



# Childhood through life stories of grandparents, parents and grandchildren. Changes and constancy (1950-2020)\*

La infancia en los relatos biográfico-narrativos de abuelos, padres y nietos: Cambios y permanencias (1950-2020)

Infância nas biografias de avós, pais e netos: Alterações e permanências (1950-2020)

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## Abstract

This research article explores the changes and the constancy in the conceptions of childhood that emerge from a series of biographical-narrative stories of grandparents, parents and grandchildren from ten intergenerational triads, originating in the Colombia municipality of El Carmen de Viboral, sub region of Eastern Antioquia located 54 kms from Medellín. The time span of this research is between the years of 1950 to 2020. The data was collected through a combination of both narrative and episodic interviews. In the case of the grandchildren between the ages of five and six, a game-type conversation was used with the participation and assistance of the mothers. A generational-analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The overall findings show the predominance of childhood as an experience, as a space and a temporality. Similarly, the findings reveal tensions between the conception of modern childhood as a stage of development and the progress towards the inception of childhood as a subject of law that decimates the exercise of power by adults, based on punishment and fear, and empowers children and young people as subjects of knowledge.

- 1 In the framework of the intergenerational relationships taking place in the family, Godman (2007) refers to the triad or intergenerational triangle that constitutes a family subsystem comprised of the relationships father-grandfather, father-son and father-grandson (Van Ranst et al., 1995 en Monserud, 2008).

## Keywords

childhood; biographies; grandparents; parents; grandchildren

## Palabras clave

Infancia; biografías; abuelos; padres; nietos

## Resumen

El presente artículo de investigación explora los cambios y permanencias en las concepciones de infancia que emergen de los relatos biográfico-narrativos de abuelos, padres y nietos de diez triadas intergeneracionales originarias del municipio antioqueño de El Carmen de Viboral, cuyas vidas transcurren entre la segunda mitad del siglo xx y las primeras dos décadas del siglo xxi. Los datos se produjeron mediante una combinación de entrevista narrativa y entrevista episódica; para el caso de los nietos entre los cinco y seis años se utilizó la conversación en un escenario de juego con la participación de las madres. Se empleó análisis de generaciones. Los hallazgos muestran el predominio de la infancia como experiencia, como espacio y temporalidad; asimismo, revelan tensiones entre la concepción de infancia moderna como etapa de desarrollo y el avance hacia la instalación de una concepción de infancia como sujeto de derechos que diezma el ejercicio del poder por parte de los adultos basado en el castigo y en el temor y que empodera a los niños y jóvenes como sujetos de saber.

## Resumo

Este artigo de pesquisa explora as mudanças e a permanência nas concepções de infância que emergem das histórias biográficas-narrativas de avós, pais e netos de 10 triades intergeracionais originárias do município de El Carmen de Viboral, em Antioquia (Colômbia), cujas vidas ocorrem entre a segunda metade do século xx e as duas primeiras décadas do século xxi. Os dados foram produzidos através de uma combinação de entrevista narrativa e entrevista episódica; no caso dos netos entre cinco e seis anos, a conversa foi utilizada em um cenário de jogo com a participação das mães. A análise de geração foi utilizada. As descobertas mostram a predominância da infância como experiência, como espaço e temporalidade, além de revelar tensões entre a concepção da infância moderna como estágio de desenvolvimento e o progresso em direção à instalação de uma concepção da infância como sujeito de direitos que dizimam o exercício de poder por parte dos adultos, com base no castigo e no medo, e que capacita crianças e jovens como sujeitos do conhecimento.

## Palavras-chave

infância; biografias; avós; pais; netos

## Introduction

Childhood as a conceptual construct dates from modernity. It originates in Western Culture West towards the 16th and 17th centuries, in a historical and social context characterized by urban growth and the improvement of hygiene and sanitary conditions that led to a decrease in child mortality. Along with other factors this led to the emergence of what Phillip Ariès calls the “modern feeling of childhood,” -a specific stage of life as opposed to the adult stage that produces the separation between the two (Diker, 2008; Alzate Piedrahita, 2003; Runge Peña, 2009). This childhood was characterized by a heteronomous and irrational infantile nature that requires the care, protection and guidance of adults in attention to filial love and severity - a conception that makes the child a fragile and teachable subject, and makes childhood the preparation stage for adulthood (Diker, 2008).

