

ANALYSIS OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTEGRATING THE NATIONAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT¹ POLICY INTO COMMUNAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS IN CHILE

ANÁLISIS DE LA PERSPECTIVA DE INTEGRACIÓN DE LA POLÍTICA NACIONAL DE DESARROLLO RURAL PLANES DE DESARROLLO COMUNAL EN CHILE

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22320/07183607.2020.23.42.06>



Este trabajo explora la perspectiva de integración de los propósitos que persigue la promulgación de la reciente Política Nacional de Desarrollo Rural (PNDR) de Chile en los instrumentos de planificación a escala local de las comunas rurales en Chile. Para tal efecto, revisa, clasifica y analiza especialmente los contenidos de cada Plan de Desarrollo Comunal (PLADECO) de un total de 30 comunas rurales en el país. De norte a sur, los PLADECO de estas comunas rurales, se evalúan en función de sus contenidos, de acuerdo con sus fundamentos empíricos, objetivos, conceptos y gobernanza, así como en referencia a sus ámbitos predominantes en materia de desarrollo rural y su articulación con el marco normativo-institucional regional y sectorial. Los resultados aportan importante evidencia sobre la escasa proximidad que tienen los PLADECO vigentes de las comunas rurales con los contenidos de la PNDR (política que integra elementos de la nueva ruralidad y/o desarrollo rural territorial), especialmente desde el punto de vista de su vinculación con otros instrumentos de planificación normativos e indicativos, políticas sectoriales y de su articulación con actores institucionales.

Palabras clave: nueva ruralidad, desarrollo rural territorial, planificación rural, zona rural, política territorial.

This work explores the perspective of integrating the goals that the recent enactment of Chile's National Policy for Rural Development (PNDR in Spanish) seeks at a local level in planning instruments for rural communities in Chile. For this purpose, it reviews, classifies, and above all analyzes the contents of each Communal Development Plan (PLADECO in Spanish) of a total of 30 rural communes in the country. From north to south, the PLADECOs of these rural communes are evaluated based on their content, considering their empirical grounds, goals, concepts and governance, as well as their prevailing rural development areas and their interaction with the regulatory-institutional framework at a regional and sectoral level. The results provide important evidence on the limited proximity current PLADECOs have with the contents of the PNDR (a policy that integrates elements of the new rurality and/or rural territorial development), especially from the point of view of their ties with other normative and indicative planning instruments, sectoral policies and their interaction with institutional actors.

Keywords: new rurality, rural territorial development, rural planning, rural areas, territorial policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Policy for Rural Development (PNDR in Spanish) is a milestone in the goal of assigning value to the contribution of the rural area to the social, economic, and environmental development in Chile. This, on one hand, facing an accelerated urbanization process that has occurred in the regional capitals in recent decades, fundamentally due to a fragility of normative planning instruments and the non-existence of territorial organization instruments that protect rural land (López-Morales, Gasic & Meza, 2012, Vicuña, 2013, Arenas & Orellana, 2019). And, on the other hand, considering the important inequality gaps caused by an economic and social development that favors urban communes over rural ones, that the PNDR itself outlines in its diagnosis.

The Communal Development Plan (PLADECO in Spanish) is defined in Law N°18.695 Constitutional Organic Law of Municipalities, being one of the instruments that municipal administration has for the development of the commune. It must contain actions oriented towards satisfying the needs of the local community and promoting its social, economic, and cultural progress (Ruz, Maldonado, Orellana & Vicuña, 2014; Valenzuela, 2018). Likewise, it must consider citizen participation and coordinate with the public services that operate in the communal area or exercise competence within it.

76% of Chile's communes are rural or have a significant part of the basis of their social and economic development in rurality (PNDR, 2020), which is why the PLADECO is the instrument that currently allows best evaluating the requirements and projecting the pro-rural development projects of the communes, where their inhabitants, public and private players, can come together for a common goal (Orellana Mena y Monte I., 2016). From this perspective arises the question, what is the level of integration of the contents that the PNDR proposes in the PLADECO of the rural communes in Chile? The working hypothesis is that the current PLADECOs of rural communes in Chile have a limited approach to the strategic goals and guidelines that the PNDR proposes, mainly due to the weakness they show in their interaction with the normative-institutional structure that is promoted from the Government's sectorial and regional level.

In this regard, Nieto & Cárdenas (2015) made an analysis about the autonomous Spanish community of Extremadura and the application of the LEADER initiative. This analysis produced variable results regarding the reduction of demographic and socioeconomic differences between

rural and urban areas, despite this being the main goal of these policies. Blanco (2019) prepares an analysis of the main policies for rural development, both in the European Union and in some Latin American countries between 1990 and 2008. Although the application of bottom-up territorial policies is seen, their incapacity to resolve the high levels of poverty is made clear. Valencia-Perafán et al. (2020) take stock of the rural territorial development policies regarding the achievements linked to the dissemination of the territorial approach and to the increase of participative processes, and their limitations related to intersectoriality and multiscale of the implementation processes and the multidimensionality of the expected results. These and other studies (Fernández, Fernández & Soloaga, 2019), have shown that the implementation of rural development policies has a limited field of action and effects. Therefore, this work is transcendental to understand and assess how close or far off this application is from the new rurality and/or territorial rural development in the goals this policy sets out.

