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## New approaches to planning and development: the case of Gramalote, Norte de Santander, Colombia\*

Nuevos enfoques de planificación del desarrollo: el caso de Gramalote, Norte de Santander, Colombia

Nouvelles approches de la planification du développement: le cas de Gramalote, Norte de Santander, Colombie

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### Abstract

This paper analyzed the territorial planning of Gramalote in Norte de Santander, Colombia, from the approaches to development planning or territorial development and its relationship with the 2010 disaster. Different approaches to development planning were reviewed from the literature available and in the light of these perspectives; a phenomenological-hermeneutical study with a qualitative approach of descriptive and documental level was carried out, by turning to municipal development plans for the 2004-2007, 2008-2011 and 2012-2015 periods which were the subject of analysis. The results show that Gramalote's territorial planning has been inadequately carried out before and after the 2010 disaster, since it has been supported by an economic perspective characterized by sectoriality and the inability to respond effectively to the main territorial problems of environmental order. The next development plans are expected

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\* The present reflection paper presents an approximation to a research of broader scope Pontificia Universidad Javeriana's Doctorate on Social and Human Sciences as result of a doctoral dissertation on Gramalote, Norte de Santander, Colombia.

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to take into account unattended factors from previous years, given the experienced lived by its inhabitants.

**Keywords:** Disaster, Development, Territorial development, Development planning, territory.

### Resumen

Se analiza la planificación territorial de Gramalote en Norte de Santander, Colombia, desde los enfoques de la planificación del desarrollo o el desarrollo territorial y su relación con el desastre de 2010. Se revisaron los diversos enfoques relacionados con la planificación del desarrollo a partir de la literatura dispuesta y a la luz de estas perspectivas, se hizo un estudio fenomenológico-hermenéutico con enfoque cualitativo de nivel descriptivo y documental acudiendo a los planes de desarrollo del municipio para los periodos comprendidos entre los años 2004-2007, 2008-2011 y 2012-2015, los cuales fueron objeto de análisis. Los resultados muestran que en el municipio de Gramalote la planificación territorial se ha hecho de forma inadecuada antes y después del desastre del año 2010, pues la misma se ha sustentado en una perspectiva económica y caracterizada por la sectorialidad y la incapacidad de dar respuesta efectiva a los principales problemas territoriales de orden ambiental. Se espera que los próximos planes de desarrollo territorial, y dada la experiencia vivida de sus pobladores, consideren factores desatendidos en los años anteriores.

**Palabras clave:** Desastre, Desarrollo, Desarrollo territorial, Planificación del desarrollo, Territorio.

### Résumé

Ce travail analyse l'aménagement du territoire de Gramalote dans Norte de Santander, Colombie, à partir des approches de planification du développement ou le développement territorial et son rapport avec la catastrophe de 2010. Divers approches ont été analysées par rapport à la planification du développement à partir de la littérature disposée prête et à la lumière de ces perspectives, une étude phénoménologique-herméneutique à l'approche qualitative et niveau documentaire descriptif allant aux plans de développement de la commune pour les périodes entre les années 2004-2007, 2008-2011 et 2012-2015 a été l'objet de l'analyse. Les résultats montrent que dans la commune de Gramalote, l'aménagement territorial a été développé de manière inappropriée avant et après la catastrophe de l'année 2010. Elle a été fondée sur un point de vue économique et caractérisée par un plan sectoriel en plus de l'incapacité de répondre efficacement aux principaux problèmes territoriaux d'ordre environnemental. Les plans de développement territoriaux futurs devraient, en considération de l'expérience de son peuple, tenir compte des facteurs négligés au cours des années précédentes.