For Gaitán Muñoz (2006) childhood is a vital space in which children’s lives unfold, reproduce and at the same time are transformed by themselves (Vergara et al., 2015). For his part, Carli (2010) makes reference

the street child, the consumer child, the dangerous child and the victim child, [calling attention to] the way the media position [and propose] them, in the midst of so much pluralization, childhood as a figure that alludes to a temporality and a space of common existence to be restored to challenge the State and society [...] in the face of the unprecedented increase in child misery. (p. 372)

Aguilar (et al., 2016), refer to new childhoods, for what differentiates children from today, based on the “use of new technologies, the appearance of legal devices for the protection of childhood, the modern ideal about it, the differences in the family structure or the childhood experience itself” (p. 68) and its presence in the mass media, which clashes with traditional conceptions (Runge Peña. 2008).

More recently, the concept of childhood as a subject of rights has been established (Alzate Piedrahita, 2003).

Since the second half of the 20th century, a set of phenomena on a global scale have been presented in the economic, technological, social, political and cultural fields. Such phenomena are reflected in individual actors which generates transformations in their perception of the world. It is therefore a paradigm shift towards so-called globalization<sup>1</sup>. This change

1 It implies the global circulation of men and things, reflected in world economy processes (Cohen, 2006), compression of space and time due to the use of information and communication technologies (Harvey, 1989) Maximum extension of social relationships (Giddens, 1994), “migrations, deterritorialization, instability of national sovereignties, weakening of state borders, increase in transnational networks, changes in the governance model of states and individuals” (Delory-Momberger, 2015, p. 90).

brings with it the loss of centrality in integrating institutions, among them the family and the school; the redefinition of parental roles; changes in intergenerational and power relationships. Nowadays the family socializes in other ways and the school operates as a place of an individual experience where subjective meanings are constructed; which in turn creates new forms of socialization that privilege the processes of individualization and subjectivation (Delory-Momberger, 2015).

In the same direction, Taberner Guasp (2012) states that the family has lost its ability to transmit culture, while Bertaux and Thompson (1993 in Bornat, 1994); Bertaux & Bertaux-Wiame (1994), contradict this argument. They claim through various studies, the power of the family as a transmitter of culture (conceptions, values, behavior guidelines and models for relationships) from one generation to another through different forms of interaction and particularly of the stories they tell about themselves; since it is through the action of telling themselves that the subjects shape their experiences and self-construct through their own narrative

In this state of affairs, it becomes important against the background of the paradigm shift described above, to explore the conceptions of childhood in a group composed of members of different generations<sup>2</sup> belonging to families originating from a Colombian town, deeply rooted in its customs, through the stories they tell about their lives, to approximate answers to the following central question:

Aspects that change and aspects that remain are observed in the concept of childhood as they emerge from the biographical-narrative accounts of grandparents, parents and grandchildren of 10 intergenerational triads originating in the Colombia municipality of El Carmen de Viboral, between 1950 and 2020.

In the first section of this article, the methodology is described. In the second, the results in attention to the reciprocity relationship between conceptions of childhood and family educational practices<sup>3</sup> that emerge from the data. Such data relate: childhood and play, gender, punishment and religiosity, transfers between work, school and extracurricular activities, technology and control, interpellations to the conception of childhood as a stage of development and the loss of the adult-cracy in the face of the progressive installation of children as subjects of law and knowledge. All

- 2 Understanding the concept of generation from the genealogical perspective, referring to the ancestors, relatives and family roles (Lüscher et al., 2016), in attention to the relationship that links them as grandparents, parents and grandchildren.
- 3 Understood as non-planned expressions or forms of daily family life in which teachings and learning mediate, which allow each of its members to establish relationships, learn and recreate knowledge, incorporate habits and assimilate values (Lacasa, 1997), build meanings (Colomina, 2001) and cement the image of themselves and the reality of which they are part of (Brezinka, 1990; Rodríguez Triana, 2011, p. 68). They are not planned.

these aspects allow to read closely the transformations that have been presented in the conception and the constancy that resists to yield. In the third and final section some brief conclusions are presented

## Methodology

The Methodology was a longitudinal qualitative research as it dealt with identifying and understanding the processes of change that occurred over a set period of time (1950-2020), in terms of conceptions of childhood in the participating population. It was carried out through the analysis of generations, which involved obtaining individual life stories grouped into intergenerational triads and comparing with each other according to their belonging to a certain generation (grandparents, parents or grandchildren) (Caïs Fontanella et al., 2014).

The life story is necessarily longitudinal and is understood as “the story that a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, through what he or she remembers about it and what the informant wants to let others know about it; usually as a result of an interview led by another » (Atkinson, 1998, in Caïs Fontanella et al., 2014, p. 31).

Two family sagas were formed. The first included four intergenerational triads descended from three brothers born in the late 19th century and a fifth made up of the wife of the grandfather of one of the triads, his daughter, and his grandson.

