

CARACAS, HECHO EN VENEZUELA

# CARACAS, HECHO EN VENEZUELA

Sabine Bitter / Helmut Weber

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CHARLES H. SCOTT GALLERY



2  
8  
14  
22  
28  
42

HOW IS CARACAS MADE? 1

LEARNING FROM LA VEGA 2

THE VERTICAL BARRIO 3

THE CONSTITUTION AS MEGASTRUCTURE 4

CRUDE ARCHITECTURE & LOCAL MODERNISM 5

SUPERCITIZEN 6

# CARACAS, HECHO EN VENEZUELA



# 1/ HOW IS CARACAS MADE?

2

1 SUPERCITIZEN SERIES:  
"BOLIVARIAN WORKERS AT  
THE FRONT OF THE REVOLUTION"

2,3 CERRO GRANDE, APARTMENT BLOCKS  
BY RAUL VILLANUEVA, 1952,  
EL VALLE, CARACAS



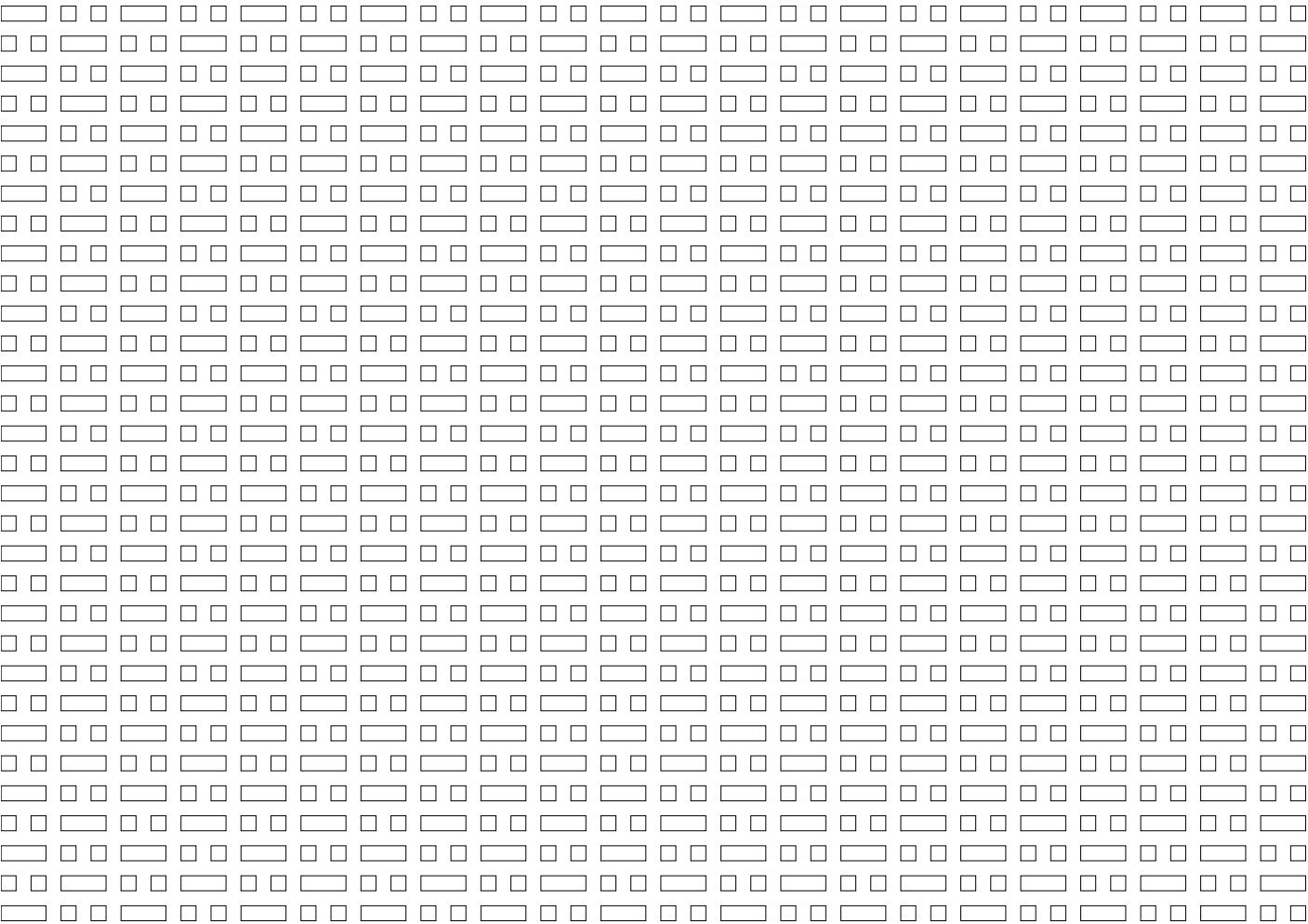
Despite the range of cities and the global reach of the debate, current discussions in architecture and urbanism continue to consider individual use, modes of consumption, and the appropriation of space as the limits of what is possible in urban territories. Yet, forms of appropriation, no matter how immediately effective, and modes of consumption, no matter how tech-savvy or culturally varied, do not imply a transformation of spatial practices and social relations. In Caracas, a city embedded into the global oil economy yet with a history of radical politics, we witnessed forms of urbanism that are the engine of a greater social transformation. This transformative urbanism is not limited to the appropriation of space within existing relations, but is both spatial and social.