**Mots-clés:** Catastrophe, Développement, Développement territorial, Planification du développement, Territoire.

## 1. Introduction

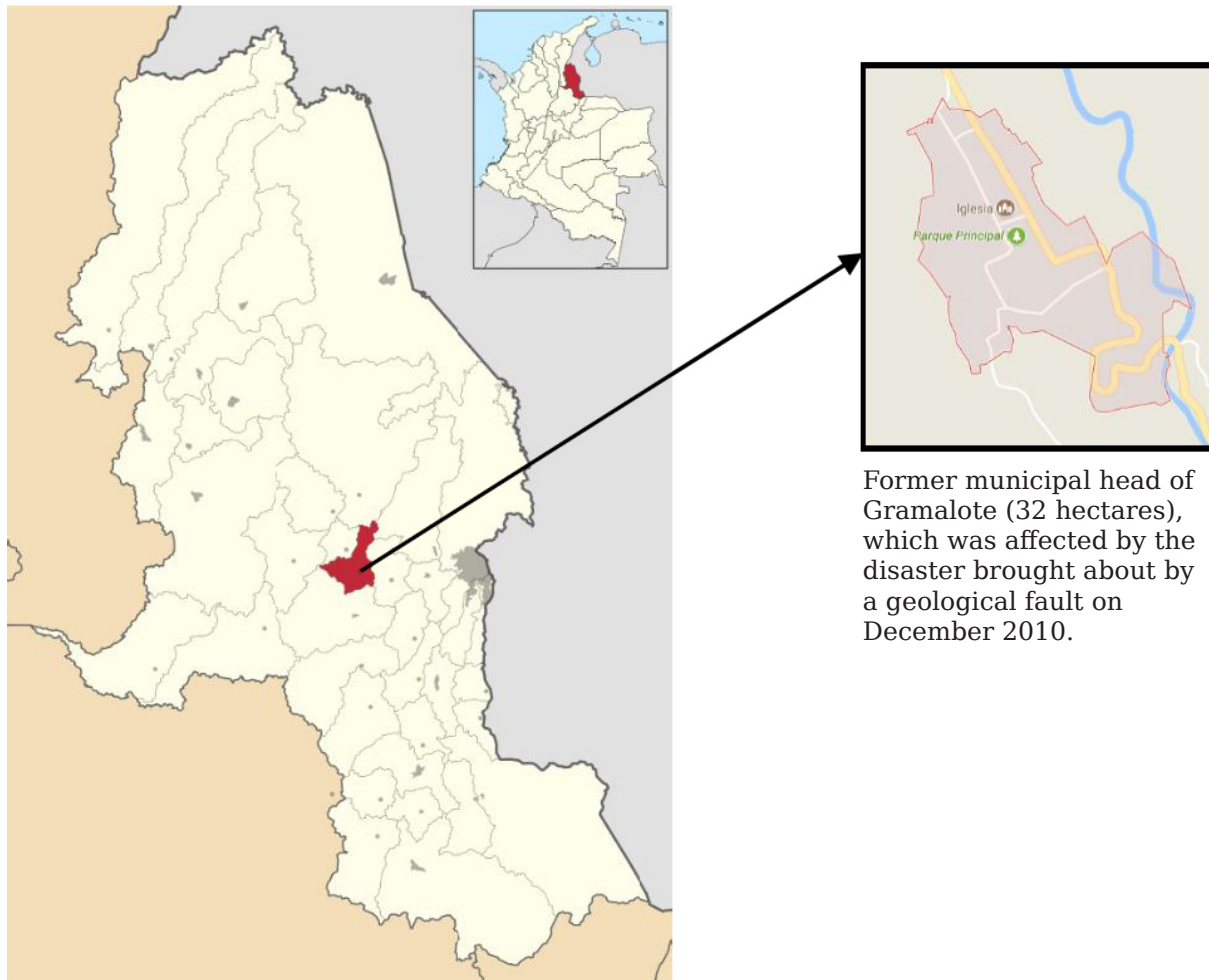
The neoclassical approach to development had its peak fifty years ago, transforming America Latina's productive systems, prioritizing production growth and the economy whose costs were high regarding social inequality, poverty, inequity, economic instability and environmental decay. It was observed that the first theories surrounding development limited their exploration and analysis to societies' economic structures, identifying dynamics, growth options and actions required to boost trade (Esparcia and Noguera, 1999; Gutiérrez, 2007; Ros, 2013; Green and Blakely, 2016).

As a consequence of applying the neoclassical approach to development during the last decades, current societies have borne witness to the significant impacts that have led to the decay of quality live of certain social groups and their exclusion, environmental damage increase and the limiting of the so-called fundamental rights by the market's logic (Schirnding, 2008). With it, other approaches to development have been developed and proposed throughout the past decades in order to deal with the economic approach to development, so as to provide a twist the understanding and interpreting of the process. In any case, these approaches have allowed to open new spaces of discussion and analysis, impregnating other scales of knowledge such as development planning.