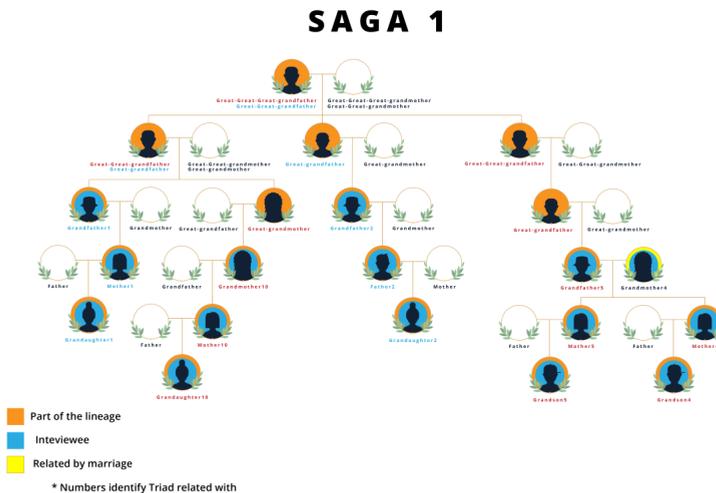
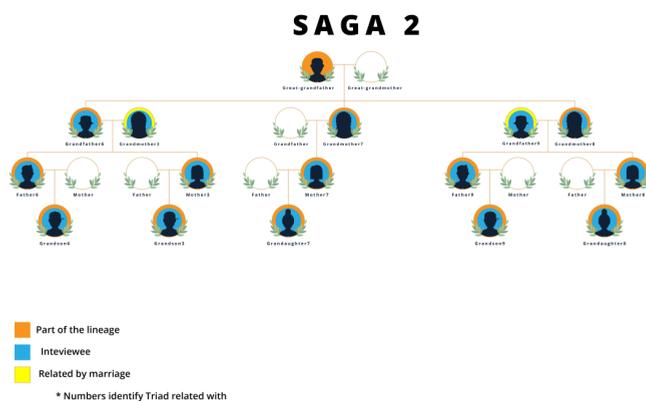


Image 1. Saga 1

Source: author's own construct

The second included three triads descendants of a marriage, the grandparents of the triads are brothers to each other; the ninth triad is made up of the wife of one of the grandparents, her daughter, and her grandson, and the tenth triad by the husband of one of the grandmothers, her son, and her grandson.



**Image 2.** *Saga 2*

Source: author's own construct

The ages of the grandparents ranged from 52 to 96 years. Those of the parents ranged between the ages of 25 and 56 and those of the grandchildren ranged between the ages of five and 22. The levels of education vary between elementary or incomplete high school in the case of some grandparents; Secondary school, technological and university level for parents, and between 5<sup>th</sup>-grade of basic education to firsts semesters of higher education for the grandchildren. Among the professions of grandparents, they dedicated their working lives to agriculture, primary school teaching, surveillance, grocery store retailing, public transportation driving and household activities. Parents worked in the areas of baking, banking, middle and higher education teaching, flower export, engineering, and medicine. The grandchildren are all students. One of them, who is 22 years old, eventually works as a model in advertising campaigns and music videos, and an 11-year-old has participated in television shows, several novels and in a movie.

As methods for data production, the narrative interview (Appel, 2005) and the episodic interview (Flick, 2004) were combined. For the young grandchildren between the ages of five and six, a conversation approach was used with the mother's presence in a play setting.

The field work was carried out between the months of March 2017 and May 2019. The interviews were carried out at the residence of the participants (after explaining and completing the informed consent). The subjects for this

study are located in the municipalities of El Carmen de Viboral, Medellín, Envigado and Sabaneta. The interviews corresponding to Mother 7 and Granddaughter 7 were conducted via Skype, since they reside in Miami.

For the analysis of the information, all the 30 interviews were transcribed, the information was read, encoded and categorized, based on the analysis of generations as noted above.

## Results

Through their biographical-narrative stories, the grandparents, parents and some of the grandchildren who participated in this research, traveled back to their childhood, revealing some nostalgia that can be read in expressions such as: *Ah those times!... Hmm, I hardly remember... I remember little,... ah yes I do remember that...* For some grandchildren, childhood is the present, the amazing daily life, a kind of sustained way in which they inhabit. For other grandchildren, childhood is a space from which they seem to be silently walking around on tiptoe, but from which they will never quite escape.

