
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN RURAL CONTEXTS. A THEORETICAL APPROACH

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SUMMARY

Development planning is an interaction process between development actors and agents, which articulates policies and strategies in the territories with the aim of seeking better living conditions for the population. In this context, the article aims to determine the development planning elements in the rural context, from a theoretical perspective and how they are shaping rural development scenarios from a planning perspective. For this purpose, the specialized literature is used to approach the study phenomenon through a classification according to a theoretical approach and the variables prioritized as a basis for the

development of rural areas. The research concludes by highlighting that the rural population general vision have about development planning processes are the existing local resources in the geographical area, culture and endogenous knowledge, together with local productive activity, natural resources and citizen participation, are the most important elements that are linked to development planning processes in the rural context; in each situation, local community actors are highlighted as decision-makers and promoters or drivers of development processes, with the participation of development agents.

Introduction



Planning is an important element in building the development of countries (Halla, 2007), regions and rural communities (Sopannah, 2012); it is also a tool or mechanism for shaping institutional and administrative activities, which requires a theoretical and technical approach to the economic

variables of the development issue (Valeta and Walton, 2008). Thus, planning reaches all actors: government, businesses, individuals, and others, and allows for the collection of a network of needs and demands of the population, which are the basis for the design of social and economic policies that benefit societies as a whole (Sopannah, 2012).

Planning has shown significant progress in terms of supporting

and consolidating territorial development processes, as well as in terms of democracy and consolidation of regional economic structures (Boamah, 2013). In the case of rural communities, this practice and the strengthening of their actor's participation favor development (Shaffer *et al.*, 2006), allowing systems productive reinforcement and revaluing endogenous knowledge of the communities (Crocker, 2007; Arranz-López *et al.*,

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2019), therefore, productive activity and local resources, among others, are the elements that have sustained the territories (Cowell, 2013). Thus, planning strengthening, and development systems emerges as a peremptory task for the current development consolidation of models in rural communities and their population (Shucksmith, 2009).

Rural communities are generally considered to be regions where high rates of inequality and social exclusion are concentrated (Valenzuela and Rangel, 2004; Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2019), poverty is also concentrated in this dimension (Lindsay *et al.*, 2021), the causes may be diverse, such as lack of planning and development promotion of their territories (Bar-On and Prinsen, 1999). In some regions, such as Indigenous communities, they are considered unfit to govern themselves, and the state resorts to their protection as an instrument of expropriation of their ability to control their own destiny (Shaffer *et al.*, 2006). However, the role of the state is to ensure adequate planning that includes these vulnerable sectors and allows for the coordination of economic activities and development mechanisms (Mille, 2005).

There is a growing interest in development planning processes in the rural context and its localities (Shucksmith, 2009), and the present research raises some questions: What are the elements involved in planning processes in rural areas? Are there common forms and practices in rural and community development planning systems? Questions that we try to answer from the theoretical perspective and studies developed on this phenomenon.

The research assumes a qualitative and descriptive approach because it attempts to describe the phenomenon of study, those forms of planning in rural spaces; to do so, it uses resources from secondary sources, mainly written literature in relation to the subject matter that allows us to analyze and identify their practices. The analysis focuses on the theoretical perspective and the results and implications suggested by development planning in the rural context, supported by documents published in the most representative public institutions, which made it possible to gather the most important conclusions on the phenomenon under study.

Theoretical Aspects

The formalization of development planning began in the 1950s,

and its technical and operational management is now a specialty. Thus, in the last two decades, they focused on the importance of territorial diagnosis (geographical spaces and their resources) as a starting point for plans generation; territorial diagnoses allow us to understand the problems, and if they are managed in a technical and strategic manner, they undoubtedly contribute to production systems functioning and positively contribute to countries' economies (Rasul, 2016; Allen *et al.*, 2016). In this sense, Kutliyarov *et al.*, (2020) point out that development planning is a mechanism for including the demands and needs of the population in plans and intervention strategies to achieve community development.