The Gramalote municipality is one particular case which has suffered deep transformation throughout the past few years, pointing the 2010 disaster brought about by La niña phenomenon as cause of the forceful displacement of most of its inhabitants towards other municipalities of the department, especially to Cucuta (Figure 1 and 2). However, this paper parts from the idea that Gramalote's disaster and the environmental conflict aren't capable of being explained as an exclusive result of this phenomenon, but requires analyzing the confluence of multiple factors that gave the disaster its origins; one of them being inadequate development planning in this municipality during the last few years.

As objective, analyzing the depth of the last three Development Plans for the municipality of Gramalote, Norte de Santander, Co-

**Figure 1. Location of Gramalote and its municipal head**



Former municipal head of Gramalote (32 hectares), which was affected by the disaster brought about by a geological fault on December 2010.

Source: Author's own elaboration

**Figure 2. Municipal head- Gramalote's central park. Before and after the disaster**



Source: Gramalote's townhall (2017).



lombia, which correspond to the 2004-2007, 2008-2011 and 2012-2015 periods, parting from the approaches and standpoints on territorial development and development planning (Moncayo, 2001; Moncayo, 2004; Furió, 1994). In order to meet the plotted objective, this paper explores, as first measure, development planning as a field of study which in the past decades has promoted new concepts, approaches and perspectives for the analysis and adequate planning of a territory. Afterwards, it will dig into the field of study of development plans at a Latin American scale with the purpose of acknowledging how urgent it is to create new scenarios for the integral analysis of territorial planning. Then, Gramalote's development plans will be addressed; synthetizing advantages and deficiencies thereof regarding the 2010 disaster. Lastly, conclusions will be drawn.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1. The planning of development: conceptualization, approaches and perspectives

Territorial development has suffered a revaluation from the identification of local endogenous factors and the incorporation of a social focus favoring, especially, the most excluded and vulnerable communities (Perry and Lederman, 2005). In light of these ideas, a *down-top* approach has been imposing, which parts from the factors that characterize a territory and sets it apart from the rest so as to plan territorial development from the opportunities and requirements of the populations thereof (Moncayo, 2004; Moncayo, 2001; Furió, 1994).

In territorial development planning several factors must be considered, one of them being the stages that must be filled with the goal of ensuring the effectiveness of the plans adopted and implemented. In this regard, Perry and Lederman (2005) distinguish at least four required stages: 1. Data recollection and analysis on relevant information about weaknesses, potentialities, risks, issues, opportunities and others that facilitate knowing the context and the respective planning, 2. Diagnosing, analyzing and prioritizing key issues, 3. Identifying objectives with a view

to addressing and solving the problems identified. 4. Designing plans, projects and actions under the criteria of implementation, monitoring and feedback. As it is observed, this whole process leads to a set of products- plans, programs, strategies, actions, models, among others- that must at least comply with the criteria of integrality, multisectoriality, cohesion, responsibility, among others. What's important of this task is that local governments promote the development of instruments and tools within the law and regulations at different scales.

From this perspective, development planning breaks development's traditional view, that which equates it to economic growth based on trading (Moncayo, 2004). Therefore, within such agenda other variables or categories arise, related to development of social, cultural and environmental nature. We're talking about new approaches such as human development, sustainable development or neoinstitutional economy which suggest that before scenarios of crisis, alternatives should be different in order to not keep on doing the same (Moncayo, 2004; Schejtman and Berdegúe, 2004). Table 1 shows each one of the approaches and theories territorial development.

None of the approaches or standpoints manages to explain exactly the reason why these differences and disparities are present between regions (Moncayo, 2001; Becerra and Pino, 2005); however, these perspectives lead to new discussions from the socio-political and academic field. For instance, the local is interpreted as a determining factor in the planning of development and for that the territory's characteristics, problems, resources and opportunities must be considered. This way, we're not parting from a generalizable ideal, but from the realities in which populations are found. Likewise, space, institutions, the environmental dimension, social capital and civic social commitment earn a special connotation. What matters is combining approaches in such a way that adequate responses are provided to the issues of the community and its territory (Hudson, Galloway and Kaufman, 2007).

