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WALKING THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD¹

UNDERSTANDING SENIORS' EXPERIENCES DURING THE PANDEMIC, IN A HARSH SANTIAGO

CAMINANDO POR EL BARRIO: COMPRENDIENDO LAS EXPERIENCIAS DE LAS PERSONAS
MAYORES EN UN SANTIAGO ADVERSO, EN TIEMPOS DE PANDEMIA

MARIE GERALDINE HERRMANN-LUNECKE ²
CRISTHIAN FIGUEROA MARTÍNEZ ³
FRANCISCA PARRA HUERTA ⁴

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² Doctora en Urbanismo
Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile
Profesora Asociada Departamento de Urbanismo
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0186-441X>
mherrmann@uchile.cl

³ Doctor en Estudios de Transporte
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile.
Investigador postdoctoral Centro de Desarrollo Urbano Sustentable UC (CEDEUS)
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6399-8360>
cfiguer@uc.cl

⁴ Magíster en Proyecto Urbano
Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile.
Asistente de Investigación
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2943-2742>
fnparra@uc.cl



Este artículo tiene como objetivo indagar en las condiciones que las personas mayores enfrentan al caminar por los barrios en los que residen. Se busca identificar las formas en las que las características socioespaciales de los barrios, el entorno construido y la pandemia de COVID-19 afectan sus caminatas. Para lograr tales objetivos, el trabajo reporta los resultados de un grupo de entrevistas y grupos focales en los que se invitó a personas mayores residentes de cuatro barrios localizados en la Comuna de Santiago de Chile a conversar sobre sus caminatas y los obstáculos que enfrentan cuando se mueven a pie. Los resultados muestran que las personas mayores comprenden la caminata como una actividad altamente beneficiosa que les permite mantenerse activos, conectados y visibles. Evidencian que los procesos de cambio que han afectado a sus barrios han cambiado el paisaje y la arquitectura social de sus vecindarios, incrementando el miedo hacia el espacio público y la sensación de soledad. El análisis de los datos también mostró que las personas enfrentan diversos obstáculos mientras caminan, incluyendo veredas deterioradas, cruces hostiles y paisajes poco placenteros. Aquellos obstáculos se vieron multiplicados por la llegada del nuevo coronavirus, lo que sumó restricciones y preocupaciones que dificultan aún más la caminata. Los datos recogidos revelan la importancia que tiene la caminata para las personas mayores, por lo cual es fundamental la creación de barrios caminables y del fomento de esta actividad en las políticas públicas como una práctica de autocuidado.

Palabras clave: personas mayores, caminata, entorno construido, barrios, Santiago de Chile.

This article aims at investigating the conditions older people face when walking through their neighborhoods. It seeks to identify the ways in which the built environment, the socio-spatial features of the neighborhoods, and the COVID-19 pandemic affect their walks. To that end, the article reports the findings of a set of interviews and focus groups where older people who reside in four neighborhoods located in the Commune of Santiago, Chile, were invited to talk about their walks and the obstacles they face when taking them.

The findings show that older people consider walking a highly beneficial activity whereby they remain active, connected, and visible. They state that the processes of change that have affected their neighborhoods have transformed their landscape and social architecture, increasing fear of the public space and the feeling of loneliness. The analysis of the data also showed that older people face many obstacles when walking, including sidewalks in disrepair, hostile pedestrian crossings, and unpleasant landscapes. Those obstacles were multiplied by the arrival of the new coronavirus, which added restrictions and concerns that make walking even more difficult.

The data gathered emphasizes the relevance of walking for older people, making the creation of walkable neighborhoods and their promotion in the public policies as a practice of self-care, crucial.

Keywords: older people, walking, built environment, neighborhoods, Santiago de Chile.

I. INTRODUCTION

Seniors (65 years or older) constitute a diverse group whose capabilities and needs vary according to their backgrounds, their social networks, and the opportunities that are available in their territories, etc. (World Health Organization [WHO], 2015). In Chile, seniors represent almost 12% of the population and, with one of the highest life expectancies in the continent (80 years), it is expected that they will reach 25% by 2050 (National Institute of Statistics [INE], 2018). However, even though the country is a signatory of several agreements that protect their rights (United Nations, [UN], 2002; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2007; Organization of American States [OAS], 2015), seniors in Chile have been suffering from a series of violations and often suffer from multidimensional poverty (Adams, 2012; Fuentes-García Sánchez, Lera, Cea, and Albala, 2013; Abusleme and Knight, 2014).