Social conflicts are marked by territories in Caracas, and the city is partially divided by class. Architecture draws the lines that delineate this class struggle. These lines are powerful yet porous because formal and informal practices cut throughout this city of five million. Formal practices that pass through institutions, companies, and governmental structures are not only the right of the powerful, and informal practices such as street vending and self-organized house construction on the city's hills are not merely the cultural domain of the weak. Spatial programs like urban and rural land reform, land titles, and urban agriculture are tied to healthcare and educational programs which provide an infrastructure for informal practices and formalized social services for the country's impoverished. In a city that is, at first glance, strictly divided between formal and informal sectors, the production of space is driven by both informal and formal practices.

Yet, as part of what Chavistas (Venezuelans supportive of President Hugo Chávez) call the Bolivarian Process or, commonly "el proceso", these reforms and programs are forcefully initiated from below by collective community organizations which have been active for decades and are not solely administered from above by governmental structures. The media image of Chávez as the strong man single-handedly reorganizing the nation does not capture the complexity and conviction of the social project in Venezuela.









The relationship between the historic modernist housing projects from the 1950s, designed by Venezuela’s Paris-trained architect Carlos Raul Villanueva, and the current urban restructurings driven by the dynamic of formal and informal processes, are central to our research in Caracas. By tracking the troubled residue of modernist promises and concepts – both rational and utopian – we question a series of intertwined tensions within the urban territory of Caracas.

How do these public housing projects, realized under very different social and political conditions and now embedded within the barrios, function today? How have architecture, urban structures, and entire territories in Caracas been appropriated, “re-territorialized”, and transformed by the people who live in them? How have architectural megastructures like the superblocks of 23 de Enero, the Universidad Central de Venezuela (UCV), Parque Central, and their equally large social programs with near-utopian ambitions been altered over time through long-term political transformations? How has the modernist promise of shaping the city and social space, as well as constructing a society and national citizens, been transformed due to shifts in urban, national, and global economies and politics?