As it is observed, these new elements or determining factors oppose the neoclassical economic perspective and the view of development encompassed in trade growth:

**Table 1. Approaches and theories on territorial development**

Approach or theory	Conceptualization	Determining factors/ new elements
Economic perspective New Economic Geography	From endogenous factors, whether local or territorial, there's disparity among regions in the matters of productivity, economic performance and investment. Within the elements to tend to there's climate, location, closeness to coastal zones and centers of power. Also, within NGE human capital, knowledge, R+D and infrastructure can be found.	Endogenous growth. Agglomeration economies. Human capital. R+D Knowledge.
Economic perspective Competitiveness	Explores nations' capacity to attain stable and progressive sustainability and expansion within international markets and improves their inhabitants' quality life. Said capacity may be concentrated in a certain region or location, establishing there a significant cumulus of economic activities.	Local competitive advantages.
Economic perspective Flexible accumulation or post-Fordism	It's centered in the specialization of localities by industrially organizing SMEs and parting from the cooperation among these, the relationships with the community. It emphasizes on local social and productive resources.	Industrial districts. Innovative environment. Competitive advantage.
Political perspective	It's centered on the State and the role it plays within globalization, phenomenon the leads to the weakening of sovereignty and borders for a greater economic, security and trading exchange. In this scenario, the State is called to regulating and controlling in order to avoid the adverse effects over social groups and territories, and to tend to the population's requirements.	Decentralization. Political, managerial and tax competencies. Development plans. Resource management.
Neoinstitutionalism and social capital	Parts from the opportunities of social capital and from it the civic social commitment that allows for greater growth and development of some regions. Therefrom visible disparities among regions are explained, despite them having norms and regulations alike.	Social civic commitment. Associativity.
Environmental perspective Bioregion	Parts from the set of international regulations in environmental affairs, which demand economic growth without putting humanity's available resources. For territorial development, what's local acquires great relevance since the resources available must be subject to permanent reflection. Taking care and advantage of these resources of common use determine the probability of sustainable development.	Bioregion. Ecoregion.

Source: author's own elaboration from Moncayo, 2004

Against the model of concentrated growth and development from the top, throughout the past few years the autoconcentrated and diffuse development paradigm has been developed based on the productive utilization of local resources. All territorial communities [...] count with a set of resources (economic, human, institutional and cultural) that constitute the potentialities of an area's endogenous development (Furió, 1994, p. 103).

A new paradigm is arising regarding territorial development or planning of develop-

ment, which is characterized by providing a character of local to the processes of accumulation, innovation and forming of human capital, considering territory analysis as a factor that explains regions' development, revaluating the territory as a dynamic active and constantly changing structure, and acknowledging interactions between functional activities and territory (Moncayo, 2004, p. 46). Lastly, it's worth quoting Moncayo (2001) who insists on the urgent necessity for a new epistemology around territories, its determining factors of growth and the manner in

which its development must be planned from a political project.

## 2.2. Study of development plans at Latin-American scale: towards an integral analysis of territory planning

Development plans are instruments or tools used in territorial planning. The analysis thereof allows to recognize the perspectives or approaches to territorial development that have been used in specific locations, which is why the studies performed on the matter include multiple dimensions- political, social, environmental, social capital, among others. In this scenario, studies by Leff (1994), Muñoz (2009), Becerra and Pinto (2005), Salinas (2005), Ortiz, Pérez and Muñoz (2006) and others are highlighted.

At the methodological scale, these works make evident the use of different techniques and instruments to analyze territorial development parting the dialectic relationship between society-territory, since it is acknowledge that rationalities and territorialities built by social groups, determine territorial development (Lira and Quiroga, 2009). Techniques and models that enable territorial analysis for the correct planning and managing of works such as those of Lira and Quiroga (2009), Armijo and Bonnefoy (2005), Armijo (2009), Barton (2009) are analyzed as well.

Ortiz *et al* (2006) analyze institutional changes and the environmental conflict in the Sinú and San Jorge river valley from the neoinstitutional approach, which translates into an interpretation of the institutions present in these territories, namely the rules and manner in which decisions are made and actions exercised. In each of the two cases analyzed by the authors, there is a set of factors determining environmental conflict (logging, low presence of the State, trade agreements, concentration of land, violence, struggles for land, macroprojects, among others) which undoubtedly bear a link to territoriality and development plans.