The “National Survey of Quality of Life in Old Age” (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile [PUC] and Caja Los Andes, 2020) reveals that a significant group of seniors in Chile have their financial (56.8%), health (55.9%) and recreational (43.2%) needs unmet. Almost a quarter of them feel excluded (24%), the target of stigmas and stereotypes that, as indicated by Warmoth *et al.* (2016), minimize their abilities and relegate them to the sphere of their homes, often to care work. The same survey indicates that most of the Chilean senior population feels physically healthy (69.2%), but almost three-quarters state that they do not do physical activity (72%). Furthermore, less than one fifth (17.1%) of them indicate that they walk more than fourteen blocks a day (-1.5 km) in cities whose characteristics they evaluate with grades below 5 (PUC and Caja Los Andes, 2020); a “poor” rating on the scale of 1 to 7 used in the country.

In this context, this article aims at researching the conditions seniors face when walking through the neighborhoods where they reside. It seeks to identify the ways the built environment and the spatial characteristics and building typologies of the respective neighborhoods affect their walks, experiences, and perceptions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the restrictions that have sought to curb its expansion. To achieve those goals, this work reports the results of a group of semi-structured interviews and focus groups where seniors were invited to talk about their walks, the aspects of the built environment that facilitate or hinder them, and the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on their lives and walks. The work was carried out in Santiago (Chile), specifically in four sectors of the Municipality of Santiago, in the interest of collaborating with the multiple efforts to make the public space in Latin American cities more

accessible (Buenos Aires [CABA], 2015; United Nations Program for Development [UNDP], and Chilean Ministry of Housing and Urban Development [MINVU], 2017; Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development Secretariat [SEDATU] and Inter-American Development Bank [IDB], 2018) and with the emerging regional literature that, so far, has focused on identifying correlations between characteristics of the built environment and mobility patterns of seniors (Arango, Páez, Reis, Brownson, and Parra, 2013; Corseuil Hallal, Brownson, and D’orsi, 2017).

The article is structured in four sections. After the introduction, the theoretical references are presented, collecting the findings of the different works that have researched the difficulties faced by seniors when walking. The methods and the neighborhoods studied are detailed in section III. The three subsections that make up the following part contain the main results and address how the processes of change in their neighborhoods have affected the perceptions of seniors, the attributes of the built environment of the places that affect walking, and the impacts that the pandemic has had on this practice. The last part contains the main conclusions.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Walking around the obstacles

Transportation, urban design, gerontology, and other fields have consistently stated that the characteristics of the built environment may prevent physical activity and hinder one of the strategies that seniors use to stay active, connected with the community, and visible to society: walking (Lee, Avis, and Arthur, 2007; Franke, Sims-Gould, Chaudhury, Winters, and McKay, 2019). In this way, it has been stated that the built environment influences the perception of insecurity (e.g., artificial lighting), increases the fear of falling (e.g., sidewalks in disrepair), or being involved in an accident (e.g., short paved sections), worsens the experience seniors have in the public space (e.g., lack of amenities), and, as a result, makes it difficult to walk (Yen and Anderson, 2012; Haselwandter *et al.*, 2015).

For some seniors (e.g., with reduced mobility), the very attributes of the built environment can become insurmountable barriers, preventing walking, and depriving them of the multiple benefits that doing so reports (Clarke, Ailshire, Bader, Morenoff, and House, 2008; Nyman, Ballinger, Phillips, and Newton, 2013). On the contrary, the presence of services (e.g., public transport), facilities, and green areas in the neighborhoods where people live have been pointed out as factors that stimulate walking (D. Barnett, A. Barnett, Nathan, Van Cauwenberg, and Cerin, 2017; Higuera, Román, and Fariña, 2021). The specialized literature also confirms

that seniors, unlike other age groups, spend more time in their neighborhoods and depend more on the services located close to their homes, with the built environment of neighborhoods being one of the keys to “aging in that place” (Cramm, Van Dijk, and Nieboer, 2018; Graham *et al.*, 2018).