Researchers such as Friedmann (1992) define planning as a set of resources involved in the rational construction of future scenarios different from the foreseeable ones, conceived as the way of setting goals and choosing the means to achieve objectives. In the same position, other authors such as Lidon (1999), Boamah (2013) point out that planning is about setting objectives and choosing the most appropriate means to achieve them along with goals for the benefit of a population. For their part, Ife and Tesoriero (2006) point out that planning is a process of permanent analysis and decision-making in favor of public goods users. The definition of development planning still complex due to various existing approaches and their applications (Albuquerque, 2004; Jourcin, 2014). It can be very precise and efficient in the way it is conceived, adopted and applied in planning processes, in situations of certainty and uncertainty, which give States a guideline and objectivity, in the approach to objectives and goals, plans and strategies for intervention in a given population or territory (Saavedra, Castro, Restrepo and Rojas, 2001) cited in Ayaviri *et al.* (2016).

Economic planning emerged after the economic crisis of 1929, and its impetus and implementation after the Second World War. For Admos *et al.*, (2019), researchers addressing the issue of economic planning and appeal to various actor coordination of activities with integration and cooperation, which direct the whole society economic activity, known as economy planning coordination (Rodrik *et al.*, 2004; Kutliyarov *et al.*, 2020). This vision could have a social orientation, given that one of the driving forces behind the plans was the United States, which oriented its activities under the model of

indicative project-based planning - conventional planning; the dissemination of the model was called the Marshall Plan, which was established in the post-war period and its aim was to allocate economic resources to the European lockdown to prevent it from being exposed to economic, social and political problems, and on the other hand, to restore confidence in countries that needed to achieve social and economic stability, as well as to avoid a possible US economic recession due to a lack of markets (Glaeser *et al.*, 2004).

Development planning is gradually being incorporated, accompanied by great researchers and planners who helped in the task of materializing planning in the States, because it was necessary to accompany the search for solutions to the problems of regional economies and to seek economic growth (Hill, 2000). For his part Mesa (2019), recommended that the action of interventions should not be centralizing or authoritarian, but should be based on planning with broad participation of the community; centralized planning should not be applied, but the intervention of the state in the front line is necessary to overcome social differences and inequalities (Fatmariza, 2019).

Latin America is at a juncture characterized by advances in fundamental rights implementation and the quest to deepen democracy, as well as the promotion of citizen participation in social, economic, and political development processes (Kempf, 2003; Aguilar, 2015). Rural communities are no exception in the practice and deepening of policies that favor territories development (Renshaw and Wray, 2004), and these have allowed an open declaration and promotion of their cultures, traditions, and productive economic activity, revaluing the communities' own ancestral knowledge (Hall and Patrinos, 2005; Young, 1995). Therefore, rural community effective membership and development planning systems strengthening emerge as a peremptory task for the consolidation of current development models in Latin America (Alonso and Ponce, 2015). According to Boamah (2013), Galarza (2015), Marat-Mendes (2020), rural communities characteristics present differentiated ethno-cultural identities, which gradually instituted a legal framework for development planning in these territories, which in turn grant powers to strengthen civil society and influence the construction and development planning processes in rural communities.

Development Planning in Rural Contexts

Achieving rural development is not a simple task, as visions of development have changed and change over time and generations (Feher *et al.*, 2012; Paasi, 2013; Losch, 2015; Gameiro and Martins, 2018). Ideas about rural development have been based on two thinking strands; on the one hand, referring to conceptual aspects, the other aspects associated with rural development practice by localities and development actors (Otiman, 2006; Prabakaran *et al.*, 2020). In Latin America, rural development has been oriented towards the fight against poverty, and this fight is permanently led by the governments in power, their institutions and the organizations that act in this area; together with social problems such as exclusion, marginalization, migration, which prevent systematic and continuous development over time, currently with the phenomenon of globalization, the development processes have slowed down or have suffered a break in terms of the search for the social and economic wellbeing of its population. As a consequence of these changes, it is up to the territories and communities to originate and provoke changes in the main actors (Askarov *et al.*, 2019). Most isolated rural communities in developing countries lack adequate planning and, as a result, development processes are incipient or do not have an impact on improving population quality of life (Ye *et al.*, 2013).

The rural environment is one of the spaces that provide the social and economic backbone of a territory, and shape social, economic and environmental cohesion, with local resources defined as its main strength and capital, as well as very strong family nuclei and local organizations, with great challenges in the search for development (Díaz-Puente *et al.*, 2009; Manida *et al.*, 2020). The response to these challenges lies in development planning processes that incorporate development actors and agents, and promote rural development based on policies, strategies and plans aimed at generating changes in realities and new scenarios, through the interconnection of communities and actors, and cooperation and coordination between the population and their organizations (Ashish, 2011; Cazorla *et al.*, 2005; Bosworth *et al.*, 2016).

