

pass by at the same time when plaza was intensely visited by exercising people. At approximately 8:00 a.m. when irrigation systems were activated in Plaza de la Madre, it was almost impossible for people to pass through the sidewalks, obligating people sometimes to leave the plaza and not continuing their exercising activities. This evidences the need for more space in the plaza; perhaps this has led people to visit the plaza for exercising at earlier hours.

Figure 73 and 74 **Proximity of traffic to walkway at Plaza de la Madre**



It was observed that vehicles transited were very close to the pedestrian flow of Plaza de la Madre. Many users expressed that the gases emanated by vehicles were unhealthy for them.

These observations allowed gathering of information that was not obtainable through the interviews. Also it reconfirmed and helped discern what in particular Plaza de la Madre needs in order to become as livable as Plaza de la República. In general, this information was important for determining that Plaza de la Madre requires more surveillance in order to allow people to use the plaza during more hours of the day, and to create the feeling of security. It determined that more features are necessary, perhaps informal activities to more attracting uses from the surrounding areas. The recommendations and design implications will be discussed further. Climatic comfort is an important factor for drawing people to a setting. Plazas that are climatically comfortable and provide sufficient shade and shelter from the sun's exposure are highly desirable. These findings will be discussed further in the following chapters of conclusion and recommendations.

Observing people's spatial behavior and activities during different hours of the day helped to have a general idea of how the plazas work. One of the findings was observing limited or no use of Plaza de la Madre during hours in which climate conditions were hot and uncomfortable (such as noon). On the other hand, although use decreased during noon hours in Plaza de la República, the presence of people and activities were almost continuous during most hours of the day. The presence of special events, the use as a recreational and sport facility, the presence of amenities for children, police surveillance and general climatic comfort experienced (provided by presence of adult trees), were some conditions that drew people to this space. In Plaza de la Madre activities consisted mainly of walking and jogging and watching

their children at play. In Plaza de la Madre the uses were orientated towards sport activities, children recreation and social interaction, but this last one was less significant than Plaza de la República. In general, observations reconfirmed that Plaza de la República was more intensely used by people than Plaza de la Madre. The observations helped detecting problems, non-functional features, and missing amenities in the plazas. The information obtained will be useful and applicable in improving these spaces and other public spaces in Maracaibo. In general, the combination of interviews and observations in both plazas, a technique develop by William Whyte and PPS, has been a useful and necessary methodology in this type of social research.

The following table summarizes the activities and the different pattern of uses experienced through observation along the different hours of the day in both plazas. This is provided in order to help the reader obtain a comparative scope of how uses develop in Plaza de la Madre and Plaza de la República.

Table 4 Frequency of use comparative chart obtained through observation in the plazas studied

Period	Hours	Plaza de la Madre	Plaza de la República
morning	4:00		NU People begin to appear at 4:00 to 4:30 in the morning to exercise. LFU
	5:00	People begin to appear at 5:00 to 5:30 in the morning to exercise.	LFU Most users are elderly, adults and young people exercising. MFU
	6:00	Most users at this hour are adults and elders exercising.	MFU Most users are elderly, adults and young people exercising. HFU
	7:00	Most users at this hour are adults and elders exercising.	HFU CUNIBE students start to appear in the plaza.
	8:00	Users, which generally are seen in the plaza exercising, begin to leave as sun and heat rises. Maintenance workers appear in the plaza	
	9:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	NU Exercising in the plaza begins to cease. MFU Predominant users are students.
	10:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students.
	11:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students.
noon	12:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students. LFU
	1:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students.
	2:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students.
afternoon	3:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students. MFU
	4:00	No use is perceived in the plaza	Predominant users are students.
	5:00	Parents and their children start to appear in the plaza.	MFU Parents and their children start to appear in the plaza. Informal food vending appears in the periphery of plaza. During weekends, children battery operated cars are available for rent beginning this hour.
	6:00	People exercising appear again. Children are seen playing in the plaza. Family orientated environment.	HFU People exercising appear again, but additionally skaters, children with scooters and bikes appear. Children are seen playing in the plaza. Diversity of users is seen in the plaza. High peak hour. Socially active environment. Surrounding activities and uses begin to be hectic.
night	7:00	Young people start to appear in plaza.	HFU Acoustic shell is prepared for TV show. Socially active environment. High peak hour. Busy surroundings.
	8:00	Socially active environment. High peak hour. Diversity of users is seen in the plaza.	TV program developed in the plaza. Socially active environment. High peak hour.
	9:00	Some users from Memorial Chapel can be seen using the plaza.	Socially active environment. High peak hour.
	10:00	Users start to leave from plaza	LFU Socially active environment.
	11:00	Use seen at this hour during weekends	Socially active environment.
	12:00	Use seen at this hour during weekends	NU Users start to leave from the plaza LFU
	1:00		Use is seen at this hour during weekends

Categories

HFU High frequency of use

MFU Moderate frequency of use

LFU Low frequency of use

NU No Use