In the Chilean case, the studies suggest that seniors face numerous difficulties in their daily movements (Olivi, Fadda, and Reyes, 2016; Fadda and Cortés, 2019; Vecchio, Castillo, and Steiniger, 2020). In this regard, Herrmann-Lunecke, Mora, and Vejares (2020) argue that the sidewalks in the country are often narrow and have high levels of disrepair. Espinosa, Ibaceta, Meza, Silva, and Urzúa (2015) state, for their part, that the time available for pedestrians at traffic lights is insufficient for a significant number of older people. González (2004) suggests that Chilean cities lack amenities, in particular public sanitary services, that could facilitate people’s movements, while Herrmann-Lunecke, Figueroa, and Vejares (2021b) indicate that those shortcomings have their origin in instruments and norms that little reflect the needs of the elderly population. Both Gajardo *et al.* (2012), and Herrmann-Lunecke, Figueroa, Parra, and Mora (2021a) are emphatic, warning that elderly Chileans lead relatively functional lives not because of the facilities that the country’s cities offer, but rather because of their social networks and the strategies that have been developed to circumvent difficulties that, otherwise, would confine them to their homes.

III. METHODOLOGY AND CASE STUDIES

To achieve the goals of the study, as previously indicated, semi-structured interviews were conducted where seniors were invited to talk about (i) their walks before and during the pandemic; (ii) their destinations; (iii) the routes they follow; and (iv) the aspects of the built environment that seem relevant to them. Once the interviews were completed, they were given a new invitation, this time to take part in focus groups where they were asked (i) to comment on the things that motivate them to go for a walk; and (ii) to evaluate different aspects of the built environment (e.g., sidewalks, crossings) of their neighborhoods before and during the pandemic. The conversation was led by two members of the research team who acted as “facilitators”. Both tools were also guided by semi-structured questionnaires that covered the aforementioned topics and were applied remotely, due to the pandemic and the restrictions in force during the period when the data was collected (April-June 2021)-, by phone calls or using an instant messaging platform, *WhatsApp*.

Following the protocols approved by the Scientific Ethical Evaluation Committee of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Chile, the interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed, anonymized, and, later, uploaded to the qualitative information analysis software, *atlas.it*. Using the software tools, the transcripts were “encoded” based on the open encoding procedure described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz (2006). For this, descriptive labels, or codes, are assigned to fragments of the transcripts that contained references to (i) the things that motivate walks, (ii) the built environment, and (iii) the activities that take place in the public space of neighborhoods. In a “discovery” oriented analysis (Fossey, Harvey, Mcdermott, and Davidson, 2002), the codes that emerged from the collected data were grouped into larger categories and systematically refined following an iterative process, where the findings were discussed with the research team and compared with the conclusions reached by other authors who have studied the subject. Interviews and focus groups were coded separately.

Participants were recruited through key informants: contact details of seniors were requested from neighborhood leaders, complex administrators, and other relevant actors. The seniors were contacted by telephone, and those who were willing to participate were interviewed. At the end of these, they were asked if they knew neighbors who could collaborate. This “snowball” recruitment process (Geddes, Parker, and Scott, 2018) was repeated with each new senior who joined the research until forty-one participants were reached⁵. Of these, only thirteen were interviewed, while the remaining twenty-eight took part in both the interviews and the focus groups (Figure 1). The participants were residents of one of the following sectors of the Municipality of Santiago, which have different characteristics in their built environment (Figure 1):

República - Ejército Sector: neighborhoods where terraced houses predominate, with historical buildings that vary between one and five floors, and new buildings of between eight and ten floors. This is a mostly residential area, with stores, services, and university buildings. It is located adjacent to the historic hub of the city and is flanked by metropolitan infrastructures (i.e., Central Highway, O’Higgins Park).

Pedro Montt - San Eugenio Sector: neighborhoods where housing between one and two floors predominates (detached, semi-detached, and terraced). It is located on the southern edge of the Municipality of Santiago, close to O’Higgins Park, and mainly comprises working-class housing complexes built during the first half of the 20th

⁵ The number of participants was defined according to the empirical saturation of the data that began to appear approximately in the eighth interview of each sector analyzed.



BARRIO	DENSIDAD [hab/há]	% PERSONAS MAYORES	TAMAÑO DE HOGARES [hab/hogar]	PARTICIPANTES [F M]
1. REPÚBLICA - EJÉRCITO	274.3	8.0	2.1	10 [9 1]
2. PEDRO MONTT - SAN EUGENIO	103.3	17.1	2.8	12 [9 3]
3. HUEMUL - FRANKLIN	87.8	8.7	2.7	10 [10 0]
4. SAN ISIDRO - SAN BORJA	444.9	6.5	1.9	9 [7 2]

Figure 1. Neighborhoods studied and participants recruited. Source: Preparation by the authors with data obtained from INE (2017).

century. This area is the one that registers the highest percentage of seniors, doubling the values shown in the other neighborhoods studied (Figure 1).

