Enhancing the right to the city by politicizing participative urban governance: the case of Caracas

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* “The loss of the city”. We have lost the right to the city – Roberto Briceño León

* “The war on words”. When slum returns: does language matter? – Allan Gilbert
How can grassroots participation improve the right to the city?

Grounded considerations in the light of justice matters (distribution – recognition – representation)

I. Brief history of participation in democratic Caracas

II. Governing insecurity, governing housing issues
I. Brief history of participation in democratic Caracas

- Enlarged political participation is part of the democratic discourse in Venezuela (from 1958 on).

- Institutional consequences are uneven over time and mostly depend on grassroots claims and pressure.

- Participation is shaped in structurally unequal context. It can even worsen inequalities.
II. Governing insecurity, governing housing issues

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Caracas. La Florida 1940’s

Caracas. Santa Sofía 2000’s

Los Angeles. Palos Verdes 1920’s

Source: Google Earth, [http://www.maureenmegowan.com/PageManager/Default.aspx/PageID=1258058&NF=1](http://www.maureenmegowan.com/PageManager/Default.aspx/PageID=1258058&NF=1)

[http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/areasdecarcas.msnw](http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/areasdecarcas.msnw)
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CONCLUSION

- There is no reason to believe that “participation” gives necessarily more appropriate decisions.

- Participation can be instrumentalized and does not necessarily tackle unequal situations.

Importance of contingencies and politics of choice in assessing participation in terms of justice.

Spaces of regulation as a dimension where actors negotiate, but also where collective – not only communitarian – interests keep working...