Abstract
In Venezuela, the processes of state reform and decentralization encouraged in the eighties are incomplete. An advance occurred in the decentralization process due to a set of laws that came into effect in the year 1989, showing favorable political results. At present, however, there are strong tensions between the postulates that accompany decentralization and the orientation of the political project of President Chavez. Based on the analysis of diverse information sources, this article examines how, starting with the set of legal transformations and public policy orientations in this decade, the democratizing character that carries decentralization is affected, and it places in perspective the participative autonomous practices and the social empowerment that derive from exercising citizenship.

Keywords
Centralization, decentralization, citizen participation, Hugo Chavez's government, Venezuela.