Huemul - Franklin Sector: neighborhoods with housing in blocks and with buildings between three and five floors. This sector is alongside one of the most relevant commercial areas of Santiago (Franklin/Bío-Bío), on the southern edge of the Municipality of Santiago.

San Isidro - San Borja Sector: neighborhoods where high-rise housing and buildings that exceed ten floors predominate. This sector is located immediately south of the historic hub and it is home to universities and relevant healthcare centers for the Metropolitan area. In recent years, it has undergone a deep process of change triggered by the widespread construction of towers that sometimes exceed twenty floors. It constitutes the densest of the cases studied and is also the one with the lowest percentage of seniors (Figure 1).

The following sections present the main results of the analysis, which, as was mentioned, include the ways seniors perceive the neighborhoods they live in, the obstacles of the built environment they face when walking, and the impacts the pandemic has had on their walks. To illustrate relevant topics, these sections contain fragments of the interviews accompanied by general identifiers (i.e., gender, age, sector) and maps of the sectors constructed from the places referred to during the focus groups.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants described walking as a highly beneficial activity, an integral part of their routines, a means to reach services, healthcare centers, shops, sources of work, or public transport, and a recreational activity that may not have a clear destination or a specific time. For most participants, and according to numerous authors (Read *et al.*, 2007; Franke *et al.*, 2019), walking

is a strategy for staying active. A practice that must be vigorous, prolonged, and done frequently to be effective. Some participants, for example, indicated that goals are set (walking n km or n hours) and constantly challenge their own records: “[Walking] is what keeps me active and I usually walk all over the neighborhood here. Look, today, without going any further, I tell you how much I have... I have walked 9,161 steps.” (Male, 78 years old, Huemul-Franklin).

Having company or pets was usually pointed out as an incentive for the walk. Fear of falling, accidents (e.g., car or bicycle accidents), and crime discourage their practice. To these fears, the concerns that emerged with the new coronavirus and the information that quickly designated them as one of the most susceptible groups to suffer severe forms of the disease, or to die from it, are added. For example, those seniors who live near neighborhoods with pedestrian congestion (e.g., commercial neighborhoods) argued that the inability to keep a safe physical distance has made it difficult for them to walk. Other participants stated that the restrictions that have been implemented to control the spread of the disease have reduced the number of people in the public space, increasing the feeling that there will be no one available to help them if something happened.

Most seniors said that they usually walk outside the neighborhoods where they live to take a walk, do physical activity, go window-shopping (“*vitrinear*”, according to Chilean colloquialism), see the city, or run errands and buy things. The main destinations mentioned were emblematic parks (e.g., O’Higgins), commercial (e.g., Franklin, Meiggs/Estación Central), or fashionable (e.g., Lastarria) neighborhoods and, especially, the historic center of Santiago. During the interviews, the participants described numerous attractive places that they can reach by walking, emphasizing that this is a “privilege” they possess by residing in central neighborhoods.

Walking through neighborhoods in the process of change

Seniors from all the sectors studied indicated that the neighborhoods where they live are changing due to the construction of high-rise housing and the arrival of new inhabitants. This has altered the landscape that seniors, in particular those who have lived for a long time in the neighborhoods, were used to. In neighborhoods where the change has been intense (San Isidro-San Borja) and has involved the construction of high-rise residential towers (20 or more floors), the buildings that have remained over time were identified as “heritage”, enriching monotonous landscapes and evoking memories. In sectors where change has been more moderate (República-Ejército),

the new buildings were described as improvements in the landscape and pedestrian infrastructure (i.e., sidewalks). However, some participants clarified that these improvements have been specific ones, limited to the public space in front of the new building, and have not managed to reverse the deterioration they observe in the sector. In Pedro Montt-San Eugenio and Huemul-Franklin, areas where there have been fewer verticalization processes, new builds were represented as a “latent threat” that could profoundly alter the landscape and their walks.

The construction of new buildings has also changed the characteristics of the population and the social architecture of neighborhoods. The participants commented that the people who have come to live in the new towers use some local services, but rarely interact with the community or participate in community organizations where only “old people” remain. This behavior has prevented seniors from building familiarity with their faces, routines, and customs. Thus, many participants agreed that they know fewer and fewer neighbors, which intensifies the fear of a public space where they do not recognize people or behaviors.

