most of old people live in urban zones. On this matter it states:

> As it happens with total population, 60-year people, or older, mostly live in urban areas, and even, urban growth percentage is slightly higher than percentage of the total population. According to population estimations for 2000, 77% of old individuals is located in urban areas. In coming decades, this percentage is expected to continue increasing, and by the middle of this century such percentage is expected to be higher than 85%. However, rural areas trend to be older, specially due to the effect of internal migration from the country to the city. (CEPAL-CELADE-UNPF, 2009:22).

Regarding Colombian demographic aging, as stated, according to CELADE, is in the phase named moderated aging. Chart 1 shows figures of total population, and 60 years age, or older, for 1950-2050.

60-year-age, or older population percentage, as related to the total population, shows that, for the Colombian case, in 1950 was 5%, in 1975, 5.6%, in 2000, 6.7%; it is estimated

that by 2025 it will be 14.6%, and by 2050 it may reach 23.9%. the term 2000-2025 is the one showing a higher increase, since, according to CELADE, during this term Colombia, together with French Guyana, Costa Rica and Venezuela, is within the group of countries facing higher increase of 60-year age, or older population, with rates higher than 4% (CEPAL-CELADE-UNPF, 2009). Aging index for Colombia in 2007 was 26,9, and fertility global rate was 2.2.

The group of adult population reaches the highest growth, in addition, shall this trend continues, according to the DANE, in the next two decades, it will keep high levels until the 30s, when a substantial decrease will be observed, but with a growth rhythm three times higher than the national average.

In Colombia, progressive increase of population, specially older adults, represents a challenge for policies and resources in terms of development, life quality, compliance with rights, and social inclusion. Just in a single century, Colombia passed from 4.355.470 individuals to a total of 41.468.384 inhabitants; 6.3% of which (2.612.508) older than 65 years; 54.6% of older people is female, and 45.4% male. 75% of general population lives in urban centers, in spite of the fact that in rural areas there are higher rates of fertility, which will result in a natural growth of population located in rural areas, but such effect is counteracted by the high rate of migration (DANE, Census 1905 and 2005).

Table 1. Total population, and 60 years of older, 1950-2050.

	Total population					Population 60 and over				
	1950	1975	2000	2025	2050	1950	1975	2000	2025	2050
Colombia	12.568.428	25.380.952	42.321.386	55.695.915	62.445.673	625.956	1.425.447	2.854.086	8.125.841	14.918.105
Latin America and the Caribbean	166.925.271	321.927.847	523.699.416	689.326.663	774.925.331	9.305.994	20.986.036	42.920.967	100.452.132	183.688.194

Source:: Cepal-Celade-FPNU, 2009.

It is obvious that along years, the pyramid base has narrowed, with simultaneous expansion at the top describing decrease of young population, and increase of old adults, specially increase of the oldest. It is expected that by 2050, total population reaches 72 million, with a life expectancy slightly over 79 years, and more than 20% of population over 60 years old, which will change a pyramid structure of a rectangular shape. In addition, residence in urban areas will be governing.

The main causes of population aging in Colombia are: increase of life expectancy, mortality decrease, control of infectious diseases and parasit, decrease of fertly rate, slow down of population growth, and migration.

In summary, Colombia has an important level of aging, and therefore, it is imperative to start foreseeing social, economic, cultural, and political consequences, among other, caused by this phenomenon, parting from expansion of formation offer of undergraduate programs of Gerontology[1], preparation and issuance of policies, plans, programs, and projects promoting participation and social and economic social insertion of old people, as well as recognition of their rights, and proper care for this population.

1. n front of this panorama of population aging in the world and in Colombia, it is not understood why there such little offer of Gerontology programs in Colombia, máximum, when it has been recognized as one of the careers of major projection for XXI Century. Today, there are only two professional programs; one provided by Catolica de Oriente Univesity in Rionegro (Antioquia), virtual mode; and the other provided by del Quindio University, presential mode. At technological level it is provided by Instituto Tecnologico de Antioquia, and in Cali, as Gerontologic Bachelor. As gradúate, there is only a Master of Gerontology, Aging and oldness, at Caldas University, and a Major of Social Gerontology at La Salle University, in Bogota.

Regarding urban development projects in Colombia, it may be claimed, as noted by the National Planning Department in its document on construction of Friendly Cities, that by 2019, about 80% of population will be living in urban centers. Likewise, it states that:

> The high rate of urban development in Colombia should be understood as a development opportunity, that will require preparation of strategies centered in cities, ensuring life quality improvement, and providing better opportunities for social and economic growth (DNP, 2006:1),

This world and national panorama, allows to center the research problem on matters related to urban culture, urban-development culture, sustainable cities, and the place for old people in the city. Likewise, this situation calls for dimensioning the problem, which perhaps has not been seen in Colombia, and this is: ¿at what extent our urbanistic culture is thoguth and planned to assume such challenges posed by world aging process, and which Colombia is a part of?, as stated by the WHO, as follows:

> For cities to be sustainable, they should provide structures and services which support welfare and productivity of their residents. Old individuals, in particular, require facilitating life environments, and support to compensate for physical changes and social, related to aging (WHO 2007:9).