The document, aside from the introduction, considers six sections. The first establishes the theoretical framework, where the different authors and cases are analyzed regarding the position of new rurality and territorial rural development. The second includes a section where the case study that considers the territorial distribution of the chosen communes and some sociodemographic characteristics is presented. The third corresponds to the methodology applied, which is qualitative in nature and consists in establishing the level of proximity and consideration of the elements PNDR sets out in the different PLADECO, considering three issues. The fourth presents the main results considering these three issues. The fifth is a discussion based on the results obtained. Finally, the sixth shows the work's conclusions.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gómez (2001) considered that the conception of the rural has relevant consequences for the structuring of public policy, which has been reflected with the current economic hegemony. The change of the industrialization model by the substitution of imports to one focused on the foreign market as of the 1970s, triggered a restructuring of the rural economy in Latin America (Kay, 2007, 2009). The implementation of State-led neoliberalism in several social spheres, opened the door to the new rurality approach (Kay, 2007), as well as important transformations within the rural agents (Blanco, 2019). This approach, adopted from the 1990's by international institutions, became a term in the region to attract international resources. Kay (2009) states

6 See the document of Rural Development National Policy: <https://www.diariooficial.interior.gob.cl/publicaciones/2020/05/05/42647/01/1757299.pdf>

how this concept is typical of Latin America, highlighting it as a richer term than others developed in Europe and North America at the end of the 20th and start of the 21st century, like the comprehensive rural development of Shucksmith (2010). However, its fragmented definition lies in this richness, as it became an umbrella concept that refers to any new productive or economic element in rural areas or any issue that has not been studied at length before. Gómez (2001) assures that this new rurality actually has been around for several decades, so the concept of the “new” is questioned. He actually outlines that in recent years, a reality that had been previously ignored has been more thoroughly observed.

The territorial and planning development approach allows valuing what is new in rurality. The previous approach was predominantly dichotomic, agrarian and productive (Sepúlveda, 2008), related with what was not modern and presented in contrast to the overvaluation of the urban as a guarantor of wellbeing (Gómez, 2001), without considering other urban-rural relations and transformations. Therefore, the new rurality (Gómez, 2001; Kay, 2009) and territorial rural development (Sepúlveda, Rodríguez, Echeverri y Portilla, 2003; Sepúlveda, 2008, Valencia-Perafán et al., 2020) is presented as a broader, more diverse concept, that considers elements based on technological modernization, productivity and economic diversity, reduction of poverty gaps and territorial inequality, environmental sustainability, gender equality, revaluation of the countryside, its culture and identity, decentralization and new institutional agreements. Recently, Fernández, Fernández and Soloaga (2019), understand the rural as a space that is traversed by relevant transformations, including economic-productive diversification, with ever less agricultural weight, greater interaction with the urban, with a greater territorial multifunctionality and a population that is culturally closer to the contemporary urban paradigm. In this sense, they mention rural territorial development as a response to solve rural poverty, being key to understand this already more diversified context, and even proposing changes to improve the conditions of the rural areas through a production and institutional transformation process. For Blanco (2019), the new rurality gives a relevant character to the territory, understanding it as the space for the interaction and cooperation of the different projects to improve the quality of life, including institutional reforms that allow a more democratic and representative governance of present needs. Thus, new elements and conditions are promoted for a greater local governability, prioritizing endogenous initiatives, innovation, competitiveness, and social capital. This “bottom-up” approach, contrasting greatly with the “top-down” centralist action, has been incorporated in one way or another by several of the region’s governments, along with different international organizations, including Chile with the recently passed PNDR. However, its application at a local level is unknown due to the lack of regulations that can govern over these territories. Fernández, Fernández and Soloaga (2019) acknowledge that one of the most complex challenges is giving the center stage

to local territorial players, including the institutionality, the instruments they have, and their coordination with others from a higher level. For this reason, the need arises to study the existing rural development planning, with PLADECO being the available and closest instrument to address this paradigm.

An example of the implementation of the new rurality and/or long-standing rural territorial development is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that emerged with the European Economic Community in the post-war period (Blanco, 2019). Although its initial goal was to protect and support food production, from there it has evolved towards the aforementioned approach. It includes granting help to unfavored areas in matters of agricultural production, promotion of economic diversification, and even attention to the population and heterogeneous activities with a territorial and multisectorial-based approach. More recently, it has gone for reforms of community rural development policies, with plans designed based on the characteristics of each area, including the participation of local players, as well as incentives for diversification, innovation, adoption of environmental measures and improvements in terms of production quality. One of the programs that stands out under the CAP is the LEADER program (Sepúlveda et al., 2003, Nieto & Cárdenas, 2015, Blanco, 2019), which is a comprehensive development model with an endogenous territorial approach, focusing on economic diversification, sustainability, valuation of natural and cultural heritage, promotion of employment and quality of life, starting from projects with decentralized financing.

According to Blanco (2019), a duality of rural policies is seen in Latin America, with the first focused on export-based agricultural production, and the second on rural development, with an emphasis on reducing poverty. In Mexico, already in the 2000s, the role of the countryside was recharacterized within the country’s development, acknowledging the structural difficulties based on how far behind and stagnated it was (Torres & Delgadillo, 2009). In fact, it is suggested that, in order to ground the intentions to plan rural development, a comprehensive, territorial and sustainable approach must be adopted, going beyond the sectorial vision (Valencia-Perafán et al., 2020). In Costa Rica, four core concepts were defined to cover the rural sector starting in the 1990s: production reconversion, improvement of living conditions, institutional modernization and strengthening of human resources (Blanco, 2019). This implies policies destined to support large non-traditional export producers, small traditional producers, and other vulnerable sectors. In Argentina, according to Noguiera, Urcola & Lattuada (2017), rural development in the last twenty years has been characterized by a correction of the lack of coordination between the players of associated programs, together with a shared vision with production and recovery-based goals. Due to the context of food poverty and security linked to small-scale farming production, the need was seen of considering rural development and family-based agriculture in the political