The analysis made also suggests that these few interactions between seniors and the new inhabitants have resulted in a growing sense of loneliness. Many participants emotionally recalled how they have been left alone as their contemporaries have passed away and how they have not been able to cultivate new bonds with their new usually younger neighbors. Some seniors, especially residents of San Isidro-San Borja, do not plan to live in the neighborhood for much longer and stated not having friends there:

I’m lucky that people here from my condo at least now answer my greeting. I say good afternoon, good morning, I always greet, I try to interact, but I haven’t succeeded [...]. No one has time to stop and chat with anyone for a while, so no, I don’t interact with my neighbors anymore apart from greeting them. (Woman, 65 years old, San Isidro-San Borja)

The arrival of new inhabitants to neighborhoods added to the introduction of new activities (e.g., universities), has also increased the floating population and the number of cars occupying the streets. The floating population was described as a situation they have learned to deal with: the public space is “negotiated”. Meanwhile, the increase in vehicles was cited as a problem that has taken away space for walking (cars parked on sidewalks) and has increased the feeling that they move through spaces designed for cars and not for pedestrians.

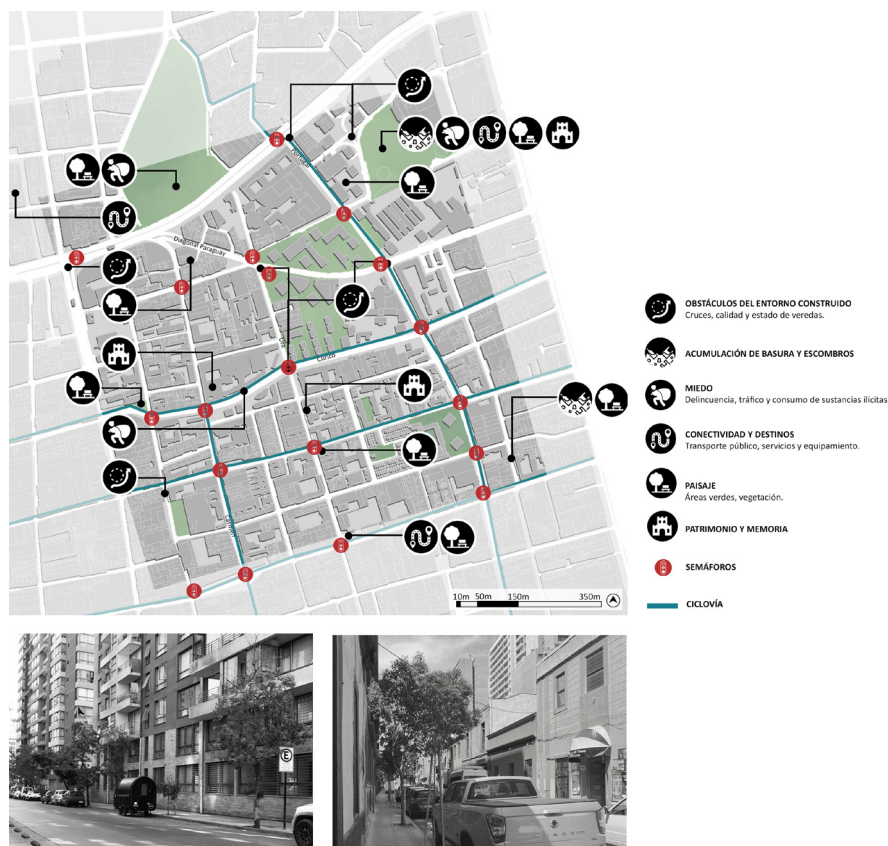


Figure 2. San Isidro-San Borja Sector. Source: Preparation by the authors

Walking through adverse built environments

Seniors claimed they face many obstacles when walking. Referring to the sidewalks, the participants indicated that they are often in disrepair and uneven. They also described them as narrow, with varying widths, partially occupied by vendors and parked cars, or obstructed by trees or signage. Participants from some sectors added that many sidewalks have been vandalized (theft of manhole covers in República-Ejército) or destroyed in citizen protests (San Isidro-San Borja). As was also evidenced by other works (Yen and Anderson, 2012; Haselwandter et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2018), seniors who took part in this research point out that deteriorated sidewalks make walking difficult, as this increases the chances of suffering a fall and increases the concerns of those who have already had accidents of that nature and, as a consequence, have lost confidence in their abilities.