6 OFFICE, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION  
COORDINADORA SIMÓN BOLÍVAR  
IN 23 DE ENERO

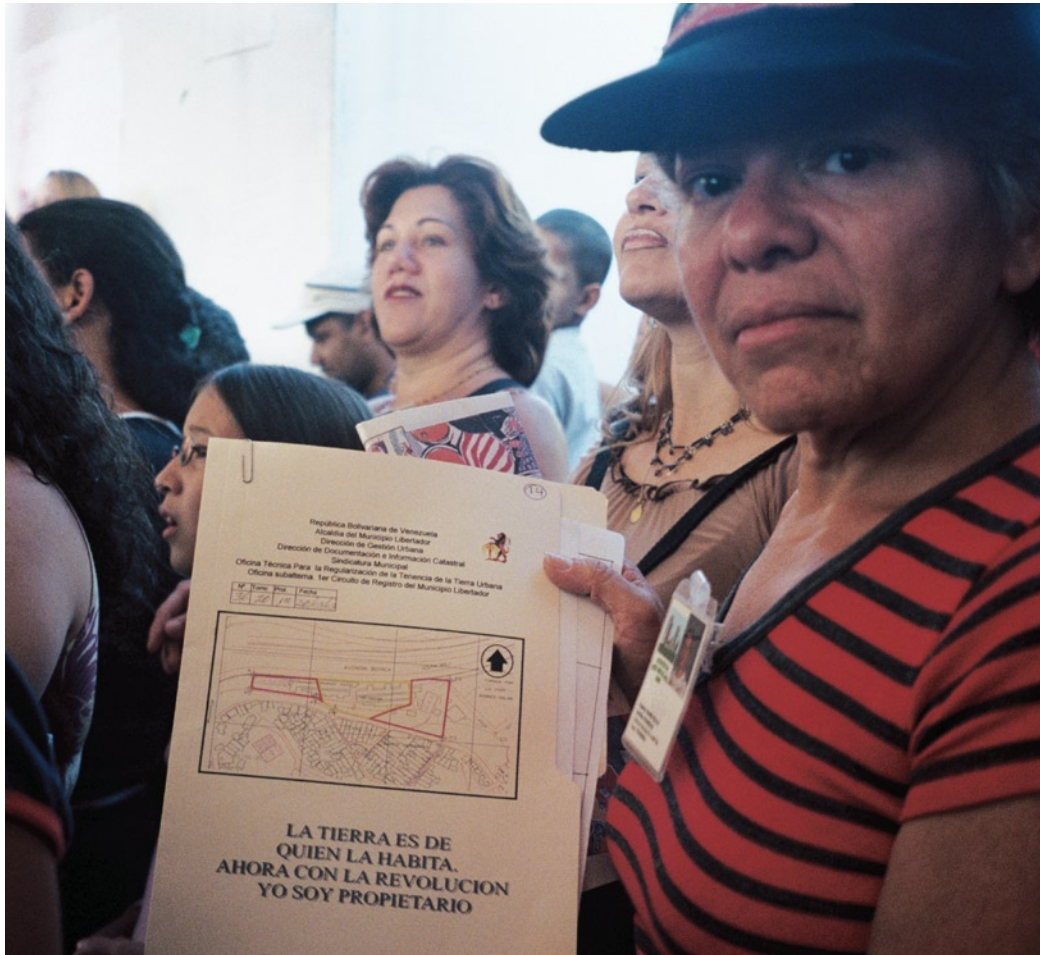


7 GRANTING OF THE FIRST LAND  
TITLES IN THE BARRIO CATIA,  
CARACAS



In 1998 the election of Hugo Chávez brought a major shift in national politics and since then the Venezuelan society has been embroiled in a process of reconstruction fomented from below by the process of participatory democracy which sprung from decades of grassroots resistance and organizing. Building on Henri Lefebvre's "production of space" and his dynamic concept that "every society produces its own space" through "its own spatial practice", we follow the collective everyday practices that produce new spatial and social relations in Caracas.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the series of works entitled *CARACAS, HECHO EN VENEZUELA*, we take particular entry points into the production of Caracas: contested modernist urban planning and architecture such as 23 de Enero; participatory democracy as represented by the appropriation of the Constitution; the anti-neoliberal protest marches throughout the city; and the self and community-organized building of homes on appropriated land. Venezuela's petroleum industries, which have inscribed Venezuela into the global economic system, and in particular its national company PDVSA, are an economic force which have shaped Caracas through projects of local modernization like 23 de Enero, the campus of the UCV in the 1950s, and the economic boom architecture like Parque Central in the 1970s.







# LEARNING FROM<sup>1/2</sup> LA VEGA

Globally, the social, economic, and political conditions of the countryside spur migration into the city. The process of urbanization has paralleled the intensification of globalization as the number of people living in cities tripled worldwide over the last three decades.<sup>[2]</sup> Venezuela is a part of this trend and ninety-two percent of its people live in urban areas.<sup>[3]</sup> The series of photographs *Learning from La Vega* was taken on a tour to the outskirts of Caracas' massive barrio La Vega, the permeable contact zone between Venezuela's largest urban area and its countryside. Newcomers to Caracas often establish themselves through what is described locally as "invasions". First deep terraces are cut into the red-soil hillsides and, after these terraces are leveled, small ranchos of brickstone and found materials are built. What appears quite basic and simple is inevitably accompanied by numerous risks and uncertainties brought on by the unstable ground, which could give way during a rainstorm, and legal actions such as eviction and removal. With no official access to water or electricity, capital or bank loans, and with no legal land titles, the process of building a rancho relies on the social relations of the barrios to succeed.

Francisco Perez, Andres Antillano, and Roberto Lewis, who took us on the tour, explained the basic organizational work necessary to create a social literacy of the barrios. Both for people living within the barrios, and for people who view these living conditions from outside, this social literacy is a set of skills for understanding the barrio's social and cultural workings. For the estimated sixty percent of the population of Caracas who live in barrios, it is also the means to gain rights of citizenship and the titles to the land on which their ranchos are built. This citizenship springs from a model of a collective subject of the barrio and is not necessarily conceptualized individually. Andres, a community organizer, proposed that the fight for land titles does not have to be understood as a formalization of the barrios leading to capitalization and real-estate speculation. This model of the liberatory powers of capital accumulation gained support through Hernando de Soto's *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. To counter this model of capitalization, innovative collective land titles create an alternative form of ownership based on ideals of community.



BARRIO LOS WINCHES

ALI GONZALEZ  
Artist,  
resident of 23 de Enero

The literacy project has always been part of the republican dream of rewriting the nation. To rebuild the nation, start with literacy. Any civilizing project, any urban project, is based on writing and theory. But I think that illiteracy is very much part of our culture. And that is what the people in power have to learn to understand: that an illiterate person is also critical, or potentially as critical as a literate person. A rancho [a barrio house] is illiterate architecture compared to literate architecture like the apartment blocks of 23 de Enero.





Writer and political commentator Gregory Wilpert describes the “shanty town entitlements” as key to the government-backed and locally organized land reforms: The rationale of the transfer, as Iván Martínez, the Director of the National Technical Office for the Regularization of Urban Land Tenancy, describes, is first of all “a recognition of the social debt which the state owes the population.” For in the past half-century, the state constructed one million homes for its citizens; the private sector erected about two million; while the inhabitants of barrios, with infinitely fewer resources than either, built over three million. Considering that it costs about ten times as much to tear down a barrio home and build a new one somewhere else, it is clear that “the barrios are part of the solution, not the problem.”<sup>[4]</sup>





"SELF-ORGANIZED MEDIA  
ARE THE BASIS OF FREEDOM  
OF EXPRESSION!"