To close this subject, and approach the city and the urban, it is convenient to retake statements made by Frank, Sharowsky and Millan (2006), who, when thinking about gerontologic architecture and on changes of so called "Gray Revolution", as an irreversible phenomenon, continuous and a growth in geometric progress, proposes realization of a master plan of habitat for old people, in order to improve their life quality. This is critical for them, because:

> Designing habitat for old people is something more than designing spaces: it supposes to arrange, structure, systematize, and define fields and surroundings, which in turn define social guides and conditions of psychological performance. "We structure our buildings, and they configure us (Winston Churchill) (Millan, 2006:216).

An approach to the city and the urban

¿where from, making a theoretic approach to a relationship apparently simple, as the city, the urban, and oldness, if, as emphatically stated by Delgado, the city is not the urban? The answer necessarily leads us to an inter-transdisciplinary approach, since it may not be exhausted from a look from Anthrolopogy, Sociology, or Geography, each one with urban addenda. ¿what will be the epistemologic and theoretic support to approach the proposed triad o research?

When going over the city, in the middle of that theoretic fluidity on urban morphology, urban imaginaries, urban landscaping, urban spaces, urban culture or urbanistic culture, we enter into a field of disciplinary border, that is, when talking from a plane or epistemological pole, we are in which Gibbons calls a "mode of two of knowledge production". A first theoretic entrance is offered by M. Delgado through his work The Public Animal, an essay that turns into a reference of anthropology or urban spaces. In his interest in defining the purpose of urban anthropology, Delgado explains three structuring categories, as follows: city, urbanity, and urban. The first, is a great settlement of stable constructions, inhabited by numerous and dense population, which appreciation he

complements by stating that the city is a spatial composition defined by high population density and settling of a wide group of stable constructions, a dense human colony, and heterogeneous formed by strange peple among themselves; the second, is a type of society that may or not surge in the city; and the third one takes place in many other contexts that over pass city limits, while territory, the urban is a lifestyle marked by proliferation of related, unlocated and precarious scheming (Delgado, 1999).

However, at this point it worths to expand the spectrum of the concept for the city, and we see that it has been defined from various perspectives, including psychological vision, physic-spatial, economic, anthropologic, political and their overlapping, amonog other.

The city may be understood as an artificial territory, and related to the social space. About the first, it is necessary to retake statements by Montañez and Delgado (1998), who state:

> The territory is the scenary of social relationships; it is the space of power, management, and dominion by the State, individuals, groups, organizations, local companies and multinational; it is social construction and spatial activity of actors, it is differential, and therefore its real and pontentical capacity of creating, recreating and appropriate territory is unequal (Montalez and Delgado 1998: 122-123).

Garcia (1976) agrees with them, at stating that the territory is a socialized spaced and culturized, which perspective allows to approach those spatial shapes with socio-cultural meaning and, specially, taking into account sensations, perceptions and representations which are built in the city.

In such sense, the city, as M. Castells (1985) states, is a social product of interests and social values in conflict, which is built along history. The city as an artificial territory is built parting from spatial activity of agents, and therefore, all of us who inhabit it, use, represent, appropriate of its spaces, built, and give sense from our life experience, and from our daily activities.

According to M. Delgado, H. Lefebvre, has been the one who clearly has proposed the distinction between the city and the urban, as follows:

> The city is a place, a great parcel where a considerable amount of constructions is raised, we find a complex group of infrastructures deploying, and a numerous population living there, most of which components are not used to know each other. The urban is a different thing. It is not the city, but practices that do not cease of crossing it over, and filling it of journeys; the 'perpetual work of inhabitants, in turn mobile and mobilized by and for such work. (Delgado, 2007:11).

About urban space definition, Delgado has stated that:

> As urban space it is understood that space that generates and urban life is generated, as a mass experience of dislocation and estrangement, in the double sense of mutual disregarding and actived springs of perplexity and astonishment (Delgado 2007:12).

In summary, this works is permeated by the relationship between city and social space, where a series of complex interactions take place. I consider that Cuervo's (2003) statement is clear and provides an accurate concept to understand the city, when he states:

The social space in general, and the city as its domining method, may be understood as a particular organization of complex interactions regulated through position, shape, and centrality structures of elements. The city is a microcosmos of the social space, and condenses its characteristics; nothwitstanding, it has traits which make it particular, which specify it: elements density, and interactions intensity cause cuantitative and qualitative difference in performance of the city as a particular component, but domining of the social space (Cuervo, 2003: 112-113).

As a manner of conclusion: A conflict between the conceived city, and practiced city

¿How to approach protagonist individuals of this research – the elderly -, in terms of Delgado, as inhabitants of the city, or as performers of the urban? ¿How far to compare the elderly group as protagonist of "that disperse society and multiple?: I retale Delgado's words when he states:

About the immense majority of those urbanist – not in the sense of inhabitants of the city but as performers of the urban - we know almost nothing, since a large part of their activity in spaces where they move consist of hiding or hardly showing who they are, where they come from, where they are going to, what they do, what their occupation or origin is, or what they intend to do (Delgado, 2007:13).