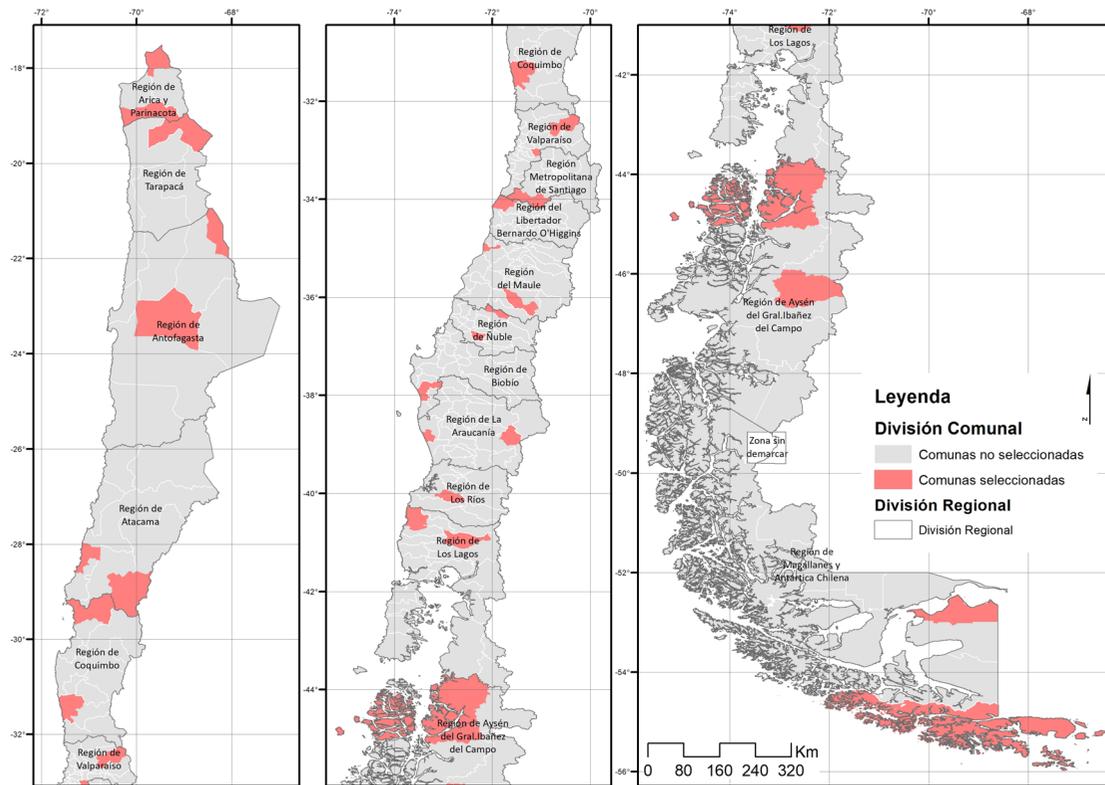


Figure 1. Map of communes selected to assess the PLADECO instrument. Source: Own preparation based on information from the Chilean Undersecretary of Regional and Administrative Development.

agenda, leading to a long-term participative strategic planning. In Peru, following Valencia-Perafán et al. (2020), rural territorial development was seen as an opportunity for local communities to connect to other markets, mainly integrating tourism activities, identifying territorial assets to take advantage of them in competitive and productive terms.

From a global analysis, Rudel and Meyfroidt (2013) instill the debate of the optimal use of rural land with regard to food sustainability and maintenance of ecosystem services. They highlight the rural territory planning and the many players involved in the issue, but state that they diverge in terms of the

different uses that they can be given, calling it an “organized anarchy”. The production owners, investors, indigenous peoples, environmentalist organizations, among others, dispute the reasoning and action to define the different uses in rural areas that are in constant dispute. The underlying response is a comprehensive planning that considers all points of view, thus defining the multiple vocation of the rural territory. This element agrees with Heike Johansen and Lund Chandler (2015), who state that rural planning can benefit from the participation of different agents upon institutionalizing knowledge and competences, structuring criticism and undermining particular goals.

7 The following documents were checked for this task: Communal Development Plan of Alhué 2014-2020, Communal Development Plan of Alto del Carmen 2016-2020, Communal Development Plan of Bulnes 2015-2018, Communal Development Plan of Cabo de Hornos 2012-2017, Communal Development Plan of Camarones 2017-2021, Communal Development Plan of Camiña 2012-2016, Communal Development Plan of Canela 2009-2013, Communal Development Plan of Cañete 2015-2020, Communal Development Plan of Cisnes 2018-2028, Communal Development Plan of Colchane 2015-2018, Communal Development Plan of General Lagos 2013-2017, Communal Development Plan of Huasco 2019-2022, Communal Development Plan of La Higuera 2014-2017, Communal Development Plan of Licantén 2008, Communal Development Plan of Lituèche 2018-2022, Communal Development Plan of Longaví 2017-2018, Communal Development Plan of Melipeuco 2016-2020, Communal Development Plan of Navidad 2016-2019, Communal Development Plan of Niquén 2008-2015, Communal Development Plan of Ollague 2019-2024, Communal Development Plan of Olmué 2016-2020, Communal Development Plan of Pallaco 2015-2019, Communal Development Plan of Primavera 2014-2018, Communal Development Plan of Puerto Octay 2016-2020, Communal Development Plan of Putaendo 2016-2022, Communal Development Plan of Río Ibáñez 2012-2018, Communal Development Plan of Saavedra 2014-2018, Communal Development Plan of San Juan de la Costa 2012-2017, Communal Development Plan of San Pedro 2018-2021, Communal Development Plan of Sierra Gorda 2011-2016

