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► **To cite this version:**

María Eugenia Petit-Breuilh Sepulveda. Natural Desastres and Intelligence in Latinamerica. In International Conference of Territorial Intelligence, Oct 2007, Huelva, Spain. p. 575-578. halshs-00519887

HAL Id: halshs-00519887

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00519887>

Submitted on 27 May 2014

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“Natural Desastres and Intelligence in Latinamerica”

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Abstract: In this communication it is analysed the state of the question of the territorial intelligence in Latin America specially related to the natural disasters clarifying that though the high frequency of catastrophic events would suppose a major determination of the different governments of the region for knowing these natural processes to mitigate the effects in the population and the infrastructures, still prevail there the economic interests that take politician and possible investors to keeping one nebulous with regard to the application of the multiple studies of technical personnel and scientist who exist on this topic. Still it gives the impression that for a wide sector of the population of Latin America. The simple mention of studies related to the catastrophes is considered to be an attempt on the development, and what is obtained finally, is that there are realized investments that can manage to get lost in the short term for lack of forecast. To settle this problem there appears the need to obtain a real communication among scientists, politicians and the citizenship in order that the future actions on the territory are consistent with the dynamic American nature.

1. PRECEDENTS

The high frequency of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, removals in mass and climatic processes with characteristics of disasters that affect to Latin America does that its study and impacts in the population it is an unavoidable question in the territorial planning's of the most vulnerable zones; nevertheless, the reality is that at present the territory deals without considering studies on the natural disasters, not because they do not exist, but because, in general, they give priority to the economic interest, before that the improvement of the quality of life of people and less yet, the protection of the environment. In this vast region of the planet, it is stills planned in the short term, for particular or electioneering interests and there exists a real sloth of the political class to confront this so dynamic nature witch they must coexist, not only them but all the American citizens.

On the other hand, a question in which you can be sure in this region of the planet is that in any moment, it might generate a catastrophe, especially in the Circumpacific sector; and if repeated some of the natural processes with characteristics of disasters that have happened during the last five hundred years, the consequences would be devastating. In this respect, the historical and geographical documentation gives testimony of the intensity with which the forces of the nature can manage to act on the coast of the Pacific one generating geological combined processes that have managed to have catastrophic consequences for the people and the countries in which have happened; an example of the previous thing is the series of earthquakes, volcanic eruption and finally the tsunami that devastated the South of Chile between the 21st and 22nd of May 1960.

2. PRESENT-DAY REALITY

When the figures of disaster are analyzed in Latin America it is possible to have the impression to simple sight that they frequency of this type of natural processes is increasing as it is insinuated, sometimes, in the mass media of masses; on one hand, nowadays, it exists a major information at all the events in real time and on the other hand, what happens is that everytime this territory –as the planet I general- is more populated and the human emplacements are realized in inadequate zones as consequence of the shortage of policies territorial planning or the urban development speculation that begins to be habitual in many sectors, to the detriment of the civil safety badly called “natural disasters” often obey to human reasons to the wrong decisions of a certain society, undoubtedly, the nature is the origin, but it is not the reason of the catastrophe. If the citizenship knew this reality, is would be more complicated for the governments and the administrations to try to convince them that a “disaster” cannot be avoided and would take the desires from them of hinting in the 21st century that these things happen for divine plan.

Considering the previous thing, it is evident that the fluid communication among investigators, politicians and the citizenships should be a regional priority, since any omission in this respect will reverberate negatively in the reached development. This way, though the studies of the scientists are perfectly detailed or the politicians raise in their

programs of government different strategies of prevention before eventual natural catastrophes, if the population is not educated adequately the application of any plan of action it will be a Utopia.

Of that social agents operate as a whole it becomes the need increasingly evident of having analyzed the failures committed in the last catastrophes in Latin America, as for example in the eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz in Colombia (1985) that had a balance of twenty – three thousand dead people. The earthquake that devastated Mexico D. F. (1985) with an indeterminate number of died people that ranged between the ten thousand and thirty thousand; the hurricane Mitch, that devastated wide zones of Central America (1998) and stopped more than eleven thousand mortal victims and approximately eight thousand missing people as consequence of the slides and floods and among other cases there can be mentioned the collapses due to torrential rains in Venezuela (1999) where they registered about twenty- and fifty thousand dead people. To everything else, it is necessary to add the loss thousands of dollars due to the damages in infrastructures that provoked these catastrophes, certainly hardly called “natural”; it meant for these regions –already enough depressed economically – a delay difficult to overcome in the short term and for the governments to have to have to dedicate few available resources to the reconstruction, instead of destining them to improve the life of their citizens.

In the previous cases, it has only been considered the events of a great magnitude, but every year the negligence's are repeated and small efficiency of the administration in natural processes that do not manage to affect a numerous population, but not for it they are not important. Really, these events should be useful as training in positive of the population and of the administration, in order that when they really need to act with rapidity and efficiency to save their lives, they know what they must do.

Another topic that has a direct relation between territorial intelligence and natural disasters in the reconstruction of damaged zones, specially, for earthquakes, floods and removals in mass. The history of last five hundred years says to us that the areas affected frequently by this type of natural processes have continued filling and being exploited economically doing that the problem transforms in an endless chain of blunders. The movement of American cities affected by earthquakes and floods of great magnitude, really, it has not been considered to be a viable possibility due to the costs; but at least, the reconstructions would have to be realized considering the pertinent measures of safety. At present there exists a real knowledge of forms of surer construction, but the governments do not dedicate the capital necessary for this purpose, allowing, in most cases that the private investors should lead the labours of building.

The worst of the present situation is that we cannot consider being any Latin American country as a model in the managing of the natural disasters, since though suitable personnel should exist so much of civil defence, scientists and qualified technicians the failures repeat themselves constantly. Undoubtedly, the condition of the social and political maturity and the own mentality can be the points of item to understand many blunders that if they were settled in some form might lead to a way with some hope for the future.

3. FINAL COMMENTARIES

Before this general panorama, a possible realistic solution to this problematic –though not for it less complex leading to effect- is the education of the politician and of the citizenships in order that they collaborate in the development of the plans mitigation and emergency before eventual catastrophes and of land management. Undoubtedly, they must take advantage of the moments of tranquillity to organize all these activities and to forget the alarmism and the speculation. To deny the evident thing has been one of the main causes of catastrophic situations in the nearby past, which they have prevented the sustainable development and continued in the time of the most affected countries in the Hispanic America.

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