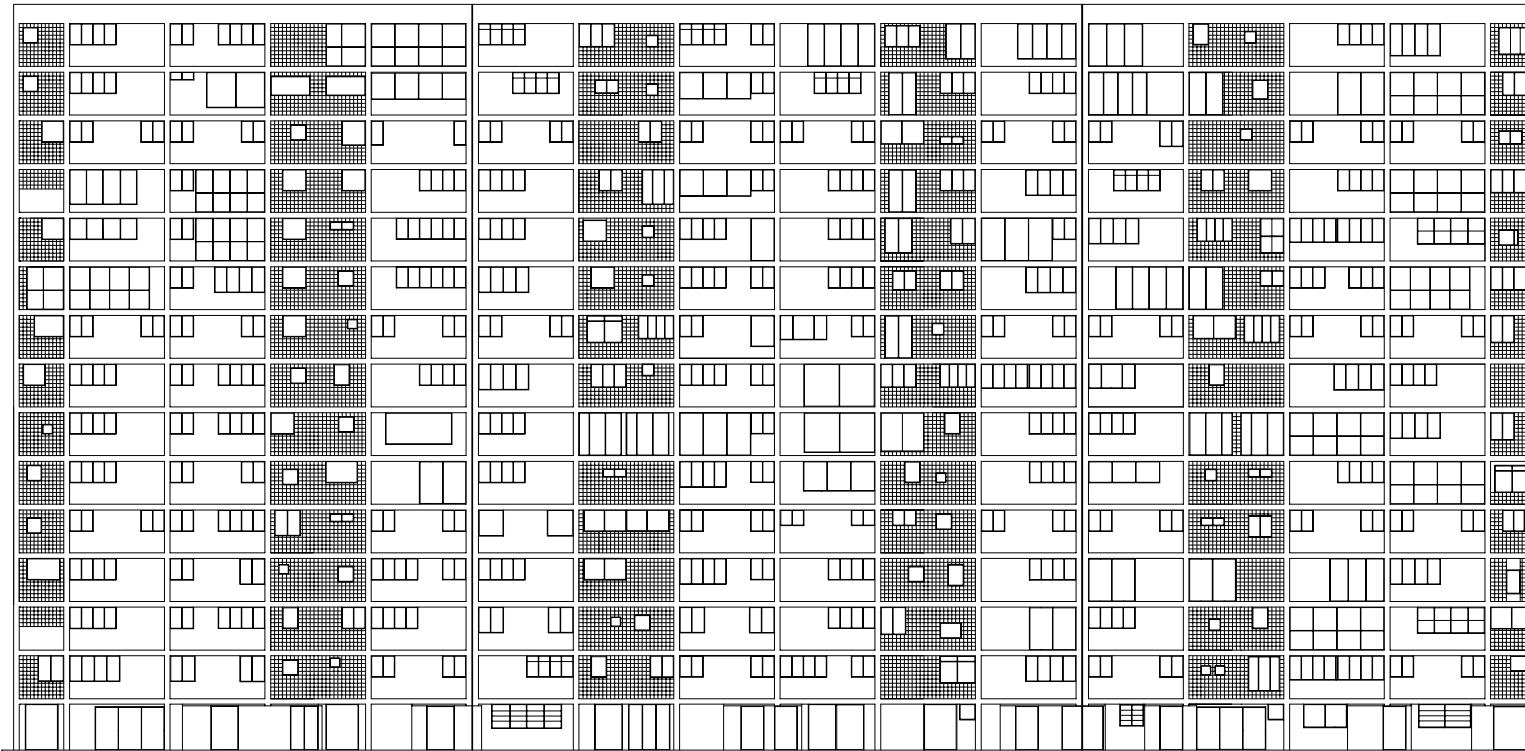
The shift in social perception of the barrios as part of the solution for housing in Caracas leads to a problem in the visual representation of the barrios. For instance, photographs of the barrio are deeply embedded into a normative view of them as an organic, chaotic, and precarious territory which is either heroic in its insistence of the everyday and the informal, or dangerous in its darkness and otherness. Literal shifts in perspective – either sprawling aerial views or on-the-ground portraiture of people who live in the barrios – can be used to reinforce this polarity. We represent the barrios in a way that reveals the politics spatialized in architecture and in spatial practices. Images of Caracas which show the denseness and confusion of the ranchos amidst the linear rationality of the modernist buildings might be read as a clash of social programs, or even as a strict hierarchy between the formal and the informal. But these differentiations don't exist, particularly in 23 de Enero where the superblocks are called vertical barrios by the people who live there. We look for "modes of translation" between everyday life, cultural literacy, and their spatial representations.