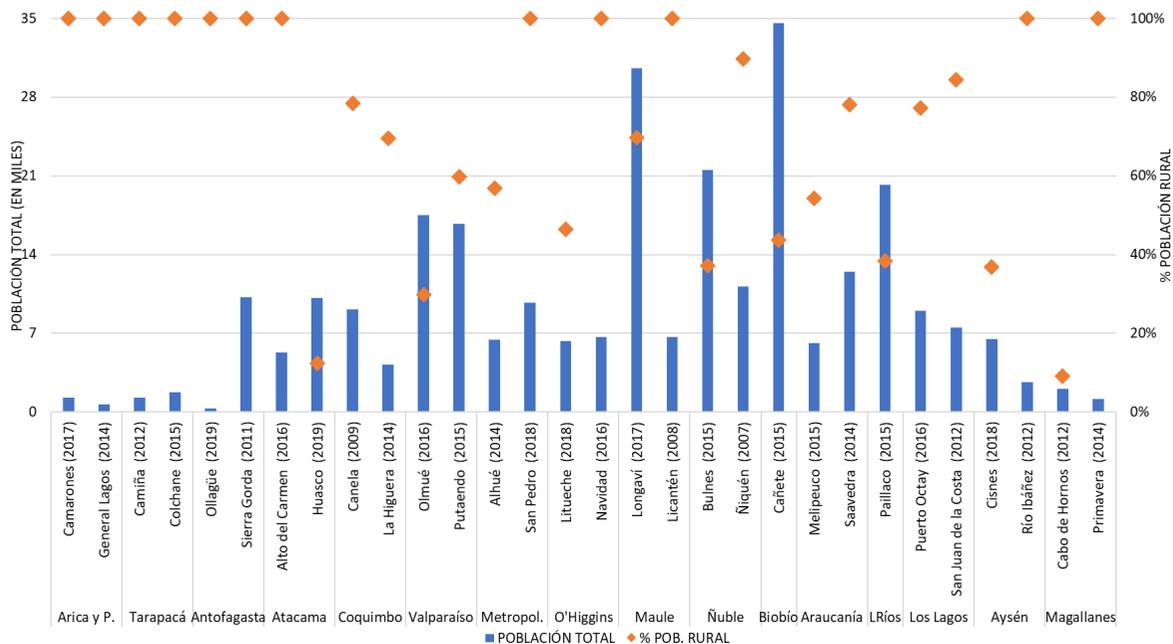


Figure 2. Communes chosen to assess their PLADECOS and population statistics. Source: Own preparation based on the 2017 Census.

In Chile, the recent PNDR has taken place within a process of decentralization and strengthening of regionalization driven by the passing of Law 21.074, with the complexities that implies the non-existence of a National Territorial Organization Policy (Arenas & Orellana, 2019). This is another sign of the resistance of the country's normative-institutional framework to progress towards a greater autonomy of regional and local governments in territorial planning (Marshall, 2019; Orellana Arenas, Marshall & Rivera, 2016). Chile currently has low decentralization levels at a local scale, mainly in state matters compared to other OECD countries (OECD, 2014; Balbontín, Escobar y Seemann, 2017; Horts, 2018), a situation that restricts a great majority of the municipal governments to sustain a suitable supply of public goods and services (Orellana & Marshall, 2017), weakening multiscale governance (OECD, 2017; Henríquez, 2020). In Chile, important territorial disparities are seen, that have been occurring for decades (Aghón et al, 1998; CEPAL, 2017), where even the regionalization processes fostered in the last twenty years have not achieved substantial changes (Rehren, Orellana, Arenas e Hidalgo 2018; Marshall, 2018). An underestimation of rurality in Chile from a territorial point of view can be added to this (Berdegué, Jara, Modrego, Sanclemente y Schejtman, 2010), with the country being much more rural-based than what tends to be assumed. In this sense, the PNDR is an opportunity that must be taken advantage of to

allow guiding and supporting the development of local territorial planning.

III. CASE STUDY

The political-administrative division of Chile at a local level comprises 346 communes. According to the definition laid out by the PNDR, 82 of these communes are classified as urban, 185 rural and 78 mixed (the commune of Antarctica is not classified). To develop the methodology, 30 rural communes are chosen (Figure 1), two for each region of the country (with the exception of two regions), considering their rural population percentage as per the 2017 census and the availability of the PLADECOS. This selection is established to obtain a qualitative diagnosis of rural development, considering the Chilean territorial diversity.

The location of the communes chosen is seen in Figure 1. While, in Figure 2 the total population and rural population percentage following the 2017 Census are outlined. Finally, the percentage of the population in income and multidimensional poverty is seen in Figure 3. Figures 2 and 3 show, from left to right, the north to south geographic localization, indicating the region they belong to. Both in the territorial distribution and in the demographic and poverty variables, a notorious diversity of rural realities can be appreciated.