When talking about pedestrian crossings, the interviewees noted that they are rarely pedestrian-friendly. Traffic lights were characterized as dangerous since they allow cars to turn, and as cumbersome since they are coordinated to facilitate the flow of

vehicular traffic and not the pedestrian experience. The residents of Pedro Montt-San Eugenio, for example, reported the multiple waits involved in crossing three major avenues that converge in their neighborhood (Pedro Montt, Mirador, Club Hípico) and how this has pushed them to reckless actions (e.g., crossing diagonally, running). Just as in other works that have shown that traffic lights in Chile do not consider the speeds of people who are in some situation that reduces their mobility (Espinosa et al., 2015; Herrmann-Lunecke et al., 2021a), the participants also stressed here how brief the pedestrian cycles of the traffic lights they pass when walking, are.

Likewise, poor lighting and vandalism were highlighted as factors that increase the fear of crime and restrict walking at times when natural light is scarce. The lack of trees and vegetation, the accumulation of garbage and debris, construction sites, and noise worsen the walking experience. One participant commented, in this sense, that she walks through streets that seem pleasant to her and avoids those that she considers noisy and dirty. Concurring with Yen and Anderson (2012) and Haselwandter et al. (2015), some participants also

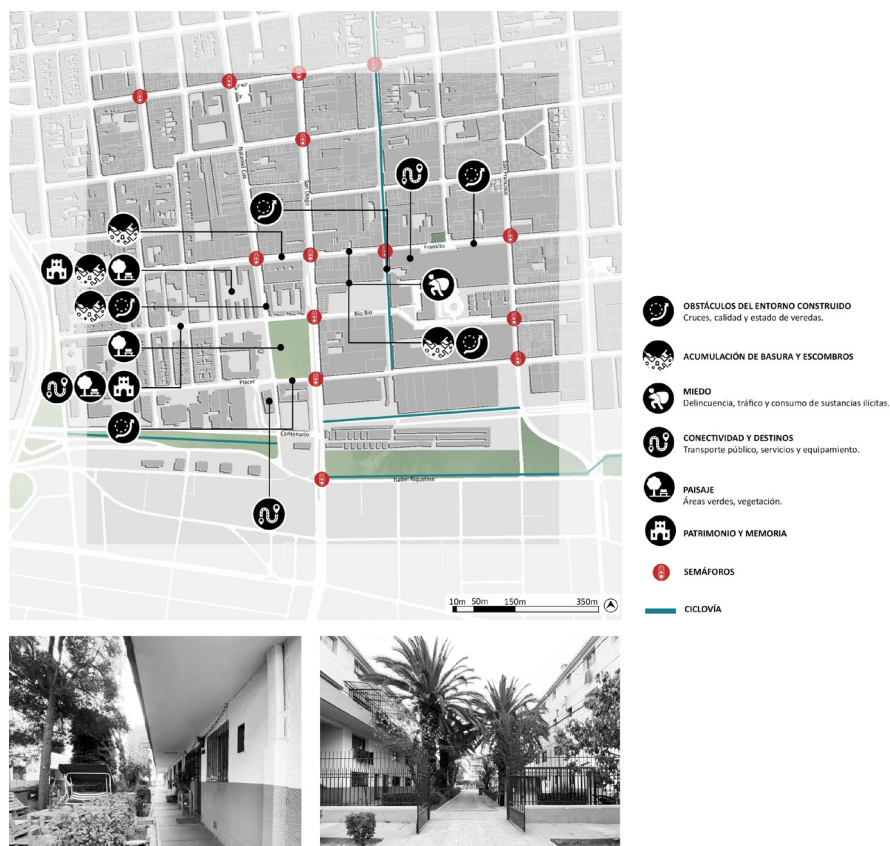


Figure 3. Huemul-Franklin Sector. Source: Preparation by the authors.

argued that their walks could be better if there were amenities such as benches, trash cans, railings, and shading elements. All of those, however, were described as “rarities” that are available in a few places. As the San Isidro-San Borja map built with the obstacles mentioned in the focus groups illustrates (Figure 2), the built environment is hostile to older people. To avoid the physical deterioration that could mean no longer walking, many seniors indicated that they have learned to “navigate” between obstacles, using routes that avoid those places where they could suffer falls (e.g., deteriorated sidewalks) or accidents (e.g., dangerous crossings).