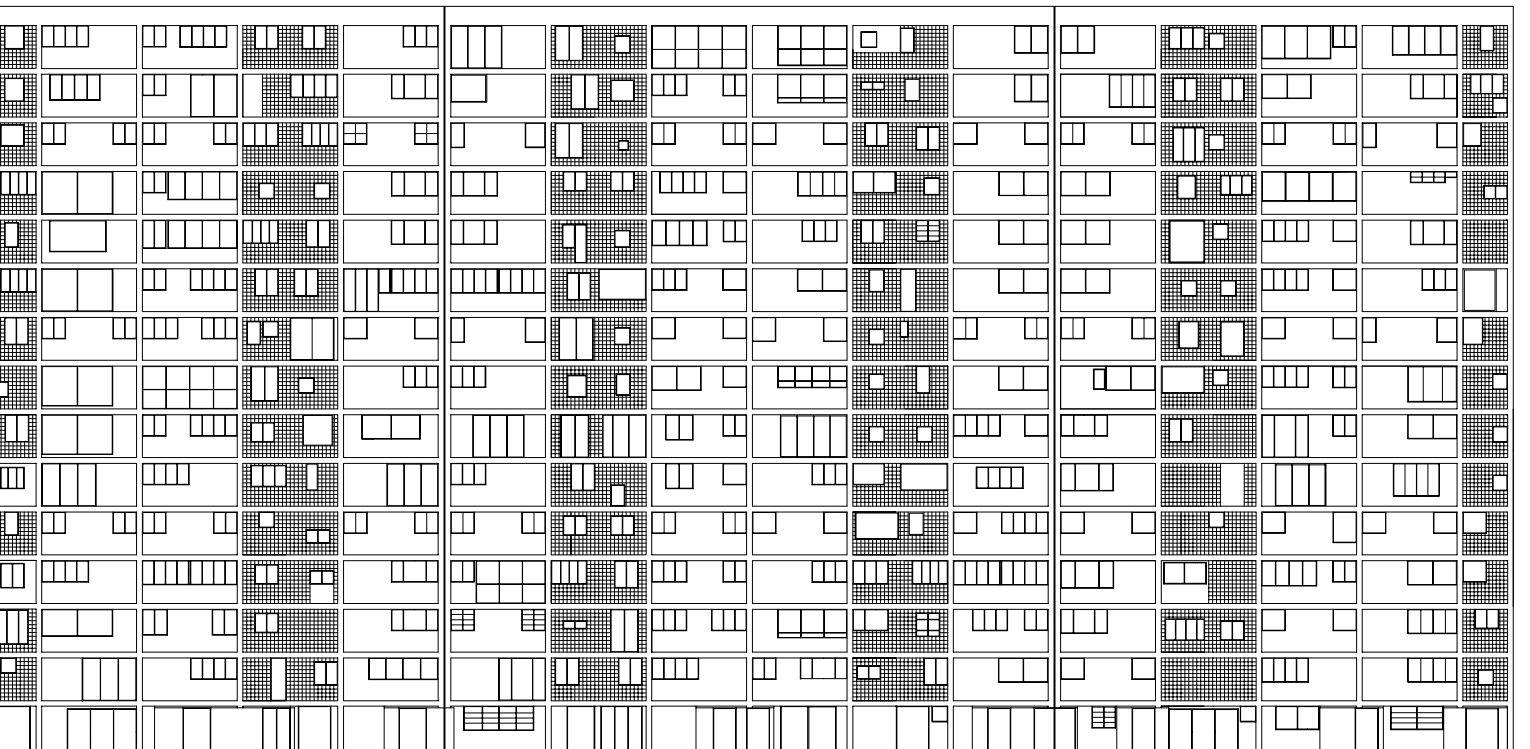
3/ THE VERTICAL BARRIO



"VERTICAL BARRIO",  
ARCHITECTURAL FACADE DRAWING  
OF BLOCK 26 IN 23 DE ENERO

PAOLA POSANI  
Architect,  
Dean of the Faculty of  
Architecture and Urbanism,  
Universidad Central de  
Venezuela

Our new reality is that the residents of the barrios have the power as citizens to make decisions about the space in which they live. I'm not a lawyer, but as a citizen I think this is one of the most important things about our constitution. Our constitution enables citizens not only to appropriate their space but to govern it and to make their own decisions about their space.





Like other Latin American countries, Venezuela did not break the pattern of colonialization with modernization, but turned to European knowledges to shape Caracas. In 1939, the modernist replanning of the city was initiated when the French townplanner, Maurice Rotival, was commissioned to design a new city plan. In 1947, influenced by Le Corbusier's ideas, the Venezuelan architect Cipriano Dominguez designed the governmental complex Centro Bolivar to symbolize the government's intention to transform Caracas into a modern national capital. Also in the late forties, Carlos Raul Villanueva realized the first government-funded housing project in Latin America, El Silencio. Architecturally, El Silencio is a transitional design between the colonial style and international modernism. Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation and CIAM-related concepts are more directly shown in Villanueva's housing projects El Paraiso (1952) and 23 de Enero (1954-1957). Under the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez, the state housing institute, Banco Obrero began to finance larger projects through the National Housing Plan in order to get "quick, visible results (and) not protracted, expensive research into their social and economic issues."<sup>[5]</sup> These housing projects coincide with the doubling of Caracas' population between 1936 and 1952 that made the ranchos on the city's hills visible.