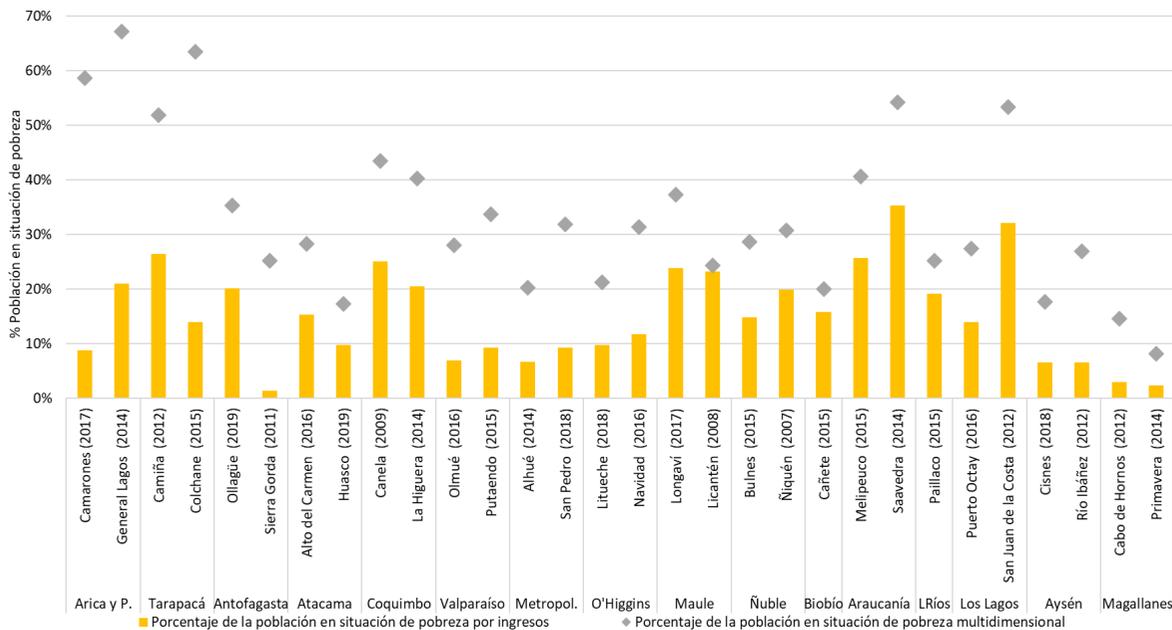


Figure 3. Communes chosen to assess their PLADECO and statistics of the percentage of the population in income and multidimensional poverty. Source: Own preparation based on information from the Social Development Ministry.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative analysis method consists in establishing the level of proximity and consideration of the elements listed by the PNDR in each PLADECO. The method is divided into three issues:

- **Content analysis:** this refers to the empirical grounds that the view of the state and the rural development projection are based upon, as well as the conceptualization, a possible description of the vision or target image, and its governance. The latter, in terms of the acknowledgment and involvement of the players responsible for rural development. For this block, contrasting each instrument with the revision of the following sections of the PNDR was considered: Diagnostic elements; Definition of the rural territory and new rural paradigm; General goal; Principles and Governance.
- **Prevailing approach on aspects:** this refers to the explicit addressing of goals, guidelines and actions referring to the different aspects of rural development. For this block, it was considered to contrast each instrument with the four aspects, as well as their core concepts and guidelines defined

by the PNDR: Social welfare; Economic opportunities; Environmental sustainability and Culture and identity.

- **Cross-referencing:** this refers to the interrelation the instrument specifies with other planning instruments like: the Regional Development Strategy (ERD in Spanish), which has a large-scale indicative-productive approach; the Regional Urban Development Plan (PRDU in Spanish) that guides the development of the region's urban centers; the Intercommunal Regulation Plan (PRI in Spanish) that regulates the physical development of the urban and rural areas of the different communes that form an urban unit; the Communal Regulation Plan (PRC in Spanish) that regulates the urban physical development of a single commune; sectorial policies, which are implemented at a national, regional or communal level; or institutional references, that is to say, to other public organizations. The analysis focuses on the instrument itself and not on the text of the PNDR, but shows the importance of the institutional integrity that is set out in rural development.

The evaluation method had some special considerations by topic, based on an assigned score. For the topic of *Content analysis*, the following qualification criteria were chosen: 3 points for "matches", 2 for "somewhat matches", 1 for "matches little", 0 for "does not match" and -1 for "contradictory". For

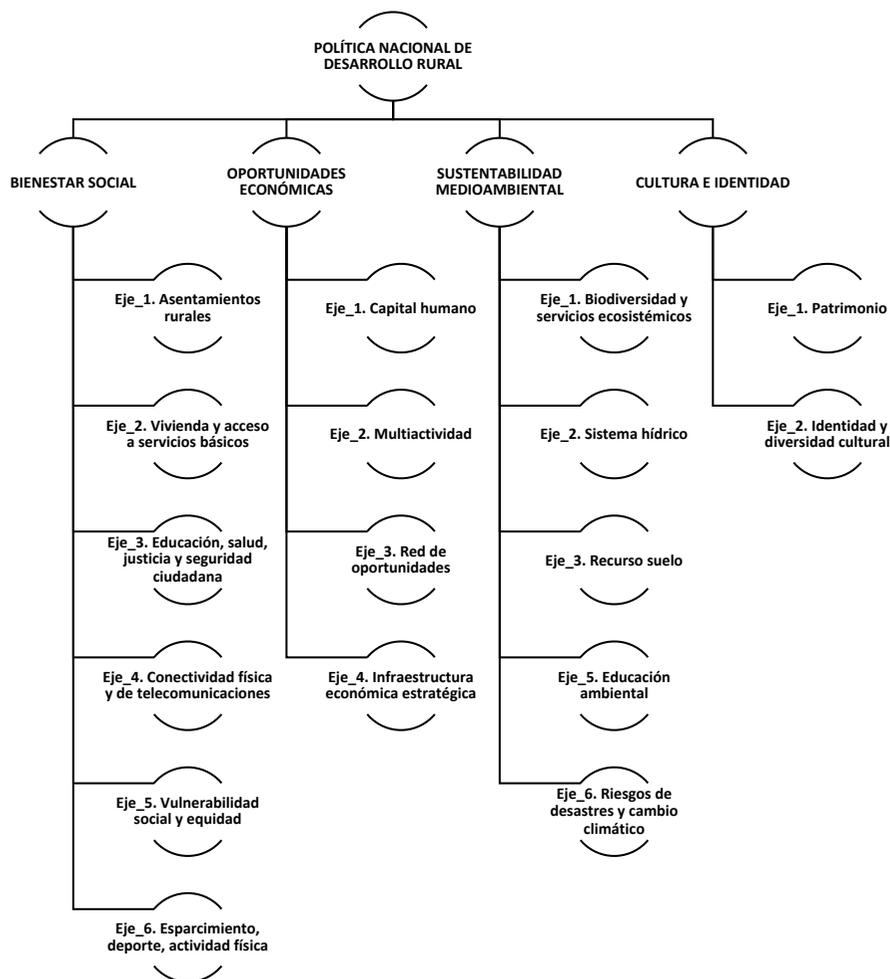


Figure 4. Aspects and core concepts of the PNDR. Source: Own preparation based on the PNDR.

the second topic (*Prevailing approach on aspects*), it was decided, pursuant what was stated regarding each one of the four PDNR aspects and their core concepts (Figure 4), to take on an estimation of the percentage spread compared to that of greater or least emphasis, with the total percentages of the four aspects together totaling 100%.