Within their analysis the authors link formal institutions at their different scales (national, departmental and municipal) and the planning and territory managing capabilities of each one of them, especially those of mu-

nicipal order. The results from this research show that in terms of territorial planning, municipalities see the environmental conflict differently and their actions in that regard are given fragmentarily and uncoordinatedly, thus reproducing and deepening the zone's present disparities.

Like Ortiz *et al.* (2006), other authors address the environmental regard in territorial planning. As such, there are the studies by Leff (1994) and Montes (2000) which address, among other things, the planning of development through the difficult valorization of the environment parting from the role of public policies, the State, the market and civil society.

Also from the environmental perspective comes the research Andrade, Arenas and Lagos (2010) who studied the instruments employed for the territorial planning Central Chile's coast and is compared to environmental fragility units and the risk of a *tsunami*. The results made it evident that over 80% Central Chile's coastal areas displays high and extreme fragility, whose are not acknowledged by instruments of territorial planning especially with regards to "real estate development, industrial occupancy and the needs of protection of fragile zones". The work by Barton (2009) set forth the inclusion of climate change affairs into the planning of cities and regions, an aspect also addressed authors such as Crawford and Davoudi (2009) and Adger (2010).

On their part, Becerra and Pino (2005) analyze the evolution of the development concept in order to apply the approaches raised on the subject to the case of Cuba. The historical analysis carried out by the authors proves there have been important advances from the 1940s when municipalities were given a fundamental role, and whose figure would enable the process of the territorial planning in each historical stage due to the faculties, functions and autonomy bestowed on them; the regulations that would permit interrelating among provinces, municipalities and rural areas and the inclusion of social aspects into the matter of territorial development. However, some limitations have always been present in this process carried out by Cuba, being worth highlighting the lack of resources, excessive financial and economic

centralization, and the absence of a work culture in order to assume decentralization, the lack of technical-professional preparation, as well as the theoretical-methodological documentation necessary for the planning of territorial development.

Also within the Cuban context, Salinas (2005) analyses the situation of Jardines del Rey (Sabana, Camagüey), the most extensive insular system of the Cuban archipelago, from an environmental approach to development. The territorial plans evidence that ordainment and planning of the promoted development have led to unsustainable economic practices at environmental scale, since the filling of coastal lagoons is being affected, the natural relief altered, and the location of oversizing of hotels, excessive logging and the proliferation of dumps in unsuitable locations:

With all certainty this regions is laying the groundwork to develop and notable touristic destination, and this will require more detailed studies about territorial ordainment and managing, as well as the analysis of the social impacts brought about which could stimulate or restrict the future sustainable development of the region (Salinas, 2005, p. 44).

In turn, Farinós, Olcina, Rico, Rodríguez, Romero, Espejo and Vera (2005) study 50 territorial plans of supramunicipal character from Spain with regards to the territorial analysis carried out and the nature thereof. Within their results, it was found that the development plans so not adjust to an integral territorial planning and they basically respond to a sectorial approach due to technocracy, public and private actors' low participation rate in decision making, regulatory logic and a scarce social pact culture or civic commitment which does not permit to meet common interests.

### 3. Method

This study is encompassed in the interpretative paradigm to the extent that it addresses a phenomenon in order to describe it in a deep manner, recognizing its elements and structures for its understanding. It corresponds to a documental research which borne the objective of analyzing the 2004-

2007, 2008-2011 and 2012-2015 Territorial Development Plans from the municipality of Gramalote (Norte de Santander, Colombia) with the purpose of stablishing their relationship to the 2010 disaster. Each one was examined and analyzed in light of the approaches and perspectives of development planning: political, economic, environmental, New Economic Geography (NEG), neoinstitutionalism and bioregionalism perspectives. Previously, a review of the literature related to development planning and its approaches and perspectives was carried out.

### 4. Results and discussion

During the years 2010 and 2011, *la niña phenomenon* affected several municipalities and departments in Colombia to a great extent. In total, 1041 (93%) municipalities of 28 (88%) departments became impacted by the end of 2011's first quarter (Ministerio del Interior y Justicia, 2011). The 2010-2011 in winter wave caused the displacement of 125.000 people, 444 deaths, 524 wounded, 74 missing, and the destruction of thousands of dwellings, crops, roads, aqueducts, etc. (Barajas and Arcos, 2011).