### Childhood and play

What do we play? Lego!!! See ... he points out to the shelf where his Legos are (buildable toys) Ayyyy, uff denoting fatigue in his voice and apparently a desire not to continue being questioned, Can we play something? Raising his voice. Can we play now? He is exasperated when he feels his mother and the interviewer are out of the game Ahhhh, (Grandson 5, 6 years old)

Perhaps in many contexts the word most commonly associated with childhood is “play.” Recently the ultrasound image of a baby in his mother’s womb was propelled with his feet and rocked peacefully as in the best of swings. Playing in the field, running, sliding, swimming in the streams, eating the fruits of the trees planted on the side of the road and running away so they can’t catch you, playing with dirt and a stick, with a spinning top; where all common to Grandparents 1, 2, 6 and 9, grandmother 7 and grandson 6. Betting races, making an impressive steed out of a broomstick was the play of Grandpa 5. Playing in the street with glass balls, with a bicycle wheel going around the block, playing in groups with a ball, playing hide-and-seek with all the kids from the block, and even “chucha americana”, a local variation of hide-and-seek for the grown-up kids where common to Mothers 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8, Parents 6 and 9. “The street was a safe place,” my mother took care of us “(Mother 4). Mother 7, carries with her a little piece of her Colombia homeland, when she plays with her daughters on a Miami street, in the area where they live, and joyfully watches as other children join.

And how to leave out the dolls with their suits and all their luggage, the kitchens, the carts, the planes, the trains, the balls, the bicycles that Grandmothers 4 and 7, Grandfathers 5, 6, and 9 gave him to his children? What about the Atari and the “Telebolite” that Father 6 can’t resist keep playing, and the other electronic games available today for tablets, cell phones and computers that not only children enjoy but also young and adults. However, the remark made by granddaughter 1 is worthwhile to complete the panorama:

My sister and I love teddies and we still like to play with them, but since everything has become so virtual now, we all are on the iPods or watching Netflix, doing homework, with the other, more complicated, continue with the games from before (Granddaughter 1, 14 years old)

In this regard, all the Grandparents, Mothers 1, 5, 7 and Granddaughter 2 were concerned about the shift from the outdoor games and recreational activities to the videogames and electronic gadgets.

## Childhood and gender

... a family of four children, I was the second, with many responsibilities since I was a little because as the only female in a 100% traditional family I had so many responsibilities, hmm, very submissive, and my older brother wanted to be in control, even more than my dad and my mom, like saying: I am the one in command! (Mother 3, 45 years old)

Things were like this: women at home dedicated to domestic chores since they were little, women were more subtle, men used to work in the fields and outside, they were stronger, with a more physical job, women had their own bedroom for women”. (Father 2, Grandmothers 3, 4, 7, 8) Although some gentlemen say they have learned to cook (Grandparents 1, 5, 6, Father 6), Mother 1 states that the situation at home was more unequal:

A macho home, men were not allowed to grab a mop, they would be called faggots if they would do so. Even, since we were little we had to wash their tennis shoes, mop, sweep, take them food to bed. Our parents were more demanding with women, and more permissive with men, but finally that made us stronger. (Mother 1, 46 years old)

## Childhood and punishment

It is observed the persistence of physical punishment with a decrease in its intensity, a higher prevalence and recognition of its educational value in grandparents (Grandparents 1, 5 and 6), in grandmothers (Grandmothers 3, 4 and 10) and in parents ( Father 2 and 6), a fear and rejection of it in

mothers (Mother 1 and 3), a significant decrease in mothers (Mother 4, 7, 8) and in father 9; A “certain control” is also observed in its application, consisting of lowering the intensity: “You won’t hit the girl again, you can’t control yourself, you would rather tell me and I hit her when the situation requires so”; (Mother 7) and in grandmother 7, which can be read in the following expression: “Why did you hit the girl? I did not hit you, but if you are going to hit her, hit her anywhere else but not in the face”, an attitude determined to eradicate physical punishment with their children in mothers 1 and 3: “You won’t hit my girl again, it is a matter of talking to her” (Mother 1)

“Although I was beaten, I don’t hit my son and I hardly ever yell at him” (Mother 3). We were whipped with lashes, straps, sticks and flip-flop shoes and sometimes pinched, those little pinches that would leave a mark on you”

Unlike the two generations that precede them (Grandparents and parents), the vast majority of grandchildren no longer refer to the prevalence of physical punishment since it is rather sporadic and milder for them: “They may have hit me once, but not twice and that’s fine, I don’t think it’s necessary” (Grandson 3); It was observed the predominance of scolding and restrictions of their hanging outs with friends, TV-watching and access to computer and the cell phone. It should be noted that several of the participants affirmed that there was no need for them to be punished because they used to be very industrious (Grandfather 9, father 9 and grandson 9, grandmother 8 and mother 8 and mother 7).

## Childhood and Religion

All the participants in this study were born and raised in the Catholic faith; a devotion to the Virgin Mary expressed in the telling of the rosary; attendance to Sunday mass, first Communion ceremony and catholic church marriage; the church was vital to the generation of grandparents and parents and appear clearly in their stories accompanied by repetitive expressions such as Thank God, Oh my God! except for mothers 3 and 5.