Finally, in the third block, referring to *Cross-referencing* and that considers the aforementioned three criteria, the following scoring was chosen: 3 points for “total”, 2 for “partial”, 1 for “limited” and 0 for “none”.

V. RESULTS

In this section, the results regarding the contents, approach and cross-referencing of the chosen PLADECOS are revised and analyzed.

Content analysis

Within the content analysis of the PLADECOS, the empirical grounds, the definition of the concept, the goal and the governance for rural development were assessed, elements that are shown in Figure 5.

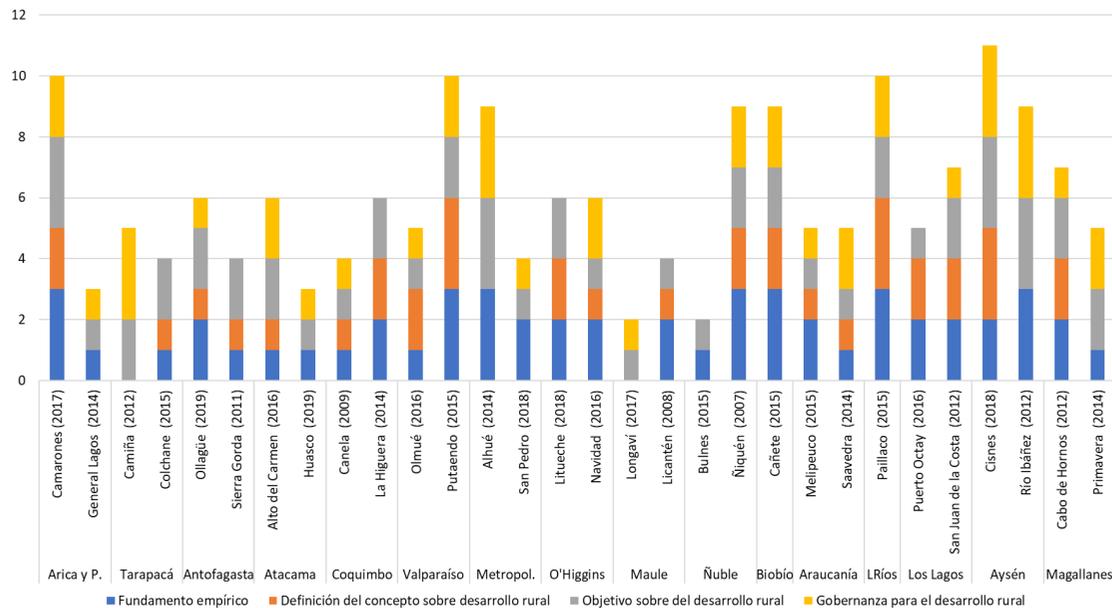


Figure 5. Results of content analysis in PLADECO. Source: Own preparation.

In the empirical grounds, an acknowledgement of rurality's lagging behind is seen in the PLADECO, which is expressed in a match of 58.9% (53 of 90 possible points) with the PNDR, where there is a narrative that is connected with the new production and economic approaches, especially with rural tourism and renewable energies. In addition, diverse problems are acknowledged, mainly those related to environmental conservation, climate change and water shortage. A certain territorial trend is seen on having a lower match in the PLADECO of the country's northern communes, with some exceptions.

In the definition of the concept on rural development, a lower match with the PNDR was obtained (40%, 36 of 90 possible points), mainly in the north of the country. Although in some PLADECO they present themselves as rural communes, only in a few, is the approach that the new rural paradigm has, explained. Most of the communes, particularly in the north and south zones, have a low match with this statement, on tacitly acknowledging the concept of rural development. Overall, the southernmost area is much more aware of the concept and goals of the new rurality.

Regarding the goals on rural development, a similar match to that obtained for the empirical grounds was

attained (57.8%, 52 of the 90 possible points). Initially, the importance of sustainability is acknowledged. In some, territorial diversity is recorded, validating the existence of towns with extensive rural surroundings, as well as the multiple activities there are. Something similar happens with the integrality and participation of public institutions and society players, which on occasions are organized. The territorial competitiveness and efficiency are the most developed, mainly due to the productive vocation of the rural areas. This is accompanied by the dependence on resources and institutions that have attributions over the rural environment. Finally, identity is also relevant, with traditions, cultures and indigenous peoples standing out.

The governance for rural development saw a match of 44.4% (40 of the 90 possible points), given that it is not set out as a cooperation between sectorial institutions or as a cross-section approach in most cases. In some PLADECO, this issue is not clearly explained and is limited to building a locally focused municipal management action aspect, supported by regional instruments, but not by institutions on other scales. In other words, the institutional structure is locally supported, with self-administered follow-up systems that tend to fall in line with the PNDR and the sectorial and regional plans.

