

## PERSPECTIVES OF INTERPRETATION AND ACTION IN VENEZUELAN URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

Carmen Velásquez; Hugo R. Rincón  
La Universidad del Zulia Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño. (Maracaibo-Venezuela)  
email [cvelasqu@luz.ve](mailto:cvelasqu@luz.ve) y [hrrr2000@yahoo.com](mailto:hrrr2000@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

In a democratic society, all citizens should have the privilege, despite their social and economic status, of having access to adequate built or natural spaces where they can perform public and collective activities in adequate conditions of accessibility, health, sufficiency, security, clean environment, aesthetic, and decision making. As a contribution to the formation of citizenship, the public space should be understood as the home of the shared and the identity; as a place of presence and social and human interaction, as environment and landscape, mobility, accessibility and services. Therefore, it is an essential component that has to be taken care of to avoid it to be, by rule, inhospitable, residual or the indispensable required minimum, in order to make it a fundamental issue and better served good for the citizen.

Nowadays in Venezuela, some local governments and NGOs have an increasing interest in rescuing the infrastructure of parks urban and plazas for the enjoyment and the contemplation of such spaces. The mission is to return these spaces to the citizens. In spite of this objective of local urban management, we can perceive disinterest of local agents to incorporate the participation of civil society in the planning process of these spaces. The need to obtain alternative funding for the maintenance and the development of new projects has suggested the promotion of private capital investments in public parks, without considering the opinion of users and the evaluation of possible environmental impacts. This behavior obliges non-government groups to express their points of view and collective concerns.

In this sense, the paper analyzes different projects and agreements among Universities, government agencies, civil associations (NGOs), which are carried out in three Venezuelan cities – Caracas, Maracaibo and Valencia. The concept of *making the city* from the perspective of the enhancement of the quality of public spaces is reviewed, with the consideration of the public space as somewhat vital for all cities. As methodology of analysis, a comparison of the difficulties, opportunities and outcomes of the rehabilitation processes of plazas and urban parks are examined, based on the conditions and the diverse lines of action that have been presented from the multiple stakeholders' perspective.