Walking in pandemic times

The participants acknowledged being afraid of the inability to walk, portraying walking, precisely, as a symbol of independence and an activity that allows them to stay in good health. However, the arrival of the new coronavirus brought with it strict restrictions that made this an unfeasible practice, at least temporarily. Many of the seniors interviewed stopped walking, especially at the start of the pandemic (fall 2020). Some

indicated that they became “heavy” and “less agile,” even though they tried to exercise at home. Others added that they now find it difficult to walk, but have been forced to do it again to improve their health:

That lockdown was really bad for me, it made me melancholic, I gave up, and my hips hurt from sitting so much [...]. Today we completed 3 weeks of going for a walk every day about 5 or 6 kilometers in the morning and that gives me energy for the day. (Female, 69 years old, República-Ejército)

When asked about the number of blocks (~100 meters) they walked before and during the pandemic, more than half of the seniors (26 out of 41 participants) indicated that their walks were considerably reduced. Another group (10 participants) stated that they walk the same, arguing that they have taken advantage of all available spaces (e.g., permits) to go out on foot. Also, when asked if their habits had changed, a significant number (25 out of 41 participants) revealed that they had changed the times when

they walk. In most cases, these changes were linked to the fear caused by the few people they see on the streets as a result of the pandemic. One participant pointed out, for example, that she does not use the so-called "sports permit"⁶ because she is afraid to walk through empty spaces.

The participants' stories in times of pandemic were usually marked by new fears (e.g., distance, empty streets, contagion) and a prolonged lockdown caused by measures that, seeking to contain the disease, were aggressive towards the elderly (e.g., mandatory lockdown for people over 80). Many participants, especially residents of apartment buildings, such as those shown in Figure 2, reported feeling lonely and isolated during periods of greater restrictions. Others took advantage of the common spaces of their complexes to get outdoors, socialize, and walk. Thus, the green areas of the Huemul-Franklin housing complexes (Figure 3) were repeatedly mentioned as spaces that helped to better resist the pandemic. Finally, many participants wondered about what will happen once "normalcy" returns and they have to walk again through a city that has always been hostile to them.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The research presented reveals the importance walking has for seniors in their neighborhoods. In the context described, it is essential to promote walking not only in "normal" times but also in times of pandemics. It should be noted that, at the beginning of the pandemic (March 22, 2020), a mandatory lockdown was decreed in Chile at a national level for people over 80 years of age, almost half a million people. Weeks later (May 15), the same restrictions would become effective for people over 75. Almost five months after the first restrictions (July 25), and in light of the serious problems generated by the total lockdown, it was allowed that in the lockdown and transition phases, people over 75 could go for a walk for 60 minutes three days a week and during the mornings (between 10:00 and 12:00 am). Considering that the pandemic will probably continue for a while, it is essential to promote walking as a self-care practice in public policies, including urban planning and design in these.

In the interviews and focus groups carried out, seniors explained that even before the pandemic, the built environment was adverse for their walks, especially crossings and sidewalks. The pandemic has made urban environments even more hostile for seniors. As a consequence – and according to the interviewees themselves – their walks were considerably reduced. In addition to the restrictions on access to public space, the fear generated in them by the lack of

people on the streets as a result of the health situation was added. In the same way, the possibility of catching coronavirus generated fear, since many urban spaces do not allow keeping the required physical distancing.

The difference in perceptions seniors have about the built environment also stand out, considering the different types of neighborhoods that were analyzed in this study. Specifically, the San Isidro-San Borja sector, an area of high-rise buildings that has undergone a strong verticalization process, is perceived as particularly averse to walking. Along with the heavy road congestion, noise, unfriendly facades, and scarce vegetation, there is little interaction of seniors with the new inhabitants that make the walk an even more difficult activity. In the República-Ejército sector, obstacles were more closely linked to the deterioration of the sidewalks than to the changes densification has brought about. While in Pedro Montt-San Eugenio, the disproportionate vehicular space translates into complex crossings that can be a barrier for some seniors. Positively, on the other hand, the community spaces present in the building typologies of the Huemul-Franklin sector that have allowed community life and walking during the pandemic, stand out. To develop healthier and more resilient cities, it is urgent to rethink our neighborhoods and public spaces and adapt them to the needs of older people to promote walking as a self-care practice in both "normal" and pandemic times.

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⁶ Time window (between 5:00 and 10:00 hours) where physical activity can be carried out even if the city is under lockdown.

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