On the other hand, the rural environment constitutes a heritage that determines the sustainable rural development of the territories, permanence

requires a commitment from its institutions and population based on a development policy aimed at establishing mechanisms that allow changes and transformations of the rural environment and the search for the social and economic well-being of the population (Pourtaheri and Naghavi, 2012; Jahandini *et al.*, 2020; Cousin, 2013; Gibbens and Schoeman, 2020).

One of the main characteristics of rural communities today is the increasing complexity of their social, economic, and territorial structures (Cejudo and Navarro, 2020; Le Bivic and Melot, 2020). This complexity is due to the coexistence of different local producers with different economic and productive activities, with different forms of production and marketing, and different ways of acting and developing. In addition, there are the conflicts inherent to economic and social processes, which determine extremely contradictory situations, such as migration on the one hand and the arrival of new inhabitants from rural communities on the other (Pérez *et al.*, 2009; Shucksmith, 2009).

Is there a need for development planning from rural areas and their communities? In the current context of strong interdependence between territories, it is very difficult to establish boundaries and a single way of life in rural communities (Prabakaran and Muthukumar, 2020; Sisto *et al.*, 2022). Generally speaking, it is observed that there are communities with low population densities, low level of value added per unit area, low proportion of land, predominance of extensive land uses and in many cases, with few job and development alternatives for their population, the latter condition can lead to demographic decline (Gause, 2007; Lapping, 2006; Sisto *et al.*, 2018); are exposed to changes in cities and the versatility of markets, and their own tendency towards low diversification and value-added products; on the other hand, there is a geographical concentration of economic activities and population in a few territorial units, and external disparities in the level of living conditions among the rural population (Pérez *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary to look at rural environments from the planning and development process (Barbosa *et al.*, (2014).

Thus, the issue of development planning from rural communities has been gaining special interest in the search for progress and its territorial transformation (Mu *et al.*, 2020), its importance lies in the concentration of economic activity (Askarov *et al.*, 2019),

demographic and labor aspects (Hanna, 2005), which represent a range of possibilities for establishing development mechanisms from communities that possess enormous capacities and potential for development, as well as solutions to the problems they pose. Consequently, it is also a complex field to approach development planning because the interweaving of endogenous and exogenous factors overlaps even the theoretical approach to planning, given that rural communities have their own distinct identity in relation to others (Morrison *et al.*, 2015; Bulus and Adefila, 2014; Bodorkós and Pataki, 2009). The rural planning orientations from academia, international cooperation agencies and public bodies, is given from different approaches, such as cultural, productive economic activity, environment, social, among others (Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2019); but what are the processes of development planning from rural communities? From a theoretical point of view, the research aims to respond to this concern.

Next, various approaches and elements of planning development processes in rural contexts are presented. They are divided into five clearly different approaches and the postulates emphasize the use of all existing resources in a geographical space, culture, and endogenous knowledge as a territory component, local productive activities are highlighted as the basis for planning, together with natural resources, and finally, citizen participation as an articulating and decision-making element in community development planning. It should be noted that the approach to development planning in rural areas is recent, starting in the 1990s, with the territorial development approach. These planning approaches can be seen and are summarized in Table I.

It is interesting to note the convergence of approaches to a common concern, development planning in the rural context, are not accompanied to the same extent by advances in the urban sphere for example. These positions had as their main object of study, what elements characterize them in the approaches to planning. The results reveal interesting positions that lead to an academic and scientific reflection. Figure 1 shows the five most important elements with which the planning processes are developed. The findings allow us to establish at least five elements that underpin the forms of development planning in rural spaces. Local resources as means that support and contribute to development, conceived as endogenous processes,