JUAN CONTRERAS  
Member of the community  
organization Coordinadora  
Simón Bolívar,  
resident of 23 de Enero

Without a doubt, the process, the Bolivarian revolution is doing exactly what any revolution does – the early days of the American Revolution, the French, the Cuban, the Russian – which is to focus on education and health. There's no difference between the people in the blocks and the people in the surrounding barrio, none. It doesn't matter if you're white, or black, or if you have a slightly nicer apartment than people in the barrio. There are no class distinctions here. The whole community is really integrated; the people in the blocks and the people in the barrio. We play sports together and we go to the same university and the same high school. We have the same needs and we also share a desire to build a more just society and that's why most of the people that you've seen here in 23 de Enero and beyond are supporting this process.

As the chief advisor of the Architectural Studio of the Banco Obrero, Villanueva designed and built this series of massive housing projects with, as Valerie Fraser writes, "the intention of eradicating all slums, as they were unsightly and gave the lie to the dictator's slogan that Venezuela was uniformly happy and prosperous. By 1956 about 180,000 people had been rehoused into 33,462 units."<sup>[6]</sup> One of these projects, the 23 de Enero development was, as Paulina Villanueva and Macia Pinto point out, "the most important large housing project implemented in Caracas in the 1950s...and on a scale probably unequaled to date in Latin America."<sup>[7]</sup>







18 COMMUNITY ORGANIZER ROBERTO  
ON THE ROOF OF BLOCK 26  
IN 23 DE ENERO

19 23 DE ENERO

In 1958, during the popular uprising against the dictatorship of General Pérez Jiménez, 4000 of the 9000 apartments of the housing project 2nd of December, as it was then named, were squatted by campesinos and the poor. Today, the alterations of the facades are evidence of the process of appropriation and modification of architectural space by the people who squatted the unfinished apartments. Appropriation, at one scale the mass squatting and at another the individual completion of the superblock facades, is one way in which the spatial relations of Caracas have been dramatically altered and made visible.



PAOLA POSANI  
 Architect,  
 Dean of the Faculty of  
 Architecture and Urbanism,  
 Universidad Central de  
 Venezuela

I think that what we Venezuelans have done with the constitution is to bring ourselves up to date with a reality that already existed. What I mean is that from the time they first built the 23 de Enero up to now, the people who live there have made changes to their situation spontaneously and naturally. What the constitution has done is to catch up with the people, put itself at the same level as the people who demanded it, who demanded that participatory vision we see in the constitution.

In 1966 the project was renamed 23 de Enero (23rd of January) to commemorate the end of the dictatorship. Since then, 23 de Enero has been a highly politicized and well-organized urban site which hosts radical social movements and organizations. The people who live in the superblocks and the ranchos do not consider their struggle for spatial and social transformations as related only to architecture, but as a class struggle.







JUAN PEDRO POSANI  
Architect,  
Director General of the  
Cultural Construction Projects,  
CONAC

I would say that the experience of 23 de Enero is particularly interesting because of the artificial method with which it was created, based on the utopian idea of being able to transform society through architecture. That was really the basis of Le Corbusier's architectural ideology, too. Le Corbusier and the CIAM claimed and Le Corbusier said it very clearly, that revolution could be created through architecture. It's been proven that this is not true, that it's not possible, at least not in a situation such as ours. So it's an interesting experience and I think that in thirty or forty more years we'll be able to draw conclusions. I hope those conclusions can lead to a new perspective with a deeper understanding of how to really transform a society and how to then develop an architecture that is really appropriate and adapted to that new situation. But that's how we see it now. We didn't understand that back then.





## 4/ THE CONSTITUTION AS MEGASTRUCTURE

22



In retrospect, the finishing of the facades of the superblocks is a participatory practice similar to what was proposed in Europe in the 1970s as “participatory architecture”. But in Venezuela at this moment, participatory democracy is associated with the writing of the new national constitution of 1999. It is one of the major projects of the government of Hugo Chávez Frías, the elected president since 1998, and the social groups who helped draft the constitution through nation-wide forums and meetings. The constitution is printed as a small blue booklet and distributed throughout the city. It is so popular that, like Diesel jeans and adidas t-shirts, knock-off versions of it are sold in the street markets. When discussing the political and social transformation of Venezuela, it seems like everybody but the middle and upper class carries the new constitution in their pocket.

22 BOLIVARIAN MILITARY OFFICER,  
DISTRIBUTING BUILDING MATERIAL  
FOR BARRIO RENOVATION,  
TALKS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTION  
DEMONSTRATION AGAINST

23 THE CLOSING OF  
COMMUNITY TELEVISION,  
CATIA TV

CAROL DELGADO  
Coordinator of International  
Relationships, National  
Counsel of Children  
and Youth Rights, CNDNA

The Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been a hugely important change for all Venezuelans because, in my opinion, it has a vision of the state that is not androcentric. What does that mean? It means that it's a vision that does not see the adult male as the universal subject. So that children, women and men are all equally citizens with things to contribute to our society. And the constitution is written in everyday language, not the legal language that is used in most of the constitutions in the world. It's a language that people can understand. People with limited education can understand and interpret it. The constitution is something to be used, laws are to be used and reality is something to be transformed.