Gramalote was one of the most affected municipalities by the so called *la niña phenomenon*, since it suffered a disaster on account of an avalanche coming from a mountain close to the site, brought on by the telluric movement of a geological fault over which it was located and the constant raining that took place during the autumn-winter season of 2010. The city occupied a territory of 147 km<sup>2</sup> at the hillside of the Eastern Mountain range at 1040 meters over sea level. The last population census of 2010 indicated that the municipality was inhabited by 5900 people of which 2800 lived in the municipal head, presenting around 850 families. The rural population equaled over 50% of the city's inhabitants. In full, Gramalote was divided into 13 neighborhoods (urban area) and 24 administrative sections of the township (rural area).

The terrain of the municipality's location was impacted by constant earth movements originated in the mountain's fractured and creased rocks, additionally to colluvial accumulations (deposits of loose material) that brought on mass displacements. The reasons



of the natural disaster are explained by the terrain's instability product of geological faults, the presence of brooks at the terrain's north and south (El Palo brook and Lagunetas brook) and logging from agricultural activities.

The disaster brought on the population's forced displacement because the site, aside from the destruction it suffered, was laid to uninhabitable conditions, a motive whereby its population was forced to evacuate and move towards Cucuta and other nearby municipalities, waiting for a response from the State and its institutions. Since then, the process for an effective resettlement has not been easy due to multiple factors.

**a. the neoinstitutional and social capital approaches to development plans.** One of the most important approaches to development planning corresponds to the neoinstitutional perspective that enhances the value of civic commitment as a determining factor for disparities elimination (Moncayo, 2004). In turn, the neoinstitutional approach prioritizes citizens' participation in public affairs and its commitment to designing, executing, monitoring and assessing development plans. Social actors' perspective is vital because it permits to identify the rationalities and territorialities built, which define forms of space appropriation and usage.

In Gramalote's specific case, the municipality's Development Plans for the 2004-2007 as well as the 2008-2011 periods, indicate that they are product of several public and private actors' consensus of the municipality. However, throughout the methodology described it is mentioned that only four meetings with the rural population and one with the urban population were useful for territorial diagnosis in both cases. In the design of the 2004-2007- Development Plan, there are further explanations about the methodological process to carry out the diagnosis; yet, for the 2007-2011 Development Plant the German technical agency GTZ and the Parcomun Foundation lent it their support; both organizations work in pro of Colombia's social development.

Without a doubt, the amount of meetings turns out scarce in order to carry out a diagnosis that allows to plan development adequately, namely, the multiple problems af-

fecting territories deserve complex reviews, analyses and interpretations that demand encounters and dialog among private and public actors. It is possible that the interests and problems of some social groups be excluded from the territorial plan.

Regarding strategic planning of the development plans that were analyzed, the one corresponding to the 2004-2007 period is characterized by including an approach where the economic prevails as the basis of progress:

Gramalote will be a sustainable model of progress and wellbeing for the community *with its diversified agricultural activity grounded in agroforestry, its developed touristic potential and industrially initiated*; grounding its development on the principles of participative democracy, social solidarity, efficiency, transparency and liberty ( Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2004).

On the other hand, within the plan corresponding to the 2008-2011 period, its strategic planning displays as a tendency an approach that prioritizes "coexistence, culture, management and sustainable socioeconomic development", where touristic activity prevails. In contrast to the first plan, there is no specific aspect including economic activities and in the second one, the economic topic is restricted to the touristic sector. Likewise, the second plan analyzed converges in a peace approach.

While it's true that both plans (2004-2007 and 2008-2011) point to sustainable development, they display a completely different strategic direction which does not coordinate between a unified mission and vision that may be interpreted within a long term political-democratic project. As such, in terms of strategic planning, it is inferred that the 2004-2007 and 2008-2011 development plans show the own views of the rulers in place at the time.

One of the municipality's main issues at a social scale, already described in the 2004-2007 Development Plan, regards poverty rates. At least 95% of its inhabitants fall within the one and two social stratum, while 5% falls within there and four. As part of the poverty issues, overcrowding was present in a considerable percentage of homes, most of them counted with one room to hold near-

ly five people. Nevertheless, strategic planning in these two plans does not contemplate poverty as an essential element that must be analyzed from their mission and vision.