TABLE I
APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN RURAL CONTEXTS

<p>Ye <i>et al.</i>, (2013); Gause (2007); Ngah <i>et al.</i>, (2010); Sánchez Escolano, (2015); Aguilar, (2015); Ramos, (2017); Carvajal <i>et al.</i>, (2019); Gibbens and Schoeman (2020); Askarov <i>et al.</i>, (2019); Manida <i>et al.</i>, (2020).</p>	<p>The view and conception as a spatial system of the local resources existing in the territories (goods and services) make up a network of possible uses in spatial planning, considered as the strength of the populations in local activities interventions with a focus on sustainability, but at the same time, there is a lack of precision and depth in addressing global problems, a systemic view of the elements and individuals that inhabit them, which makes it very difficult to assess their value. However, the sum of those involved in the geographical space raises the level of the search for development processes, incorporating all resources in the planning process.</p>
<p>Sisto <i>et al.</i>, (2018); Mukwehvo and Mtapuri, (2014); Marat-Mendes <i>et al.</i>, (2020); Saelzer Canouet <i>et al.</i>, (2019); Sisto <i>et al.</i>, (2022); Bonenberg (2019); Figueiredo <i>et al.</i>, (2004). Mesa (2019).</p>	<p>They present a marked importance of development planning processes based on the culture of rural populations, local knowledge, and practices, which from this, generate scenarios of articulation and integration of resources and development actors, both the vision and its practices would therefore be found in rural communities.</p>
<p>Prabakaran <i>et al.</i>, (2020); Mu <i>et al.</i>, (2020); Marcellus, (2009); Cowell, (2013); Arranz-López <i>et al.</i>, (2019), Fernández-Arroyo <i>et al.</i>, (2017); Barbosa Brandão <i>et al.</i>, (2014); Johannesen <i>et al.</i>, (2019); Sullivan <i>et al.</i>, (2014); Simms <i>et al.</i>, (2014).</p>	<p>The position is that under an exhaustive diagnosis of productive, economic, and social capacities, focused mainly on local productive activities, community development is generated; this would have an important participation in development configuration based mainly on the generation of economic resources as a source of improvement in population quality of life and living conditions.</p>
<p>Morrison <i>et al.</i>, (2015); Manzo and Perkins (2006); Chipeniuk, R. (2008); Valencia-Sandoval <i>et al.</i>, (2010). Bourgoin, J. (2011); Fatmariza <i>et al.</i>, (2019). Hanna (2005); Bar-On and Prinsen (1999); Johansen and Chandler (2015); Bojorquez-Vargas <i>et al.</i>, (2020).</p>	<p>Participatory planning must prioritize poverty eradication, sustainable development promotion, equitable resources redistribution and wealth as fundamental conditions for achieving social welfare. Population, individually and collectively, have the right to participate in decision-making, policy formulation and the management of public affairs. As citizen participation is one of the constitutive elements of democratic life, it implies the active inclusion of the diverse citizen expressions in public life, thus constituting one of the development processes of rural communities as one of the sustainable models, which is why it is a fundamental element in the construction of community development planning processes.</p>
<p>Bodorkós, B. and Pataki, G. (2009); Kutliyarov <i>et al.</i>, (2020); Robles-Algarín <i>et al.</i>, (2018); Bruña-García, and Marey-Pérez, (2015); Bulus <i>et al.</i>, (2014); Hibbard and Lurie (2013); Qu <i>et al.</i>, (2011); Minato <i>et al.</i>, (2010).</p>	<p>Natural resources as a factor in development is present in the classical definition, in the context of increasing production and generating growth, the question arises of the exploitation and management of natural resources required to meet society's needs and how to use them in a sustainable way. Therefore, development planning in general terms is assumed to be based on the use and transformation of resources. They also agree that the wealth generated from natural resources contributes to rural territories and regions development.</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

given that the practice, extraction and production of goods and services sustains and supports the changes in the realities of rural spaces, in addition to the transformations that a rural community may experience. Goods and services probably limited and with certain technological shortcomings, but with ample room, constitute the capital and patrimony with which they systematically seek their development. Incorporation of this element in development planning processes approaches a basic question of sustainability since local resources are available to communities and their use will depend on their management and vision of development.

On the other hand, that capacity and responsibility in the management of natural resources gives rural populations a marked awareness of the

use and administration of resources as the main source of their existence and survival; the identity created around natural resources reflects and shows as a priority in their planning, actions to care for the environment and natural resources, i.e. land, water resources, forestry, fauna and others. The productive capacity based on traditional systems and not necessarily technified, allows on the one hand to keep alive local traditions and practices, which is considered an invaluable intangible value; it also strengthens production and marketing mechanisms at community level, in the concept of alliances or cooperation between families and nearby communities, which undoubtedly strengthens the intrinsic social capital of the territories. The practice of these production systems is therefore of such importance that they are considered

as relevant factors for their planning, thus strengthening their own forms, knowledge, and customs of local production systems.