The rosary was prayed at different times during the day: “In the afternoon and until late in the evening everyone played out in the streets, but at 8:30 everyone had to go inside to pray the rosary” (Mother 1, 45 years old) “While the rosary was being prayed, the “aguapanela”, a hot sweet lemon drink, was being prepared” (Father 2, 56 years old) “We were going to visit our paternal grandmother on Saturdays at 4 in the afternoon with the main purpose of praying the the rosary” (Mother 4, 48 years).

Attending mass on Sundays required a decent personal presentation, and in turn offered opportunities to socialize “one had two type of clothes, one for the week and another one to attend mass” (Grandfather 6, 72 years old).

On Sundays I would run to attend mass at 12 and then I would go to a house that had a restaurant and I would help make “empanadas” and they would give me “tamal”, and it was right there where I got myself a boyfriend. (Grandmother 3, 70 years old)

Several members of the second generation, the generation of fathers and mothers explicitly attribute feelings of spirituality and religiosity to the bond established with their grandparents: “I was the apple of my grandpa’s eye. I use to keep his company and he would take to mass on Sundays. He told me that I had to respect God and obey his rules and things like that” (Mother 10, 25 years old). “My maternal grandfather was very prayerful; I learned to pray due to him ... my paternal grandmother was also very prayerful, she died of a heart attack while at the church, something she really liked” (Father 6, 49 years old)

I was raised in a deeply-rooted traditional environment, focused on taking care of the family and praying. My grandmother, who has always been very spiritual, prayed a lot for me and when she prayed I could calm myself down and let go of my fears. (Mother 7, 39 years old)

In turn, Mother 8 comments: “At night we would read stories to the children, we would get them to pray together and put them to bed”, referring to two children of two and five years.

With regard to the third generation, that is, the generation of the grandchildren, several trends are noted: 1) no reference to religion in the case of grandchildren 5 and 6 and granddaughters 2 and 8 2) a blunt expression of distance: “I don’t mess with church things” (Grandson 4, 19 years old), “which devil? That’s is made up only to scare me! I have not seen and God anywhere yet!” (Granddaughter10, 5 years old) 3) reference to first communion in the case of granddaughters 1 and 7 and grandsons 3 and 9: “I made my first communion in Colombia and they gave me a lot of money as a gift” (Granddaughter 7, 11 years old). “I’m going to start the catechism to make the first communion” —and when asked if he wants to do it or what he thinks about it, he responds—: “ no, I know, I don’t know because I don’t know” (Grandson 9, 10 years old), the same individual who points out “We go to mass, we pray every night and almost never in the morning, but we do well praying, we pray to God”

The following is the case of intergenerational Triad 1, as far as religious practices are concerned, it is considered illustrative to interpret the changes that occur in this regard as they pass from one generation to another:

**Table 1.***Changes in religious practices from one generation to another*

Triada 1		
Grandfather 1 (87 years old)	Mother 1 (45 years old)	Graaddaughter 1 (14 years old)
You have to be a good Christian, attend mass, confess to the mistakes you make and comply with the sacraments; that was the advice we got, than more than anything else, at that time; it was base on a religious tradition; you couldn't miss Mass on Sundays	We tried to pray the rosary every day (...) with my father; the girls learn to pray as a family - that's good. We go to mass every week, that tradition cannot be broken. I tell them we must believe in God and thank him, for all we have: a wonderful life, work and good health.	Grandma used to tell me how to pray and I didn't like to pray like that. I do like to pray but I think that this is up to each person. One cannot be forced to do what one does not like, that if I pray, then I pray. On Sundays we go to the pool and then we attend mass.

Source: Author's own construct

## Childhood between work, school and extracurricular activities

"... no, that he was not going to send to school; that women had no need to study; that women were not worth educating; that they could get a husband to support them; There I was crying out.. I got up early to organize my brother and myself for the day, but time was not enough for me because we also had to sell country cheese at. (Grandmother 3, 70 years old)

The childhood of six out of the 10 grandparents interviewed can be seen as a rural and working childhood (Grandparents 1, 2 and 6, Grandmothers 3, 7 and 8). Five out of the 10 grandparents were forced to drop out of school because they had to work either assuming housework and raising the siblings due to the death of the mother (Grandmother 3); or in agriculture due to the death of the father (Grandfather 2); or in the textile sector to contribute to the maintenance of the home (Grandmother 7); or in the transport sector (Grandfather 6); or in household chores due to the mother's illness (Grandmother 8). For the second generation, that generation of mothers and fathers, the relationship is opposite, that is, seven out of the ten fathers finished at least until high school and even some of them finished their technological and university careers, though didn't manage to work in those fields (Mothers 4, 5, 7, 8, 1 and Father 9) not so Mother 3 and Father 2.