**b. Development plans' environmental approach.** Regarding water, a resource of common usage (RCU), the municipality did not count with drinking water, so the community turned to different techniques at home to make it drinkable. Likewise, the loss percentage of this RCU was undetermined even though it was thought to be high due to the aqueduct's ample time of use (nearly 40 years). Since the very 2004 plan was warned about the influence of this issue on the soil's stability. Likewise, the *per capita* consumption was higher than 350 daily liters, which surpassed the consumption according to established parameters. The same problem remained in the 2004 as well as in the 2008 Development Plan, which signals that during eight years no measures were taken regarding water's rational and adequate use.

Garbage treatment constituted one of the issues incorporated into the first two development plans. Both documents reported that the non-existence of an integral residue management system affected Gramalote's environment and its natural resources such as water sources:

Local basic sanitation is being directly affected by the conditions generated by some facilities such as the municipal slaughter house which dumps the residues inherent to such activity into the La Calderera water source (Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2004).

There are conflicts among neighbors due to waste water dumping into water currents and the other is used as animals' drinking trough or human consumption (Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2008).

However, despite the aforementioned, the issue remained in both development plans without being effectively addressed through mitigation actions in pro of reducing pollution rates and preserving RCUs.

The town's soils were being negatively affected from several years back and it was due to inadequate use. The 2004 Development Plan included, among other factors, the incidence of overexploitation, overgra-

zing and the usage of burning to clean certain areas. Given the above, it reported the need to develop techniques for alternative agroforest crops and to introduce cropping experiences of high workforce usage so as to avoid damaging soils apt for crops.

These issues are retaken in a broader manner in the 2008-2011 Development Plan:

The search for soils for agricultural practices and uncontrolled forest exploitation has led forest areas to a bare minimum, thus deteriorating related resources and contributing to wetlands disappearance, and unbalancing the local hydrological cycle and generating water scarcity during some periods of the year (Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2008).

What is observed is a problematic sustained in time where authorities have not had the capacity to address it effectively. Following along this line and from a political perspective of development planning, the 2008 Development Plan reports that environmental normativity and regulations have been a factor of low contribution to preserving Gramalote's RCUs and where public entities shield themselves with others in order to avoid responsibilities over the depletion of environmental resources.

Part of the theoretical contributions described in the first sections made reference to the need for territorial planning to address climate change events present in each locality and regions. The 2004 Development Plan made some reference to weather conditions that affected soils and crops drastically. However, within strategic guidelines, climate change events were not taken into account with the purpose of taking on concrete measures in the face of this worldwide issue.

Definitively, the problems presented in the 2004-2007 Development Plan are once again described in the next plan, which makes it evident that flaws, deficiencies, and problems were not adequately addressed. This could be due to several factors: public authorities' disdain the lack of a civil commitment among social groups, the non-existence of strong institutions with new playing rules, development practices strongly linked to economic progress, the scarcity of models or techniques to analyze territorial planning for the

building of serious diagnoses based on valid information, the lack of coordination among public entities and both public and private actors, among others.

Lastly, it is worth pointing out that the 2004 Development Plan timely warned about the progressive decay of great number of dwellings, both in the urban and rural areas. The analysis at the time only characterized the phenomenon, yet it did not establish links with other kind of factors such as soil deterioration, irrational usage of RCUs, environmental damage and climate change. In this regard, instruments like those described by Armijo (2009) and Lira and Quiroga (2009) prove useful to analyze a territorial ordainment displaying multiple problematics and errors at decision-making level.

***c. The 2012-2015 municipal Development Plan: changes suffered by territorial planning subsequently to the disaster.*** On December 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 the disaster in Gramalote had already led to highest-scale havoc and on account of it, the population was forced to move to the municipalities of Norte de Santander. Since 2012 the municipal council of Gramalote approved the municipal Development Plan for the 2012-2015 period named *Commitment with view to change*. Within this plan, its main axis was to maintain togetherness among citizens while returning to their territory took place. Those flaws present in the 2004 and 2008 development plans, now correspond to teachings of lessons learned in current planning:

Amid institutional and community crisis, arises the need to project what happened as an opportunity for organizing, planning and rethinking of the municipality from new dimensions. Namely, a conjuncture is born to believe that it is possible invent once again a renewed city, not only in its structure and form, but in its inhabitants' quality; people capable of coexisting with nature and the environment, accountable for these relationships and convinced that it is feasible to build human and institutional alliances that teach all of us to live harmoniously with one another (Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2012).