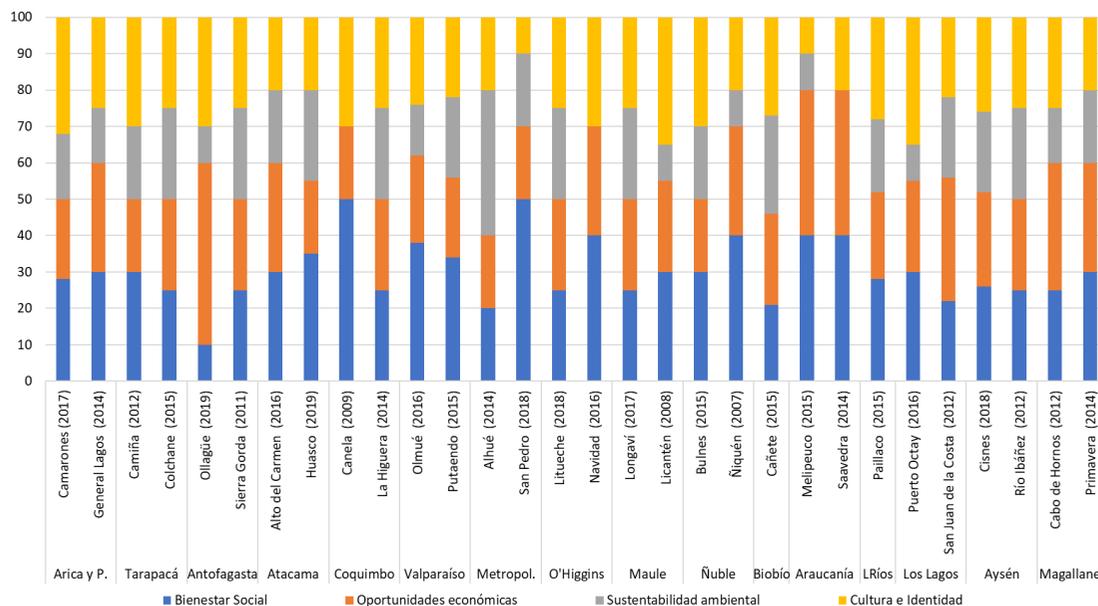


Figure 6. Results of the prevailing approach on aspects in PLADECO. Source: Own preparation.

Prevailing approach on aspects

In a second stage of the PLADECO analysis (see Figure 6), the actions proposed in the action plans of these instruments are compared with the aspects, guidelines and goals that the PNDR proposes. As was already mentioned, a percentage of 100% is distributed between the aspects in such a way that a higher percentage was assigned to those that were best represented by the proposed actions.

Figure 6 shows that the core concepts of the policy that are expressed in the PLADECO, mainly referring to the actions linked to the areas of Social Welfare (30.2%), Economic Opportunities (27.1%) and Environmental Sustainability (25%), and to a lesser extent, Culture and Identity (18%).

Social Welfare, with the highest percentage among the aspects, is explained by the higher amounts in human and economic resources of some of the directions that the institutional structure of the municipalities comprises, given that they all have a Community Development Direction that includes the departments of education, health and sport. Therefore, it is not strange that most

PLADECO generate actions related to vulnerability, social equality, and housing. Likewise, it is seen that similar issues related to Social Welfare in the PNDR, like timely and efficient access to justice, are not present in any PLADECO.

As for the aspect of Economic Opportunities, the measures related to training and provision of economic knowledge to the population are repeated. In addition, actions destined to identify and foster particular aspects of the communal production are proposed, although they never outline the development of certifications such as denominations of origin or collective labels. On the other hand, the PLADECO studied did not propose new financing options other than the traditional ones, either.

In Environmental Sustainability, several PLADECO refer to environmental issues like the contamination of natural elements or water shortage. However, these concerns do not lead to concrete actions. The most repeated initiatives are the development of programs on environmental education and caring for water, compared with those that are least mentioned, like the studies, monitoring and recognition of the biodiversity and ecosystem services, conservation and recovery of the soil resources, and measures for disaster and climate change risks.