Memories from childhood almost automatically refers back to school for grandparents and parents. For the former, admission age was 8 years. Grandparents 1 and 5 attended Miss María's Kindergarten before that minimum age, which accounts for the existence in the municipality of at least one early childhood education alternative, prior to entering primary school. Mothers 3 and 5 refer to their passage through preschool. Mothers 7 and 8, Father 9 and all the grandchildren refer to their passage through the nursery, a fact that accounts for the schooling of children at an increasingly early age.

Among the images that connect childhood and school, appear those focused on the relational aspect that involve the teachers ("Miss Socorro was very dear" Grandmother 4, 72 years old; "the teachers were very rude, I almost pissed in my pants with fear that suddenly they will beat me " Grandmother 8, 66 years old); involve the classmates (There was a biting companion who made me run away, Father 9, 39 years old); involve the positioning of themselves ("In kindergarten I felt like the king of all that", Grandson 6, 22 years old); involve spaces ("I loved the playground, the sandbox, the ball pool", Mother 8, 33 years old); involve knowledge and learning ("There, they taught me many things, I learned easily", Grandma 3, 70 years old; "What I like most about school is learning", Grandson 9, 10 years old; "I have failed many school grades, I cannot tolerate the environment of any school, it is like being powerless for not wanting to be there, no methodology works for me", Grandson 4, 19 years old)and involve spaces for participation in the school government ("I have been class representative and been in the student council, I am liking it, they take you into account for many things and also the classmates obey me " Grandson 9, 10 years old).

In all grandparents without exception, including those who had to drop out of school, it is quite noticeable the appreciation they make of formal education and the efforts they made so that their children, that is, the second generation of the parents, could take university studies. Likewise, the appreciation of sports, cultural and artistic activities in which they enrolled their children. In a fact, that is reflected with greater emphasis in the generation of grandchildren who have an even more intense routine than the one their parents experienced in terms of extracurricular activities (pottery, guitar and dance classes, cycling, martial arts, introductory classes among others)

## Childhood, technology and control

The presence of technology can be observed in the generation of grandparents through the use of the radio; in the parents through the use of television, computers and cell phones for work and communication

purposes in their daily life; in the grandchildren through the recreational use of television and the Netflix platform (Grandson 9), video game consoles and online games (Grandson 6) and “Baby Alive” YouTube tutorials (Granddaughter 10). The presence of children in the mass media was represented in the participation in the Miss Miami Baby contest, commercials, television programs, three soap operas and one movie, all of that under strict supervision and accompaniment of the mother (Granddaughter 7, 11 years).

The use of technology is progressive, its influence on lifestyles is undeniable. It has been present in the childhood of the different generations and has influenced the construction of their identities, preparing them to face technological challenges and driving them to position themselves.

There seems to be a clear difference marked by gender that brings together a grandfather, three parents and a grandson, in whose stories it is possible to see how the evolution of technology has influenced their ways of becoming children; in a reading that traces back to the lifestyles of the generation that preceded them, and connect with their own childhood and intuitively the childhood of the generations that are to come. This seems to increasingly compromise their existence as subjects for the world, based on access to technology and its use.

**Table 2:**  
*Technology-childhood-generational changes relationship in a male gender triad*

Triada 6		
Grandfather 6 (72 years old)	Father 6 (49 years old)	Grandson 6 (22 years old)
At that time there was practically not that much, nor places to spend the money. It is not like the present where there is already much to buy.. At that time neither TV sets nor telephones [...]but there was lots to keep yourself busy like playing, running, jumping rope; but now, I see the grandchildren with the television on and with the cell phone on their hands [...] For those who have small children now, it is harder. We educated our children the best way we could - it is now up to them to educate their own children; but it will be harder for them because there is so much technology.	Now our children are tied to the cell phone, the social networks, they are very different from us. They have other games, [...] one always criticizes the new generations, let's see how they will do with their children, that is with my grandchildren.	From a very young age, I have loved video games all my life [...] I had cell phones when I was already grown up and in less than four or five years they became necessary [...] you have to keep up with that. Whoever does not have a cell phone misses the little parties and job offers. For certain things if you don't use technology today, it's as if one doesn't exist, nobody knows about you.