What is made clear from the initial reading of the 2012-2015 Development Plan is a change of approach and perspective regarding territorial development in which the envi-

ronmental dimension is prioritized. This environmental approach to development parts from the idea that growth is not limitless just as natural resources aren't either, and that's why sustainable development is prioritized (Moncayo, 2004; Moncayo, 2001). Although this is an highlighted aspect within the current development plan, another type of flaws are also noticed which could obstruct the fulfillment of the proposed strategic guidelines. Two of these flaws are:

Firstly, a top-bottom perspective to development, which does not enable a development parting from the territory's endogenous factors:

Technically and politically accompanying the decisions made at the national scale around the reconstruction of the city, watching over a quick, transparent, efficient and integral process envisioning its reconstruction in a manner superior to the building of dwellings, set as an integral process that validates psychosocial accompaniment, recomposing social fabric and strengthens the creation of family income (Alcaldía del Municipio de Gramalote, 2012).

And secondly, the absence of active participation by all the actors from a neoinstitutional approach where civic commitment is promoted as a determining factor of development. Indeed, participation was left fragmented due to the different municipalities the population was displaced to: 2134 people in Cucuta and 1220 in other municipalities: Bogotá, Bucaramanga, Chinácota, Lourdes, Los Patios, Villa del Rosario, Santiago among others. It should be remembered that the data about the total population before the disaster was close to 6000 people and the data of the current development plan only mentions 3385 people. This leaves out a great portion of the rural area's population which is still located in Gramalote's territory.

While the approach signaled in the 2012-2015 Development Plan was defined as one of *inclusion and equity*, the very moment of the planning has marked a disparity for different social groups: the rural population that is still close to the zone of the disaster and the population displaced to other municipalities, especially to other departments of Colombia. Likewise, at the scale of planning multiple actors are observed to have participated in the 2012 Development Plan (much more than

those described in the previous plans), yet only three meetings were carried out with the participants, which casts doubt on the information collected, systematized, analyzed and interpreted for decision making. Development planning after disasters must especially consider the community's participation in a broad manner, taking into account both beneficiaries and interested parties with the purpose of recognizing local capabilities (Ganapati and Ganapati, 2008).

## 5. Conclusions

The case of Gramalote's development plans shows flaws on the planning that has taken place before and after the 2010 disaster. In general terms, these plans have been characterized by sectoriality and their inability to respond to the main problems of the territory. In each plan environmental conditions proved to be critical and it is possible for multiple factors linked to inappropriate territorial planning to have influenced Gramalote's disaster. Greater civic commitment is lacking, as well as development of new rules to abide by, novelty institutions capable of effectively facing the issues of the population and planning that includes diverse approaches and perspectives about development. Regional analysis techniques may be useful to this task with the purpose of making the most appropriate decisions in pro of territorial development.

It also proves necessary to signal that a review of similar cases must be carried out, considering the factors identified or pointed out throughout this document so as to determine and make evident the existing real commitment towards risk administration in Colombia. Indeed, analyzing cases allows to explore from a practical standpoint the dynamics and tensions present in our country's field of risk management, generating territorial planning alternatives according to the characteristics of each population group. On the other hand, there are other gravely threatened municipalities as is the case of Salgar, Antioquia, where a reading of the issues related to the community's risk is urgent and imperative. The elements and inputs proposed in this paper may be useful to analyze and intervene the problems related to disasters and territorial planning.

In synthesis, this study allowed to recognize that:

- The neoclassical and economic approaches have been prioritized in the municipality's planning.
- Sectoriality prevails within planning.
- Attention to environmental issues found within the plans is scarce.
- There is a clear lack of coherence and continuity between development plans, especially regarding attention to environmental issues. Against this, it must be taken into account that implementation problems are harder to address (Waterston, 2006), and as such special attention must be drawn to this aspect.
- All plans emphasize the lack of civic commitment and citizens' participation.
- A top-bottom approach prevails without considering significant local elements.
- Before future challenges presented by the new Gramalote, considering environmental resources and conditions within planning is recommended; as well as taking advantage of the situation lived by its inhabitants in order to create a collective consciousness that enables greater political and social participation by its population.
- One final point to be highlighted in terms of development planning is the possibility of using different approaches. It's not about giving privilege to one or suppressing another within development planning, but about considering the benefits or opportunities of each one, thus making planning an integrative and significant process.

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