To link two productive processes of Caracas – 23 de Enero and the new constitution – we took a helicopter shot of 23 de Enero and altered the image with software we developed. The software program allows an image to be made entirely out of text characters without losing the readability of the image. In a two-part process, the aerial image is first transferred into text characters (following early examples of computer ascii art). Next the random text characters which construct the image are replaced with the entire text of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The aerial photograph mimics the scopic regime of a modernism which rationalized spatial relations, yet the constitution provides the opposing view of a participatory democracy from the streets up. 23 de Enero represents the transformation of a modernist rationality to an insurgent urbanism – an insurgency made through the politics of its inhabitants.

The billboard work was installed in the Metro Station Bellas Artes with the support of the Metro de Caracas. In the accompanying video, *Living Megastructures*, Caraqueños are interviewed about the everyday use of two mega-structures – the new constitution and 23 de Enero. The views of the architects, social activists, governmental experts, artists, and people who live in 23 de Enero elaborate the relationship between these two productive forces which shape Caracas. The spatial and social relations of Caracas have, over decades, altered the oppressive legacy of local modernism associated with years of dictatorships and have been instrumental in opening up greater social and political participation. This dynamic of transformation, cultural literacy, and participatory democracy has gone beyond the limitations of appropriation as an urban and architectural tactic.



[illegible]



ROLAND DENIS  
Activist, Vice-Minister  
of Planning and  
Development  
2002

I think that the blocks are precisely part of capitalist rationality with its need to fragment the individualized subject and organize its industrial property. That was the reason for making these huge apartment blocks. Barrios have a different dynamic. It's a different life, a different logic. A new society is being born or could be born there. A new society can't come out of the blocks.

SUPERCITIZEN SERIES:  
26 "THE WORKERS ARE THE BUILDERS  
OF THE COUNTRY"

26

27 "THE REVOLUTION  
WILL NOT BE TELEVISED"







# 5/ CRUDE ARCHITECTURE & LOCAL MODERNISM

29 VIEW FROM PARQUE CENTRAL  
OVER THE URBAN AGRICULTURE  
PROJECTS

28

30 PARQUE CENTRAL

Since 1920 Venezuelan petroleum industries have shaped the country, affected the state, and determined the social, economic and political life of the nation. As a member of OPEC, Venezuela is the fifth largest oil producer in the world and is integral to the global economy and energy industries. In particular the oil boom in the seventies shaped the architectural cityscape of Caracas and fueled the unjust social landscape. Despite this lucrative resource, poverty has been estimated at nearly eighty percent of Venezuela's population.

Gregory Wilpert, quoting *America Economica*, points out that "PDVSA is in turnover Latin America's largest single corporation, but also one of the least efficient. Currently it costs PDVSA about three times as much to extract a barrel of oil as it costs other major oil corporations, such as Exxon Mobil, Shell or Chevron Texaco."<sup>[8]</sup>

In conversation with us, Bernard Mommer explained that the formal nationalization of the petroleum industry in 1976 did not necessarily lead to benefit for Venezuela's citizens. PDVSA was run by a highly privileged management that was hostile not only to OPEC, but to any kind of national or social development strategy; due to this, the profits passed from PDVSA to the state continuously diminished. In his article "Subversive Oil" he delivers a succinct analysis of the PDVSA: "PDVSA was transformed into a 'state within the state' a long time ago, becoming more powerful the more the country became impoverished. Under the Chávez government this trend has been reversed; as a result, the country has made significant progress in recovering control over its most important natural resource."<sup>[9]</sup>

















JUAN BARRETO

National Assembly Deputy,  
Member of Movement 5th  
Republic, MVR  
(now elected Mayor of  
Greater Caracas)

We came across the idea of constitutional power. It's an old idea that the republican way of thinking had either forgotten or put aside for later. We found some texts, for example the *Constitutional Power* of Toni Negri and other works along the same lines and these ideas came together. We began working on taking the constitutional project to the people. We worked on the understanding that the power resides in the people and that the people should exercise it and that legal structures should not be abstractions, but should be based in the daily lives of the people. The constitution is the political discourse of the popular classes. It's the way that popular classes constitute themselves as subjects. To view the constitution as an instrument separate from the people, that the people have in some manner appropriated it, establishes a separation, which I think is metaphysical, artificial. The popular classes have invaded the political scenario and made themselves visible, constituting themselves as subjects through a discourse, and that discourse is the constitution.







MADERA  
Media activist,  
Radio Alternativa Caracas

If there's ever been an awesome constitutional text in the world with respect to the economic question, it was the text of 1961, which stated that the economic question couldn't be discussed without a social context. There hasn't been a more revolutionary constitution than that. That text pointed a cannon towards private property. That text was really awesome. But with regards to economic matters, that one was super advanced. The Bolivarian agenda is the script for the government's programme. So that's why I think things were straightened up by that constitutional text. At least for the economic question, it straightened things up. And I wonder why the constitutional assembly of 1999 didn't copy that text. That would have been a blow to the liver of the oligarchy. A major blow. But no, private property is untouchable. And that's wrong. As long as there is private property and institutions, humanity will continue on a bad path. As Saint Simon said: the wrongs of humanity are in its institutions and in private property.