Source: author's own construct

In a similar way, in relation to gender, but this time in the case of women, restriction and control over the use of technology brings together Grandmothers 4, 7, 8, Mothers 1, 7, 8 and Granddaughters 2, in their appreciation of technology

**Table 3.**

*Restriction and control in the use of technology in a female gender triad*

Triad 7		
Grandmother 7 (69 años)	Mother 7 (39 años)	Granddaughter 7 (11 años)
One is either controlling or taking care of the grandchildren, My granddaughter was given a cell phone but only for her to make and receive calls while she is at school, in case something happens.	They do use technology to do their homework, like I did. They finished the task and that's it – they are not on it all the time.	My mom lets me use the phone only on Saturdays and on Sundays sometimes. I occasionally ask her to let me use it for half an hour, but not every day since my mom doesn't like us to be always on it

Source: author's own construct

All interviewees without exception recognize the importance of technology, especially its benefits for communicating and learning (Granddaughters 1, 2, 7 and Grandsons 3, 6 and 9) and to extend social ties (Granddaughter 1). On the other hand, grandparents and parents point out, the danger that harmful content can lead to, such as pornography (Grandmothers 4 and 3), isolation (Grandmothers 3, 10 and Mothers 5 and 10), addiction (Grandmothers 7, 8, Grandfather 9, Granddaughter 1), sedentary lifestyle (Mothers 5, 7 and 8, Father 6 and Granddaughter 2) even the alteration of the scale of values giving priority to virtuality over face-to-face (Mother 4) and to a greater extent they point out that its inadequate use contributes to the disintegration of families and emotional distancing (Grandmothers 3, 7, 8, 10; Grandfathers 6, 9, Mother 5, Father 2).

The position of Mother 3 stands out clearly in favor of technology, inviting us to not demonize it and to recognize its full potential for the democratization of knowledge and overcoming inequalities as she states:

technology empowers everything one wants to be, there is a range of possibilities [...] above all, the Internet democratizes knowledge [...] it is the opportunity for the poorest, for people from remote places, there are books that were only available large libraries in the United States or in Europe; when was one able to have access to that knowledge? Never! It is a matter of will (Mother 3, 45 years old).

Regarding the generation of grandchildren, it can be observed the development of clear criteria related to the use of technology (Granddaughters 1 and 2, Grandchildren 3 and 6); a restrictive and controlled use by

the parents (Granddaughters 7 and 10); skills for their management despite their young age (Grandchildren 5 and 9) “I sometimes see photos and play little games on my dad’s cell phone and on my Tablet, I play the game of a bear, on YouTube” (Granddaughter 8 , 5 years), while her mother ensures that the girl does not manipulate this type of artifact.

It should be noted that in this matter we have the clearest example of upward transmission or reverse socialization (Strom & Strom, 2017), that transmission that goes from the youngest (grandchildren) to the oldest (parents and grandparents) and that is seen reflected in the following testimonies:

My daughter gave me a cell phone that has all the bells and whistles, but I don’t know how to handle it. I would better stay with the old one, because I only use it to answer their calls, but my grandson who is 13 years old tells me: Come on mommy take out that cell phone that I will teach you to handle in 10 minutes! (Grandmother 3, 70 years old)

He is six years old and he knows how to handle the tablet, the television and the cell phone backwards and forwards and I am not the most expert technology-wise,” affirms Mother 5, referring to her son, Grandson 5.

Well, you already have to ask them, you don’t know how, they are the ones who understand, they know everything. You don’t know anything anymore. They are the ones who understand, who know how to (repeats the gesture of typing on the cell phone), haha (Grandfather 6, 72 years old).

## Childhood Questioned

Childhood is understood as a stage of development, framed in age limits. It is challenged by the voices of a grandfather who moves from the place of a father who cares, to the place of a son who is cared for (“I am a 97-year-old boy and my daughters ask me how the little boy is doing? The little boy is so cute! Grandfather 2, 96 years old) and for two grandchildren, one who seems to be suffering from his childhood that ended suddenly, but who at the same time does not let it go:

I could not believe that life had passed so quickly, that my childhood disappeared so quickly, as if I had closed my eyes and childhood had gone, as if I had already awakened with other ideas, with other dreams, or perhaps not even with dreams ... I cried a lot, I was delusional, flooded with crazy images like photographs of me as a child, very, very little, they were like odd memories (Grandson 6, 22 years old).

And for another grandson, on whom several diagnoses are pending and who has lived his transit through school, closely associated with childhood, feeling powerless and misunderstood and when faced with the pressure to

grow that adults put on him; he tries to respond by looking hard and tirelessly for a way to increase his height by 10 centimeters (My true dream is to stand 1.90 m, Grandson 4, 19 years old).

