

Territorial agreements and disagreements. Reflections on tri-border governance

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This text represents an effort to think and show the relations that link the territorial development with territorial planning, management and governance. The main problem identified consists in the low levels of quality of life and the meager development prospects of the population on the study area, which arise from a fragmented, inefficient and ineffective planning and land management process that contributes to the destruction of the natural environment.

The study object is the area composed by the Amazon tri-border between the towns of Iñapari (Peru) Assis Brasil (Brazil) and Bolpebra (Bolivia). Our objective of study is to bring a new understanding of the planning process and management from the perspective of territorial governance, in order to establish the main guidelines for the development of a tri-frontier territorial governance model that contribute to improve the management and the increase of standard life quality of local people.

Our hypothesis considers that the current territorial dynamics stimulate a disordered urban growth – in the future it will be a tri-border international conurbation – which expressively accentuates the problems related to social and environmental degradation, common in border cities. We believe that the territorial development must be planned and managed from an integrated approach, passing over national borders, and considering the Amazon territory as a unit – even more in the case of the Acre

River basin which has a high biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, some are even endemic. Consequently, it is necessary to establish integrated forums and mechanisms of governance for tri-border. Therefore, we discuss the creation of an international city, which incorporates the three mentioned towns.

The methodology used is aligned to the classic strategic planning proposal, rescuing the competitive aspects of territory, as well as the establishment of a logical trend scenario, built for the area. Our approach favors aspects of environmental conservation, land management and job creation. In this sense, the implemented strategy is based on comparative analysis of public policies, which are addressed through different scales of territorial analysis. So we used primary and secondary sources of information.

We start with the definition of concepts that allow a better understanding of our proposal, such as border and governance, in order to propose guidelines for an integrated territorial management. The elements that connect one point to another are framed in the processes of climate change and globalization, and discuss, on the one hand, the role of networks in the optical change of the State and populations related to borders and limits.

On the other hand, territorial development will depend on the institutional construction and its implications on the formation of citizens and social capital for their participation in development processes. In that sense, we consider necessary to identify and promote innovative territorial systems, understanding and activating local mechanisms of development processes, understanding how the local alliances work and which local actors are the principal players.

Finally, it should be noted the importance of the relationships and the social ties already established, because they are the most precious good of society. It is necessary to give special emphasis to the creation of tissues designed to support, encourage and nurture social ties, promoting interaction between people. Such environments should promote the balanced development of border communities with a sense of belonging to the place. This feeling, that translates into territorial identity, is fundamental for a long-term sustainability of territorial governance.

The results of our research – specific strategies for planning and management – were presented to the tri-border local governments, so they will serve as inputs for the formulation and management of their respective development plans, through the strengthening of integration processes to become more territorial competitiveness with environmental conservation.