A similar change is happening with the use and tenancy of PDVSA buildings. The massive former PDVSA building near the UCV in Los Chaguaramos is a striking example of this shift: it now houses the new Bolivarian University and stands out in economic, cultural, and political terms. This free university provides education to people from the barrios and others who would have difficulty gaining entry into the UCV.

This series of architectural photographs of the PDVSA building, the UCV, and Parque Central registers the spatial politics constructed by the history of oil production in Venezuela. These images depict how local forms of modernization, corporate globalization, and neoliberal agendas are intertwined in the relations between the nation state, global economies, and specific urban conditions.













Near Caracas' impressive yet rundown Parque Central, a hopeful commercial and residential megastructure from the 1970s, families and community organizations grow vegetables in the city with the assistance of governmental initiatives. This huge vegetable garden, punctuated with the colors of the vegetables, is laid out like a masterpiece of urban land art with its radial and linear design. Even though the vegetables are sold to the public, it is primarily an educational project with workshops to teach people how to grow food on a balcony or rooftop with just one square metre of soil.



This urban project addresses Venezuela's perplexing historical dependency on imported food. Despite having a climate where almost anything would grow, agriculture was not an important aspect of the economy, particularly since the oil boom in the seventies. Only now have land reforms, initiated in tandem with the encouragement of agricultural collectives, begun to cut down the dependency on importing food.







ROLAND DENIS  
Activist, Vice-Minister of  
Planning and Development  
2002

The Bolivarian constitution is first of all part of a social, political process that took about ten years to develop. In 1989, at the time of the popular rebellion, people began to talk about a constitutional assembly and there was even a very important national front formed on this issue. But then in the mid-nineties, this constitutional movement started to have the vision of rewriting the whole basis of the country which was different than the specific focus on electing an actual constitutional assembly. It turned into a constitutional process, seeing constitutional power as an inalienable power that has to do fundamentally with the capacity of the organized collective to maintain itself as the constitutional power of the time.







In our series of digitally altered photographs of pro-Chávez demonstrations and marches in Caracas in 2003, the architecture and the cityscape have been sketched out, rendering it more as an ideal or even utopian architectural drawing. These sketches recall the optimistic aesthetics of the collage works from late-1960s architectural groups such as Archigram and Superstudio. The language of this moment of utopian architecture, with terms such as "total urbanization" and "absolute egalitarianism", is replaced in our sketches with the forceful language of protest and change: *The Workers are the Builders of the Country*, *Workers in the Process of Change*, *Bolivarian Workers at the Front of the Revolution*. The abstracted architecture is reduced from the main texture and structure of the urban territory, and the citizens – with their signs and banners – are made more vital and central.<sup>[10]</sup>

The initial version of Supercitizen drawings were printed in a newsprint edition by the Instituto Municipal de Publicaciones, Alcaldia de Caracas. After the change in the city government in 2000, the municipal printing plant's directorship was taken over by activists who socialized the company and organized it more collectively. The Instituto supports communities and people in the barrios and produces their printed matters. When we picked up our job, the printing-room floor was stacked with posters announcing events, poetry books, and community papers. The Instituto is a remarkable example of the effective meeting of formal and informal practices which also shows the productive dynamic of contemporary Caracas.

The globalized city becomes a platform for great mobilizations, new claims, and concentrations of the political. Porto Alegre, Mumbai, Seattle, and Genoa are cities central to a new geography of global politics and not just nodes of commerce on the grid of the global economy. This geography breaks the center-periphery model of colonialism, negotiates the urban-rural divide, and creates a new scale for the political. Caracas is a vital example of an urban platform that is simultaneously national and global.

Caracas, 2003 / Los Angeles, 2005

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 31.
- 2 David Harvey, "Contemporary Globalization", *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- 3 <http://conferences.gsd.harvard.edu/latinamericanurbanities>
- 4 Gregory Wilpert, "Collision in Venezuela", *New Left Review* 21 (May-June 2003), 113. For more of Gregory Wilpert's writing see also: [www.venezuelanalysis.com](http://www.venezuelanalysis.com)
- 5 Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World* (London: Verso, 2000), 121.
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 Paulina Villanueva & Macia Pinto, *Carlos Raul Villanueva* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 40-49.
- 8 Gregory Wilpert, "Collision in Venezuela", *New Left Review* 21 (May-June 2003), 106.
- 9 Bernard Mommer, "Subversive Oil" in Steve Ellner and Daniel Hellinger (eds.), *Venezuelan Politics in the Chávez Era: Class Polarization, and Conflict* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003).
- 10 An extended series of Supercitizen digital prints were realized in 2004 and a billboard version was presented within "Public Speaking", a project organized by Clockshop in Los Angeles in 2004/2005. The billboard quotes the Latin American liberator, Simón Bolívar (1783-1830): "¡Nuestra Patria se llama América!" ("The name of our country is America").

Quotations throughout the book are taken from the video *Living Megastructure*.





“¡Nuestra Patria se llama América!”

—Simón Bolívar—





#### CARACAS, HECHO EN VENEZUELA

Sabine Bitter / Helmut Weber

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Sabine Bitter / Helmut Weber,  
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The artists' web address is:  
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Further info on Venezuela:  
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