Citizen participation, exercised as involvement in planning and decision-making processes on local problems, is of special interest in its approach, given that the participation of men, women, youth and children in the analysis of local problems, and consequently the search for solutions, represents an exercise of an endogenous nature, given that local knowledge and the potential for development make up the scenario for the construction of planning, based on the participation of the population, together with their local organizations, as information channellers, opportunities and actions to solve the problems of rural communities.



Figure 1. Elements defining approaches to planning in rural contexts. Source: Own elaboration based on planning approaches in rural contexts by the authors in Table I.

In rural communities, culture and ancestral knowledge are considered as the main basis for development processes; actions in the economic and social sectors prioritize and give priority to these factors that give them their own identity and, consequently, development becomes a way of life based on their culture, practices and ancestral knowledge that guide the course of community planning and their territories.

Conclusions

The research allows us to establish five elements that are linked to the practices of development planning in rural areas, which define the approaches to planning. Local and natural resources, productive systems, citizen participation and culture based on customs and ancestral knowledge, form the appropriate scenarios for building development planning processes in rural communities. While the literature presents these elements as the most relevant, there may be others that can be investigated to complete a full picture of the study phenomenon uncovered by this study.

Local community actors are also highlighted as the main promoters and drivers of development processes, they play an important role as decision-makers and participate in development planning processes, the articulation and action of social and economic organizations, and their community institutions make up a favorable scenario for promoting the development of the territories; on the other hand, the agents of development accompany in a decisive and committed manner when conditions allow for communities development objectives achievement. These agents, such as municipal governments, governors' offices, international cooperation, and other organizations, bring about changes, but not necessarily in the communities' intentions.

Additionally, the study establishes that there are common forms and practices in modes or development planning systems in rural spaces, actors are identified through participation in planning processes, as well as local and natural resources, cultural issue or to some extent productive systems based on endogenous knowledge, their customs and traditions, recognized as their main strength and social capital.

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PLANIFICACIÓN DEL DESARROLLO EN CONTEXTOS RURALES. UN ENFOQUE TEÓRICO

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RESUMEN

La planificación del desarrollo es un proceso de interacción entre actores y agentes del desarrollo, que articula políticas y estrategias en los territorios con el objetivo de buscar mejores condiciones de vida para la población. En este contexto, el artículo tiene como objetivo determinar los elementos de la planificación del desarrollo en el contexto rural, desde una perspectiva teórica y cómo estos van configurando escenarios de desarrollo rural desde una perspectiva de planificación. Para ello, se utiliza la literatura especializada para abordar el fenómeno de estudio a través de una clasificación según un enfoque teórico y las variables priorizadas como base para el desarrollo de las zonas

rurales. La investigación concluye destacando que la visión general que tiene la población rural sobre los procesos de planificación del desarrollo son los recursos locales existentes en el área geográfica, la cultura y los saberes endógenos, junto con la actividad productiva local, los recursos naturales y la participación ciudadana, son los elementos más importantes que se encuentran vinculado a los procesos de planificación del desarrollo en el contexto rural; en cada situación se destacan los actores comunitarios locales como decisores y promotores o impulsores de los procesos de desarrollo, con la participación de los agentes de desarrollo.

RESUMO

O planeamento do desenvolvimento é um processo de interação entre os atores e agentes do desenvolvimento, que articula políticas e estratégias nos territórios com o objetivo de buscar melhores condições de vida para a população. Neste contexto, o artigo tem como objetivo determinar os elementos de planeamento do desenvolvimento no contexto rural, a partir de uma perspectiva teórica e como eles estão moldando os cenários de desenvolvimento rural a partir de uma perspectiva de planeamento. Para tanto, utiliza-se a literatura especializada para abordar o fenômeno estudado por meio de uma classificação segundo uma abordagem teórica e as variáveis priorizadas como

base para o desenvolvimento das áreas rurais. A pesquisa conclui destacando que a visão geral da população rural sobre os processos de planeamento do desenvolvimento são os recursos locais existentes na área geográfica, a cultura e o conhecimento endógeno, juntamente com a atividade produtiva local, os recursos naturais e a participação cidadã, são os elementos mais importantes que são vinculada aos processos de planeamento do desenvolvimento no contexto rural; em cada situação destacam-se os atores comunitários locais como decisores e promotores ou impulsionadores dos processos de desenvolvimento, com a participação dos agentes de desenvolvimento.