

III. Venezuela

FORMATION, STRUCTURE, AND DYNAMICS OF A PRIMATE CITY

A Case Study of Caracas

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After more than a decade of experience, Venezuela's policy planning establishment has come to demand increasingly high levels of performance from its staffs in response to the increasing complexity of the planning tasks proposed. The need to plan for the effects of changing demographic characteristics and to cope with the widespread consequences for the dynamics of family patterns and social interaction that these changes imply, for example, has forced the development planner to search for new tools of analysis which will allow him to gauge accurately the impact of various policy alternatives.

In this search, Venezuela's planners have turned to historians in hopes of acquiring a broader chronological framework and a longer perspective for the analysis of the complex combination of variables required of contemporary policy planning. But because of the paucity of systematic, data-based studies of Venezuela's past, few have been able to demonstrate the utility of the historical perspective in the policy planning process. This project is a prototype for the kind of historical analysis that could provide professionals with the information required to refine their concepts, to modify the mix of variables considered, and to clarify the criteria used in the evaluation of policy alternatives.

Equally important, this project operates as a training workshop where social scientists can acquire the methodological tools and learn the requirements of policy-oriented historical research. In addition to the intellectual product of the project, we expect to produce a cadre of social scientist historians who can apply their newly acquired skills to other topics of interest to policy planners.

For the purposes of this study, Caracas is considered the primate city for Venezuela because of its role in the development of Venezuelan society during the period 1560–1960. The project proposes to offer answers to the following key questions: How did Caracas become Venezuela's primate city? How has it functioned as such?

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PROJECT

1. In 1960 Caracas had all the characteristics of a primate city: Most national and provincial questions were decided there and were resolved according to criteria defined there; it was the seat of Venezuela's financial, commercial, and industrial institutions; its residents had greater access to social services and employment than those of other localities; it had a virtual monopoly on artistic, literary, scientific, and educational activity; and the solution of local problems was sought there.

2. This condition of primacy is a phenomenon which can only be studied in terms of a long historical perspective.

3. The planning process, to which Caracas and the Federal District are subject, requires a precise analytical diagnosis of the dynamic which created the situation.

4. Development planning on a nationwide scale necessarily implies a modification of Caracas' primate city patterns.

5. There has yet to appear a study of the formation, structure, and dynamics of Caracas as a primate city.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the purposes of this project the history of Caracas, and the projection of that history on the national scene, has been divided into four stages, each within approximate chronological boundaries. These stages provide the principal focuses for the analysis of the formation of a primate city. The project will be carried out through intensive research on two fundamental themes within each stage. Each theme will be developed through monographic treatment based on archival research and using appropriate quantitative techniques. The final product from this project will be eight monographs and a synthetic analysis of about 350 typescript pages each. The data bank composed of magnetic tapes and punched cards will be deposited with the Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo (CENDES) for the use of social scientists and development planners.

1. The Creation of a City (1560–1600)

- a. From a precarious foundation to a colonial city (geographic, demographic, and economic factors in the implantation of Caracas).

- b. Formation of the primary patterns of *caraqueño* social structure.
2. The Mature Colonial City (1750–1800)
 - a. Maturation and consolidation of the basic patterns of the colonial social structure of Caracas (social organization, structure, and dynamics of the population of Caracas).
 - b. Provincial projections of the Caracas patterns in terms of administrative and economic networks.
3. The First Modernizing Attempt (1870–1900)
 - a. Repercussions of the first modernizing attempt on the basic patterns of the economic and financial structures of Caracas.
 - b. Repercussions of the first modernizing attempt on the basic patterns of the social and political structures of Caracas.
4. The Petroleum Metropolis (1930–1960)
 - a. The patterns of a primate city under the impact of petroleum and industrialization: Population, family, and social dynamics.
 - b. The patterns of a primate city under the impact of petroleum and industrialization: The utilization of space and the organization of services.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

1. Directors: John V. Lombardi, Department of History, Indiana University, Mid-West Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA); Germán Carrera Damas, Escuela de Historia, Universidad Central de Venezuela, CENDES.

2. Four Venezuelan researchers (to be appointed).

3. North American researchers: Robert Ferry, University of Minnesota; Robert Lavenda, Indiana University; Ralph Van Roy, Indiana University; Kathy Waldron, Indiana University.

SCHEDULE FOR THE PROJECT, 1974–76

1. Preparation (1 June to 31 August). Organization of the project. *Completed.*

2. Orientation (1 September to 14 September). Orientation of the researchers. A week of seminar work to explain and clarify the research design. Classes on the use of SPSS for social scientists. Introduction to the use and organization of Venezuelan historical archives. Organization of the subgroups made up of the two researchers working in each stage with the directors. *Completed.*

3. Research: Phase I (15 September to 10 February). First phase of the research: Collection of data, design of coding schemes, revision of in-

dividual research designs. Monthly meetings of subgroups with the director in alternation with monthly meetings of the whole team with the director. *Completed.*

4. Checkpoint 1 (11 February to 18 February). Meeting of the entire research team with the directors. Progress reports on the state of the individual projects and on the collaboration between individuals of each subgroup. Adjustment of the research design for the next phase, January to May. Preparation of a report on the state of the project.

5. Research: Phase II (19 February to 31 May). Second phase of the research: Completion of data collection, final revision of coding scheme, preparation of data for processing and analysis, finalization of research outlines for the individual themes. Monthly meetings of subgroups with the director in alternation with monthly meetings of the whole team with the director.

6. Checkpoint 2 (1 June to 8 June). Meeting of the entire research team with the directors. Progress reports on the state of the individual projects and on the collaboration between individuals of each subgroup. Adjustment of the research design for the next phase, June to November. Preparation of a report on the state of the project.

7. Write-Up: Phase I (9 June to 30 November). Organization and analysis of the data. First draft of the monographs and critiques of these drafts by the participants in the project and the directors. Final draft of the monographs due on 30 November.

8. Write-Up: Phase II (1 December to 31 May). Final draft of the synthesis based on the individual monographs prepared earlier. Translation of the monographs into Spanish. Preparation of the manuscripts for the press. Preparation of a final report on the project. Project ends on 1 June 1976.

SUPPORT FOR THE PROJECT

This project is currently funded through the Mid-West Universities Consortium for International Activities (MUCIA) and the Universidad Central de Venezuela and its Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo (CENDES).