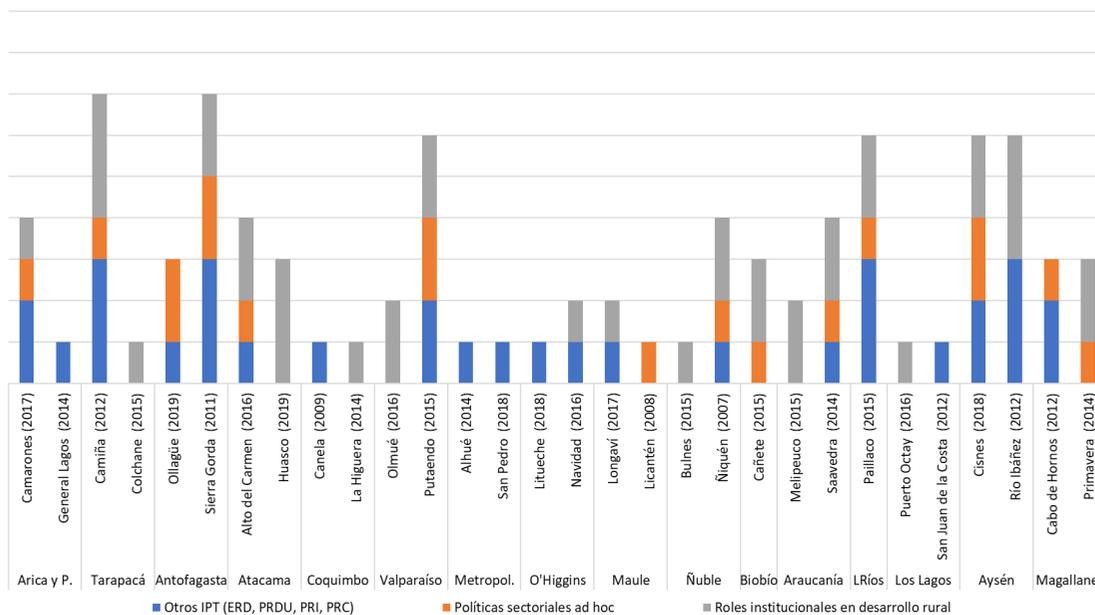


Figure 7. Results of cross-referencing in PLADECO. Source: Own preparation

Finally, in Culture and Identity, the most repeated actions are related to the recovery and recognition of country life and indigenous cultures, usually related to the education and economic development of communal tourism. In general, the results in this aspect show a recovery of the sociocultural specificity of the territories regarding the goals and guidelines the PNDR outlines. Finally, the territorial differences by area are not significant or conclusive in the results for this and for any previous aspect.

Cross-referencing

The strength of PLADECOs, in terms of their interaction with other planning instruments, public policies and institutional players that have an impact on local territorial development and the rural development of communes, is presented and analyzed as of Figure 7.

In this regard, it is seen that only 35.6% (32 of the 90 possible points) of the PLADECO establish some references to other instruments, with the most significant being the ERD, and with almost none with the PRDU and PRI, as many of these communes are not regulated by these two instruments. Most of the plans do not link their proposal with regional goals, at least not directly,

so it is not possible to recognize how the ERD permeates to the actions of the PLADECO. In the case of normative instruments, the few mentions are related with communal PRC, although this is understandable as these mainly regulate urban areas.

Regarding sectorial policies, only 20% (18 of the 90 possible points) of the PLADECO explicitly acknowledge ties with one or more sectorial policies that have an influence in the definition of actions for rural development. In this respect, few plans mention at least one policy their actions are linked to and most do not make any type of cross-referencing. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that sectorial policies are key documents in the definition of local actions for territories, as they provide the State's framework of action in independent matters with a direct impact on rural development.

As for the institutional roles in rural development, this aspect has the highest valuation. 42.2% (38 of the 90 possible points) of the PLADECO mention the interaction with other players, especially in terms of sources of financing. Despite this, a little under a third of PLADECO do not identify institutional responsibilities outside the councils, a matter reflecting that, in their formulation, an

analysis about the plan's governability is not incorporated in terms of institutional roles that should guide and support their execution.

VI. DISCUSSION

The analysis made reveals the effects of the prolonged non-existence of a comprehensive rural public policy framework in a local scale planning. The historic trend towards the shared action of diverse institutions on rural territories, although it has helped achieve great progress in matters like irrigation, drinking water and forestry and farming production, has been developed outside of a comprehensive view. This is established in a framework of governance that does not link the different sectors and levels of public policy that address historically acknowledged rural problems. Likewise, other issues which have gained relevance in recent times (like sustainability and environmental conservation), have yet to find a powerful hold on municipal planning. In this sense, the PLADECO establish some links with emerging narratives about economic diversification, but lack, in their majority, a clear conceptualization and diagnosis about their rurality and the different existing problems. On the other hand, the operationalization of their action plans, in general appear to be outside a coordination with public and private entities that have an influence on rural development.

Without a doubt, the country's centralized layout has contributed to this, considering the significant gaps between councils to implement a comprehensive planning. The lack of mentions to specific aspects of rural territories reveals a concentration of efforts on urban spaces, or rather, an invisibility of socio-territorial differences inherent to rural councils. The contributions of the PNDR, that frame the key issues for a new rural view, must be visible in communal planning with the incorporation of clear development goals and directives. This means a greater effort to be integrated by the municipal level with support of regional and national levels, as difficulties of intersectorial and interlevel coordination still act as an obstacle for this new paradigm.

Thus, the strengthening of the PLADECO as a planning instrument for rural territories requires an internalization of the diversity of socio-territorial manifestations, guaranteed by a systematic implementation of the PNDR goals in their formulation. Alongside this, the interaction of the different sectorial instruments and policies must be aimed for in a common vision of rural development.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The PNDR, by their strategic nature, specify operationalizing their goals through local-scale instruments, where the interests of the different players whose actions influence the social, economic and environmental development of the rural areas, converge. The PLADECO constitutes the main instrument for this purpose in rural or mixed communes. However, from the results obtained, it is confirmed that most of these are far from integrating well what this policy intends.

The limited interaction of the PLADECO with sectorial policies and regional and national planning instruments, as well as the limited accuracy about the role of different institutional players, weakens this instrument regarding attaining the objectives of the PNDR. However, given that in rurality, the normative-regulatory framework is more fragile to protect changes in land use and that there is less autonomy of budgetary resources in the councils, the PLADECO of rural communes needs to match more closely the challenges that the PNDR outlines.

Facing the limited regulation of urbanization processes in rural areas, and the lack of a national territorial organization framework, the PLADECO is the most viable alternative to incorporate and integrate the current challenges of rural territorial development. Thus, as they require synchronizing with the elements proposed by the PNDR, they also need to strengthen their capacity to diagnose the particular aspects of their rural spaces and to integrate them in their action plans, and to combine these with the intercommunal and regional challenges, showing the different levels and scales of action.

Although the results obtained do not reveal significant differences in the approach of the PLADECO among the large macrozones of the country, it is necessary to consider the territorial production contexts of these plans. The municipal technical capacities, the lagging economic conditions, the structural isolation, and the indigenous component are key differentiating factors for the implementation of pertinent instruments and policies, sensitive to the country's rural territorial diversity.

In summary, the results of this work contribute towards determining the vacuums and gaps PLADECO currently have to become the governing instrument for local development in rural communes, outlining the contents of the PNDR that could be more urgently visualized and integrated in the future.

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