*Amidst the loss of power excised by adults, children as subjects of rights and educational responsibility*

Here are the voices of three grandparents who speak for themselves:

### They are the ones who rule ...

Now they are the ones who are in control, one does not command, one receives order. They knock down the house and leave quietly and nothing happens. The grandfather will have to organize the mess. They come to my house and if one tells them: sit there, and be quiet, don't touch anything, be careful, don't jump there, don't turn on the TV, don't pick up the phone and so forth; one ends up frustrating them and the child does starts feeling reprimanded and starts telling mom and dad that grandfather gave me these order. They come here and do whatever they want and one cannot tell them anything. (Grandfather 5, 76 years old)

### I demand them!

And now if you punish them you could be sued, have you ever seen that? Never ever! Punish me, hit me and you will see that I will sue you ...and you don't know how serious and how many those sues will be... I will tell you the truth ... I took care of 11 brothers and four children, I suffered more taking care of these four than the 11 brothers and considering the fact they were not so horrible. Life has already changed a lot, they no longer pay attention to anything, everything is a burden, everything is a no, if you ask them to run an errand for you ... no no, no, I can't . that is the answer you get.,. What a horrible job. Life has changed a lot, doesn't it? (Grandmother 3, 70 years old)

### Neither God nor the Devil

All things have changed 100%, rising children for example: before they would speak to you and just with a look or a pinch was enough for one to follow the rules, fearing the devil would haunt you down if you didn't obey. Now, even the devil runs away from those spoiled brats that are more devilish than the devil itself... for example, when I tell my granddaughter: Here comes the devil! She says to me: Which devil, mommy? You are just making up to scare me! At another time the little girl was hospitalized due to kidney problems and I told her: my little daughter thank God for healing you, she replies: Noo mommy, those who healed me were the doctors, I did not see God anywhere right there. (Grandmother 10, 52 years old).

## Conclusions

The conceptions of childhood for the case of this study are marked by the ways in which that time was crossed and that territory was inhabited (Carli 2010) or how it is still inhabited. That is, by experience, and at the same time, it is influenced by the established relationships and practices (of upbringing, socialization and family and school education) lived within the contexts, groups and institutions of belonging and at a broader level by the historical, economic, political and social development. characteristic of globalization and its inherent effects on the processes of modernization and change.

As was well noted in the introduction, the adoption of the generational perspective allowed identifying changes and constancy in the context of globalization (1950-2020) in ideas about childhood, in the ways of being a boy and a girl; in the relationships between generations. adults (grandparents and parents) and child and youth generations (grandchildren); predominantly based on the use of technology and the effects of these on the increase in consumption (Granddaughter 10, 5 years old, Grandfather 6, 72 years old) and the extension of relationships through social networks (Granddaughter 2, 14 years old), use of the mass media (Granddaughter 7, 11 years old); changes in the forms of governance of individuals indicated by almost all grandparents. All this in tension with the concern to maintain certain traditions, among them the religiosity that is reflected in the generation.

It can be observed that diverse conceptions about childhood coexist: as a stage of development (Alzate Piedrahita, 2003); as a time of discipline, education and schooling within the family and the school institution; as a demarcation between childhood and adulthood (Runge Peña 2008), as subjects of law (Alzate Piedrahita, 2003; Aguilar, et al., 2016) and of knowledge based on their relationship with technology (Aguilar, et al., 2016).

Conceptions that are challenged by life experiences that sometimes bring together members of the different participating generations and that separate them on others. This is perhaps one of the most novel findings, along with some differences marked by gender, in which the triad 6 of the masculine line makes a reading of childhood based on the generational change and triad 7 of the feminine line, from educational practices of control, both positions in relation to the use of technology.

Childhood as a *stage of development* framed by age limits is questioned by two subjects, one belonging to the generation of grandparents (Grandfather 2, 96 years old) and the other to that of grandchildren (Grandson 4); the first breaks age limits by calling himself a 97-year-old boy and demonstrating his transition from the place of a father who cares and provides, to that of

a son who is cared for by his daughters. The second, by responding at 19 years of age, to the demands for normalization and growth that guarantee his departure from childhood, with the fervent desire to increase his stature.

The conception of childhood that sees children as fragile and vulnerable beings is put in tension by grandparents who lived through what could be called rural and working childhoods (Grandparents 1, 2, 6 and Grandmothers 7 and 8), as well as by children and young people who by virtue of their relationship with new technologies position themselves as subjects of knowledge (Granddaughters 1, 2, 8, Grandsons 5, 6 and 9) resisting the control exercised mainly by their mothers from the educational practices they implement.

In the same direction, the emergence of the paradigm of childhood as subjects of law is observed, which brings with it a certain loss of the power of adults (Runge, 2008), shown in many cases in the name of its educational responsibility by grandparents, parents and other significant adults, depending on the developments in psychology, pedagogy and legal devices that question the exercise of authority based on certain forms of punishment and the diminishing of the power of religious practices that instill fear. (Grandfather 5, “school group lead, in which he alludes to the importance of participating in the decisions that are made and the staging of the exercise of power over their peers (“Peers obey one”)

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