A double feeling of vulnerability, as an old individual, and as a part of that majority of urbanists, who may see the city as a hostile and dangerour environment for their physical integrity, and even, paraphrasing Garcia Chaclini, who may live experiences of foreignity in the same city.

Urban space functionality for disabled individuals or the old ones, is many times limited to accessibility and architectonic barriers, turning into the central reference point in arrangement and planning that, in spite of their political sense, ignore the old individual as an active subject, autonomous, and participative, capable of conceiving and building an including city. This fact shows that in conceptions and practices of the city, they would seem to forget that "construction of consensus through negotiation of odd points of view and interests, is a substantive component for success of development strategies of the city" (Rodriguez, 1999:297).

In a recent publication, Rios (2013), when thinking about architectonic barriers of the city states:

Individuals, because of their "disability" condition, see how their rights are breached, and face a hostile society that disregard and exclued them from a human environment, where physical limitations turn into social barriers which weight more than architectonic barriers, that we find in the built urban space (p.39).

In this sense, a conflict is develaed between those who plan, design, and arrange cities, in one hand, and those who inhabit, use and represent the city; that is, between the conceived city, and the practiced one. It is clear, then, Delgado's statement, when he holds that:

> In their creating vocation, a large number of architects and urban designers think themselves as executor of a semi-divine mission of imposing pre-established orders to nature, in function of an idea of progress, which considers unlimited growth by definition, and understands use of space as inexhaustible (Delgado s.f.1).

Power that charges on the city, as a "taxomizable territory", as a planned and arranged intervention, as a designed space, does ot allow the possibility, according to Delgado, for presence or absence; for him:

> Real urban space, not the conceived one, knows innumerable heterogeneity of actions and actors. Chases, over all, the multiple, the trend of the different to multiply with no brake, proliferation of social potencies perceived as dark. And, therefore, it denies that uniformity of architectonic productions does not hide a brutal functional separation in which keys use to be connected to all types of asymmetries which affect certain classes, genre, age, or ethicas (Delgado, s.f.1)

It is precisely there, in that practiced and heterogeneous city, where the old individual, as a subject who inhabits the city, creates images fragmented by different meaning, which when reiterated, incorpore themselves o daily life, and return to the city as it relates to it, forming semantized territories, and denying or using the various urban spaces. Old peple see and use the city differently, parting from their geographic, social, and cultural "positioning", within the urban context. However, as such, they do not use the city as children, young or adults, either. As Niño (1998) and other state, the city is built parting from a sum of territories, as socialized and culturized spaces, as lived, perceived, valued and imagined spaces in different manners, by those subjects inhabiting it. (Nino et al 1998:5).

Therefore, when seeking to establish the relationship between city and oldness, some conflicts between urbal culture and urbanistic culture acquire sense and importance. Accessibility, mobility, security, architectonic barriers, are among other matters to take into account when, as Urroz states, in the surrounding we inhabit, it has been created on the basis of a mental human pattern and anthropometrically perfect, but, which in the reality is complied with just for a very small percentage of population.

When reaching oldness, Urroz says, individuals face these physical barriers which make difficult and/or impossible their normal performance within their surrounding, and at a larger extent within the society. Presence of architectonic barriers, urban, transportation, and communication, resulting from man intervention as a solution to the demand for evolution and development of technical science, arts and culture, demonstrates that the city, where we are born, where we grow, develop, age and die, is formed by social and physical environment not suitable for all of us.

Retaking, Lynch's (1976) statements in his classic study on the imagined city, we may state that old people, as urban actors, are subjects historically positioned, who are exposed, from the place the occupy in the social structure, to multiple and varied speeches on the reality (city), which they introject through perception, valuation and action schemes. Those who live in a city, represent and use it, and appropriate of its spaces, build and give sense from our life experience, and from our daily living. However, along time, urban subject who age together with the city, in those processes of progressive change and differentiation, use, imagine and give it a different meaning. Urban spaces that we used to run as children or adolescents no longer exist, or simply we no longer go there.

This article recognizes existence of this conflict, given historical development of our cities, and Colombia is not the exception; Colombia has demonstrated, in practical terms, how cities have been formed without an including arrangement for the elderly, and cities have not worried about adapting their structures and services as to be acceesible by old individuals of various social, conditions, and needs and capabilities. It is undeniable that this situation adversely affects old people life quality, since the environment causes them uncertainty, isolates them, and affects their autonomous performance in the city. This situation has also been raised in the Second World Assembly on Aging by referring to migration process of the elderly from rural to urban zones, which phenomenon brings among other consequences "being forced to face loss of social networks, and lack of support infrastructure in cities, which may lead to their margination and exclusion, specially if they are sick or disabled (UN, 2002:15.

Finally, I reaffirm the call by Lowenstein and Carmet (2009), who, when reflecting on the new paradigm of gerontologic education, state that it should be ensured that education programs provided, are sensible to changing needs of an aging world.

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